TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



ויגש

לעילוי נשמת



אבי מורי ר' גדליה דוד ב"ר איסר הענרי ע"ה

ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

ואשתו מרת גאלדא ב"ר יצחק אהרן ע"ה

ר'יעקב שמואל ב"ר צבי הלוי גרינספעלד ע"ה

ואשתו מרת חנה ב"ר דוד ע"ה

ר'שרגא פייביש ב"ר מרדכי צבי ערליך ע"ה

ר'יעקב ב"ר שלום הלוי פרידמאן ע"ה

ר'חיים דוד ב"ר אלכסנדר הכהן ריטשמאן ע"ה

ת*נ*צ*ב*ה

Yitzchok's Collections אוספי יצחק

ויגש

Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



Hamaayan is prepared by laymen and published weekly for the edification and enjoyment of the reader who is lacking the time or ability to study the weekly parashah on his own. Hamaayan's goal is to acquaint the reader with a broad spectrum of traditional Torah commentary — classical, recent and "obscure" — as well as with aspects of Jewish history and thought. The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah")



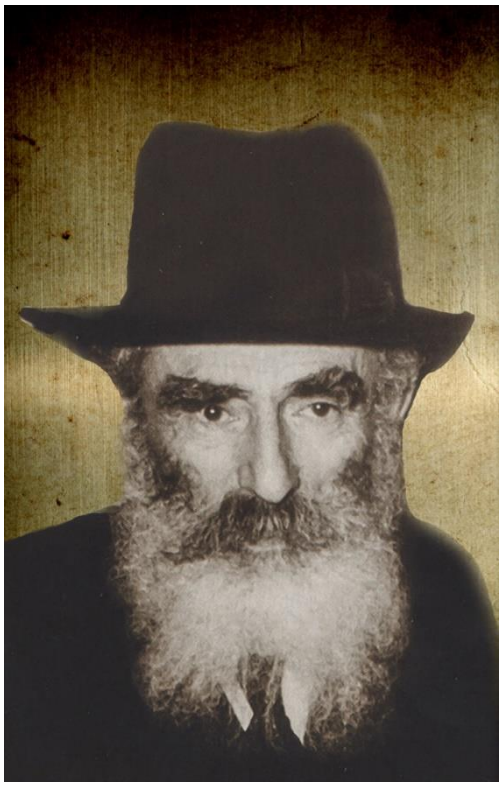
וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ וְאַל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה כִּי לְמִחְיָה שְׁלָחַנִי אֱלֹקִים לִפְנֵיכֶם "***Now, do not be saddened, nor be angry, for having sold me here, for it was to be a provider that G-d sent me ahead of you.***" (45:5)

Commentaries ask: Yosef's words are inherently contradictory, for "sadness" is a trait of humble people, while "anger" is a trait of haughty people!

R' Shlomo Flam z"l (1740-1813; early chassidic leader, popularly known as **R' Shlomo Lutzker**) explains that Yosef's words were addressed to different people. To Shimon and Levi, who originally hatched the plan to kill him (see Rashi to 42:24), he said, "Do not be saddened." On the other hand, to Reuven, who had previously castigated the brothers for not accepting his advice to spare Yosef (see 42:22) and might do so again, he said, "Nor be angry."

Why? **כִּי לְמִחְיָה שְׁלָחַנִי אֱלֹקִים לִפְנֵיכֶם** - "***For it was to be a provider that G-d sent me ahead of you.***" - It was all part of His plan. (**Dibrat Shlomo**)

Letters from Our Sages



The letter below was written **by R' Yechezkel Levenstein z"l** (1895-1974). Reb Chatzkel, as he is popularly known, was mashgiach ruchani of the Mir yeshiva in pre-war Poland and in Shanghai, China during World War II. After the Holocaust, he lived briefly in New York and then settled in Yerushalayim. In later years, he served as mashgiach ruchani of the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak.

This letter appears to have been written in Elul 5715 [1955] and is printed in Ohr Yechezkel – Michtavim, no. 202. We present it here in connection with our parashah's description of how Yaakov's family left Eretz Canaan, and Hashem's promise that they eventually would return.

Blessings and peace etc.; After wishing you well, and with great honor: I wanted to write to your honor [without further delay] regarding your statement that you see danger hovering over our

Holy Land, G-d forbid. Your honor should know that the people of Eretz Yisrael do not think this way, for this is our home. Why should the "maidservant" be more secure than the "mistress"? [i.e., since Eretz Yisrael is G-d's "favorite" land and the source of all blessing, it is like a noblewoman compared to all other lands, which are merely "maidservants."]

I would like to write to your honor that I consider this [apparently he means the state of tension and fear in Eretz Yisrael] to be a good thing. You know the words of ***Ramban z"l*** *[1194-1270]: "A person has no share in the Torah unless he believes that everything that happens to us is a miracle; nothing is nature or 'the way of the world'." [Thus, we must recognize that the events which we fear are the hand of Hashem.]*

When I see our holy land's population increasing and [cities] expanding every day, with more new buildings than we could have imagined, it is nearly impossible to see this and not believe [in Ramban's words]. Regarding this I say [quoting Tehilim 147:2], "The Builder of Yerushalayim is Hashem; He will gather the exiles of Yisrael."

This is a source of great joy, for surely Hashem will soon have mercy on us and we will all merit seeing the salvation by Hashem speedily.

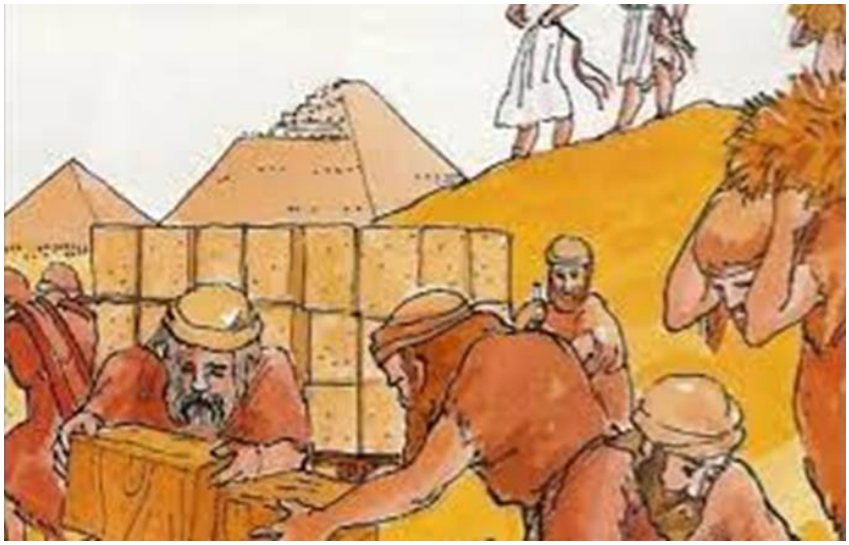
From the one who values you, Yechezkel Levenstein



וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי הָקֵל אֱלֹקֵי אָבִיךָ אַל־תִּירָאִ מֵרְדָה מִצְרַיְמָה *' He said, 'I am the Kel — Elokim of your father. Have no fear of descending to Egypt . . .'"* (46:3)

R' Yosef Gikitila z"l (1248-1310; Spain; author of the influential work of kabbalah, Sha'arei Orah) writes: From the fact that Hashem told Yaakov not to fear, we know that he was afraid. Of what was Yaakov afraid?

R' Gikitila explains: Yaakov saw that G-d's Attribute of Strict Justice was "outstretched" opposite Yaakov's descendants when they went down to Egypt, and he saw that they would never merit leaving there by natural means. Therefore, he was terrified, and G-d had to promise him (verse 4): "I shall descend with you to Egypt, and I shall also surely bring you up."



This, concludes R' Gikitila, is why we say in the haggadah, "We were slaves in Egypt . . . and He took us out with a strong hand [and if He had not taken us out, we and our descendants would still be slaves to Pharaoh]." (Haggadah Shel Pesach Tzofnat Paneach p.18)

וַיֶּאְסֹר יוֹסֵף מֶרְכַּבְתּוֹ וַיַּעַל לִקְרַאת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו גֹּשְׁנָה וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוָּארָיו וַיִּבְךְּ עַל־צַוָּארָיו עֹוד "***Yosef harnessed his chariot and went up to meet Yisrael his father in Goshen. He appeared before him, fell on his neck, and he wept on his neck excessively.***" (46:29)



Rashi z"l writes: Yaakov did not fall upon Yosef's neck, nor did he kiss him. Our Sages say that the reason was that he (Yaakov) was reciting the Shema.

R' Yerucham Halevi Levovitz z"l (mashgiach ruchani in the Mir Yeshiva in Poland; died 1936)

observes: One must be amazed at Yaakov's concentration! At this moment, he was being reunited with his long-lost son, who was now crying on his shoulder, and Yaakov was still able to focus on the words of Kriyat Shema!

R' Levovitz continues: Commentaries ask why Yosef was not reciting Kriat Shema at this moment as well, and they give various answers. The underlying assumption of their question is that, had Yosef wanted to say Kriat Shema now, he too could have put all other thoughts out of his mind and concentrated on his prayers.

וּלְאָבִיו שָׁלַח זֹאת עֲשָׂרָה חֲמֹרִים נִשְׂאִים מִטּוּב מִצְרָיִם וְעֶשֶׂר אֲתֹנֹת נִשְׂאֹת בָּר וָלֶחֶם וּמָזוֹן לְאָבִיו לַדָּרֶךְ "***And to his father he sent the following: ten he-donkeys laden with the best of Egypt and ten she-donkeys laden with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey.***" (45:23)



R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (Maharal of Prague; died 1609) writes: The words "the following" imply that there is something significant about the numbers that follow. Otherwise, the verse would have said simply, "And to his father he sent ten he-donkeys . . ."

He explains: Yosef was conveying to his father that his brothers were not at fault for selling him. Just as a pack-donkey carries its burden with no understanding of what it is carrying or why, Yosef's ten brothers were merely puppets in the Hands of Hashem when they sold him to Egypt. - They actually had no idea why they were doing what they were doing. (**Gevurot Hashem, ch.10**)

וְהִגַּדְתֶּם לְאָבִי אֶת־כָּל־כְּבוֹדִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר רְאִיתֶם "***Therefore, tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and all that you saw.***" (45:13)

Why would Yaakov care about Yosef's glory in Egypt?

R' Yosef Shaul Nathanson z"l (19th century rabbi of Lvov, Galicia) explains: Yaakov was understandably wary of descending to Egypt, for he realized that this marked the beginning of the exile that was foretold to Avraham. What effect would the exile have on his descendants? Yaakov wondered.

Throughout the Jewish People's history, our brethren have fallen by the spiritual wayside for one of two reasons; in some cases they suffered more than they could bear and in other cases they were seduced by the riches that they amassed.

Said Yosef: We are taught that "**מעשה אבות סימן לבנים**"/ "***What befell our forefathers is an omen for their children.***" I experienced both extremes–humiliating slavery and fabulous glory-and I have retained my spiritual standing. Please tell this to my father to alleviate his fears. (**Divrei Shaul**)

וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי הָקֵל אֱלֹקֵי אָבִיךָ אַל־תִּירָאִ מֵרְדָה מִצְרַיְמָה ' ***He said, 'I am the Kel — Elokim of your father. Have no fear of descending to Egypt . . .'***" (46:3)

Why would the information that he would become a great nation in Egypt console Yaakov?

R' Yosef David Sinzheim z"l (1745-1812; Strasbourg) explains: Yaakov was aware of Avraham's prophecy regarding a 400-year exile, and he feared that decree. Hashem responded: Do not fear! Your descendants' numbers will be so great that they will finish the work of 400 years in only 210 years, as actually happened. (**Shlal David**)

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו "***Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him because they were left disconcerted before him.***" (45:3)

Midrash Rabbah states: Rabbi Abba Kohen Bardela says, "*Woe to us from the Day of Judgment! Woe to us from the Day of Rebuke! Yosef was the youngest of the tribes [involved in the dispute], yet his brothers could not reply to him. When Hashem comes and rebukes each of us, how much more so [will we be left speechless]?*"



R' Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg z"l (rosh yeshiva in Berlin and Switzerland; died 1966) asks: Where do we see that Yosef rebuked his brothers? Furthermore, why will Hashem rebuke us on the Day of Judgment? At that point, it will be too late for rebuke!

He answers: Yosef gave his brothers the greatest rebuke possible – he said nothing!

When the brothers recognized Yosef's power and saw that, despite having the ability to do so, he had no plan to harm them, they were thoroughly humiliated.

Similarly, the rebuke that we will sense on the Day of Judgment will not come from anything Hashem will say to us. It will simply result from our recognition of His greatness. The shame we will feel will be the ultimate rebuke. (**Li'frakim p.607**)

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו "***Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him because they were frightened before him.***" (45:3)

R' Shlomo Algazi z"l (1610-1677; Izmir, Turkey) asks: After Yehuda had been speaking at length about Yaakov's pain, why would Yosef ask, "Is my father still alive?" Also, why were Yosef's brothers unable to answer him?

We read later (45:27), **וַתְּחִי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם** – "***The spirit of their father Yaakov was revived (literally, 'came alive')***."

Rashi z"l explains this to mean that the Shechinah rested upon him. It was in this sense that Yosef was asking whether Yaakov was "alive." "My father was a prophet. Why didn't he know where I was all these years?"

Yosef's brothers were unable to answer this question, for they understood that their actions were the cause of Yaakov's losing his ruach ha'kodesh. (**Shema Shlomo**)

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו. וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו גְּשׁוּ־נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגָּשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה "***Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef! Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him because they were left disconcerted before him. Then Yosef said to his brothers, 'Come close to me, if you please,' and they came close. And he said, 'I am Yosef your brother — it is me, whom you sold into Egypt'.***" ***(45:3-4)***

Why did Yosef only say, "Whom you sold into Egypt," the second time that he identified himself?

R' Yeshayah Muskat z"l (1783-1868; rabbi and Chassidic Rebbe in Praga, now a neighborhood of Warsaw, Poland) explains: Our Sages emphasized the importance of not shaming any person, even to the

point of giving up one's own life rather than embarrass someone else. When Yosef first revealed himself, "He cried in a loud voice. Egypt heard, and Pharaoh's household heard"(verse 2). As such, he was careful not to mention that his brothers had sold him.

Later, he said, "Come close to me," and they did; then he could mention that they sold him–not to embarrass them, but to prove his identity by the fact that he knew their secret. (**Rashei Besamim**)

Daf Ha'yomi

Superficially, one could describe the Daf Ha'yomi as an undertaking in which participants worldwide study the same page of Talmud Bavli (Gemara) on any given day and complete the Talmud every seven-and-a-half years. **R' Meir Shapiro z"l** (1887-1933), the tzaddik who first promoted the concept, saw it much differently:

"*The Daf Yomi is a bridge–though fashioned of paper–which lifts the Jew above the stormy confusion of the waters below, so he walks with more assurance and confidence than on the firmest steel structure.*

The great allure of the Daf Yomi concept lies in the realization that the Daf / page of Gemara which I learn here and now is being poured over by countless Jews scattered over the face of the earth. While each one has his own particular mode of learning and is influenced by the intellectual climate of his environment, nevertheless, Abaye and Rava [two great sages of the Talmud] remain Abaye and Rava." [From R' Meir Shapiro's remarks on the occasion of the first completion of the Daf Yomi cycle on Tu B'shvat 5691/1931]

The two-fold purpose of Daf Yomi, first begun on Rosh Hashanah 5684/1924, was to encourage Jews to increase their Torah study through the implementation of a regimented program

or quota, and to provide a vehicle for uniting Jews worldwide. R' Meir Shapiro himself observed on the occasion mentioned above:

"*It was on my first trip abroad on behalf of the Yeshiva of Lublin [in 1927, to the U.S., England, and Western Europe], when I found groups and individuals learning the Daf in every Jewish community I visited, that I saw at first hand the impact that Daf Yomi has made in the Jewish world. Whether it was in Strasbourg, London or Baltimore [here he mentioned by name people whom he had met], while their styles of learning differed, there was the same motivating force which is inherent in Daf Yomi.*"

In every generation since the Daf Yomi was introduced, many Gedolim / leading Torah scholars have endorsed it. **The Gerrer Rebbe** studied the Daf and encouraged his Chassidim to do so. **The Chafetz Chaim** reportedly told R' Meir Shapiro, "In Heaven, they love you dearly." **R' Aharon Kotler z"l**, one of the leading sages in America in the 1950's, studied Daf Yomi as well.

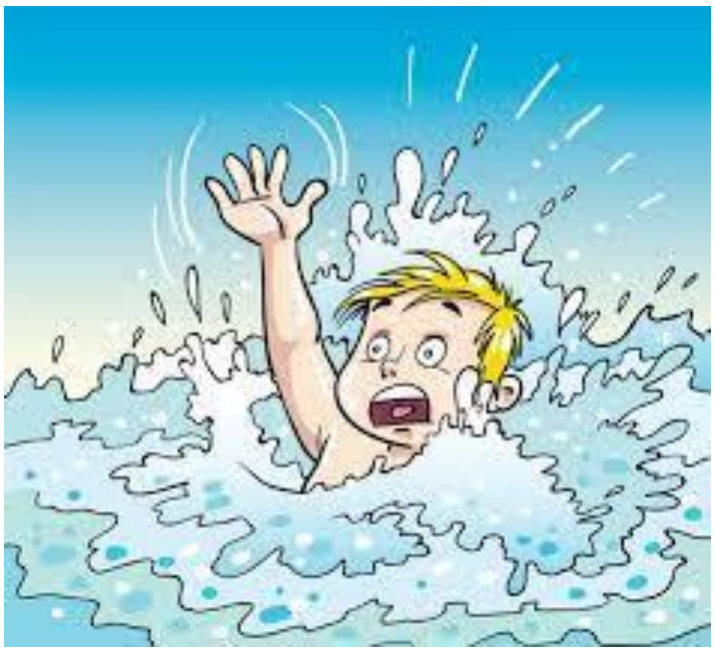
In addition to the advantages of Daf Yomi which R' Meir Shapiro himself described, **R' Moshe Feinstein z"l** notes that it gives a person the opportunity to complete the entire Torah.

R' Feinstein proves from various sources that every person is obligated to do this during his lifetime (Igrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah II No. 110).

R' Feinstein notes that centuries ago it was common practice to study a page of Talmud each day, and many towns had a Chevrah Shas / Talmud society which did just that (Igrot Moshe, Y.D. IV No. 36).

R' Yaakov of Lissa z"l (the "Nesivos") wrote in his famous ethical will almost 200 years ago that his sons should study a page of Gemara every day.

An Astonishing Midrash



וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְאַל־יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדֶּךָ כִּי כָמוֹךָ כְּפַרְעֹה

"Let your anger not flare up at your servant, for you are like Pharaoh" (44:18) – just as Pharaoh is destined to drown in the sea, so you are destined to drown in the sea.

R' Yehonatan Eyebschutz z"l (died 1764) explains as follows: The gemara (Nedarim 22) teaches that when one becomes angry, he forgets the Torah which he has learned. And, Pirkei Avot teaches that one who willfully forgets the Torah he has learned incurs the death penalty. It follows, therefore, that one who becomes angry incurs the death penalty.

What type of death is he liable for?

The gemara teaches that whenever the Torah makes someone liable for the death penalty and does not specify how the penalty should be administered, it is through suffocation. Chazal also say that at a time when there is no sanhedrin and the death penalty is not administered, a person who is liable for suffocation will die by drowning.

Therefore Yehuda said, "***Do not let your anger flare up, for if you do you will drown.***" (**Midrash Yehonatan**)

"When you pray, trust that Hashem will listen to your prayers and do what's best for you; not what you think is best." ~ R' Avigdor Miller zt"l.

וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה *'Yehuda approached him..' (44:18)*



According to one interpretation in Midrash Rabbah, "him" (or "Him") refers to Hashem, i.e., Yehuda approached G-d in prayer before confronting Yosef.

R' Yitzchak Ze'ev Yadler z"l (Yerushalayim; 1843-1917) asks: Why, then, does the verse use a pronoun ("him") whose antecedent appears to be Yosef?

He answers: Yehuda approached Yosef to pray because prayer is more efficacious if the person praying is standing close to the person or thing about whom or which he is praying. (**Tiferet Zion**)

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי *"Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef; is my father still alive?" (45:3)*

Hadn't Yehuda told Yosef moments earlier - **וְהָיָה כִּרְאוֹתוֹ כִּי־אֵין הַנַּעַר וָמֵת** (verse 44:31) that Yaakov would die if Binyamin did not return? Obviously, then, Yaakov was alive!

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (1784-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) explains: Yosef was saying, "You may find it unbelievable that I am indeed Yosef. I find it equally unbelievable that my father Yaakov did not die of sorrow when I disappeared. If it can indeed be true that my father is still alive, it likewise can be true that I am Yosef." (**Chochmat Ha'Torah**)

וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב עוֹד־יוֹסֵף בְּנִי חָי אֵלְכָה וְאֶרְאֶנּוּ בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת "***And Yisrael said, 'How great! My son Yosef 'od' / still 'chai' / lives'.***" (45:28)

וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יוֹסֵף אָמוּתָה הַפָּעַם אַחֲרֵי רְאוֹתִי אֶת־פָּנֶיךָ כִּי עוֹדְךָ חָי "***Then Israel said to Yosef, 'Let me die this time . . .'*** " (46:30)

R' Aryeh Laib Zunz Charif z"l (1765-1833; rabbi of Plock, Poland) writes: **The Zohar** states that King David would have died at birth, but Yaakov and Yosef gave him 70 years. Yaakov lived 33 fewer years than his father and Yosef lived 37 fewer years than his father, a total of 70 years.

The Torah writes that Yaakov lived in Egypt for 17 years. Together with the time it took Yaakov to travel to Egypt, Yaakov had (part of) "chai" / 18 years left when he heard that Yosef was still alive. For his part, Yosef had (part of) 62 years left. (Yosef was 39 when his father arrived in Egypt and he died on his 110th birthday, one day into his 111th year.) The sum of 18 and 62 is 80, the gematria of "**עוֹד**" / "still."

Yaakov recognized that he and Yosef had 80 years left between them. Yaakov wanted to see Yosef, but he also wanted Yosef to live as long as possible (without taking years from King David). Therefore, as soon as Yaakov saw Yosef one more time, Yaakov was ready to die. אָמוּתָה הַפָּעַם אַחֲרֵי רְאוֹתִי אֶת־פָּנֶיךָ כִּי עוֹדְךָ חָי "***Let me die this time, because you are still alive***," he said. (**Melo Ha'omer**)

"Our sages teach that there is no wealth in the world that is adequate compensation for even the tiniest of mitzvot. We'd surely be happy if we found a two-carat diamond on the sidewalk, so why not be happy with every word of prayer and every good deed, which is intrinsically much more valuable than the diamond?" ~ R' Shalom Arush Shlita.

"***When that year ended, they came to him in the next year and said to him, 'We will not conceal anything from my lord . . .' "*** (47:18)

What did the Egyptians mean?

R' Moshe Shimon Sivitz z"l (1856- 1936; rabbi in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania beginning in 1888) answers: Rashi (41:55) writes – **לְפִי שֶׁהָיָה יוֹסֵף אוֹמֵר לָהֶם שֶׁיִּמּולוּ** – that when the Egyptians came to Yosef for food, he ordered them to be circumcised. Why? There is no mitzvah for gentiles to be circumcised!

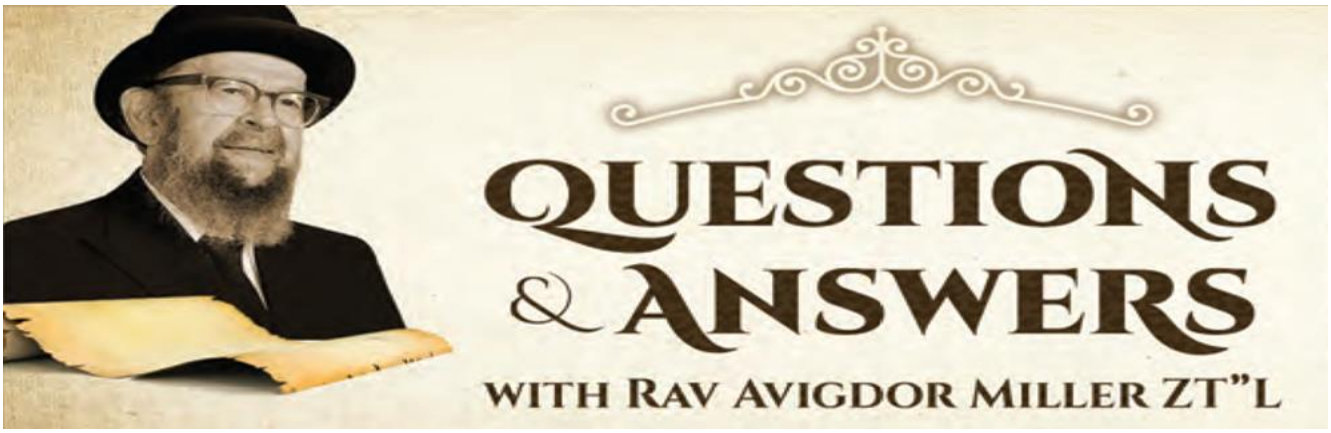
R' Sivitz explains: Yosef took this drastic measure to find the black marketers among the Egyptians, for only those who truly needed food would submit.

After the first year of the famine, the Egyptians came to Yosef again to obtain food. They did not know what test Yosef would impose this time in order to discover which Egyptians really needed food, and they wanted to convince him that they really were hungry. So they told him, "*We will not conceal anything from my lord*" – *we are not black-marketers and we have nothing to conceal.* (**Tzemach Ha'sadeh: Eshkol Amarim p. 63**)

Someone said to Reb Yisrael Salanter zy'a "I am set in my ways; I don't think I'll ever do teshuvah."

Reb Yisrael Salanter rebuked him, "Chazal tell us that when we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, the Satan gets frightened because he fears that we've done teshuvah and what he hears is the shofar of Moshiach.

So you see, even the Satan believes that you can do teshuvah. Why don't you believe it?" ~ R' Elimelech Biderman Shlita





How can a husband keep his wife happy if he cannot afford to buy her expensive things?

And the answer is diamonds don't make anybody happy. It's diamond words that matter! If a man makes it a career to be an actor and to always encourage his wife, that's how he'll make his wife happy.

When she makes supper, he has to encourage her - praise her for whatever she does. קָמוּ בָנֶיהָ וַיְאַשְּׁרוּהָ בַּעְלָהּ וַיְהַלְלָהּ. That's what it says in Mishlei when it describes the Woman of Valor. Her husband and her children arise and praise her enthusiastically. - Encouragement – that's what everybody wants. There's nobody in the world who doesn't have a craving for encouragement. And why should a housewife be different?

And so, the Jewish wife can be made happy even without any gifts at all. Of course, if her husband remembers from time to time to buy her small inexpensive gifts, it's proper to do that; but he could always make the house a place of happiness no matter what.

Poor people can be just as happy as rich people. That's a truism that you don't need to hear from me. If a husband and wife live with wisdom and kindliness, and with a certain affection and self-respect, then they can live a happy life that cannot be bought by any money.



When is it considered proper for a person to fast a taanis yochid [a personal fast day]?

I can't tell you all the things, but sometimes a person did something wrong and in order to make him realize how wrong it was, he should feel obligated to fast a taanis.

Now I personally would not say to fast a taanis. A man did a very big sin and called me up. He wanted me to tell him how to do teshuva. I told him he should learn Mesillas Yesharim ten times from cover to cover. He said, "Ten times?!" I said, "Yes, ten times. And don't be in a hurry, go slowly." That's what I told him. Ten times Mesillas Yesharim is better than fasting a taanis yochid.

But sometimes a person who sinned is not willing to learn Mesillas Yesharim. And he needs something as a k'nas, a fine, to make him feel that he lost something. A day when you're not eating should help you realize you lost something. You lost breakfast, you lost lunch, you lost something. And you're sorry you did this sin that caused you to lose those meals.

The truth is that a sin causes a loss of much more than a meal. But at least you should know what you lost by the sin.

So a taanis for a cheit, chalilah, is worth doing. Although it's better, as I said, it's better to learn Mesillas Yesharim a number of times; that's the very best.

"Sometimes it takes 'darkness' for one to truly appreciate the everyday blessings that we experience." ~ Ben Ish Chai.



The Rav said tonight that Yoshkeh was basically an observant Jew and that it was only the later Christians who created a new religion. But then why is Yoshkeh called a meisis in the Gemara?

Yoshkeh was considered a meisis because he ridiculed the Chachomim and encouraged the ridicule of the Chachomim. And anyone who ridicules the Torah leaders is chayav misah. We know that **כָּל הָעוֹבֵר עַל דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים חַיָּיב מִיתָה** – "***If someone is going to disregard the words of the Sages, then he is deserving of death***" (Brachos 4b).

The Chachmei haTorah are the light of our eyes. They are the einei ha'eidah, the eyes of our people, and a loyal Jew views the world through their eyes. And so if a fellow in the street is walking around with a few bums following him, and he's making jokes against the Chachomim, and ridiculing them and encouraging others to ridicule them, then he has lost his right to exist. That's a meisis.

But did Yoshkeh himself worship avodah zarah? No, no. He wouldn't even think of avodah zarah. You have to know that he was a Jew. And if sometimes you find statements that are attributed to him that seem to imply differently, those may be due to the later writers who put things into his mouth as if he said it. But it's not *mistaber* that he said it. No, it's not logical that those are his words. Because we know that he was a Jew.

He said the following – and I'm telling you what it says in the New Testament – "If anyone were to oppose even a jot or a tittle of what's in the Torah" – that means even a yud or a tag – "then that man has no place in this world." All Jews were like that in ancient times. Only that he opposed the Chachmei haTorah. And that we know. We know that he opposed the Sages and tried to rally people

to this cause. And that is a tremendous aveirah, a terrible sin. Just for that he lost his right to live. That's why we call him a meisis.



Is there a problem with taking children to concerts where shomrei Torah u'mitzvos will be singing kosher songs?

I will tell you my private opinion. I don't think that children should become accustomed to unnecessary and superfluous things. Don't train your children to become accustomed to going places that cost money. They don't need it and you're ruining them in the process.

You can train them to take walks. They can take walks and get fresh air. They could play a little in the street with a ball and get some exercise, but don't take them to concerts and things like that. I don't believe in that at all. I don't believe in taking children to travel at all. Don't get them accustomed to luxuries. A child should be taught how to live a frugal life and to desire only what is necessary.

Today, people are feeding children all kinds of ideas – all kinds of wrong ideas. And people think it's normal. Even to send your daughter to Seminary in, let's say, Gateshead, I don't believe in it anymore. It's a very good place, Gateshead. But send your daughter to Boro Park, to Yeshiva of Brooklyn. There are very good places here.

And don't let your daughter travel to Eretz Yisroel either. A man approached me the other day. His daughter wants to go to Eretz Yisroel. She's a frum girl. He wants to know what I think about it.

What does she have to go to Eretz Yisroel for?! It costs a lot of money to go to Eretz Yisroel. What does she have to go to Eretz

Yisroel for?! An unmarried girl should waste money on going to Eretz Yisroel?! No, I don't believe in these things.

Teach your children to save their money. They'll need it someday. A bank account is better than travelling – a savings account in a bank. Teach them to save money for themselves. And you want to train them to spend money on unnecessary things?! No, I disapprove of that.



That Fearful Moment

The brothers had felt entirely justified. It was twenty-two years of justifications! For years they had reinforced their arguments. You know that when you get into a fight with your wife, so the first hour you might feel bad about it. Something at least; a tinge of regret. An hour later, as you go off to work, you feel that you're right. Two hours later, you're surely right! The more time passes, the more right you become.

And the wife is doing the same thing at home. She knew she was right from the beginning! Because that's the way of a human being; always justifying oneself. It's human nature.

And so, Yosef's brothers were human as well. And they were building up and reinforcing themselves since the last time they had seen Yosef. And it was some building by this time! It was a skyscraper of righteousness. And now all of a sudden it came crashing down and the brothers now realized that they had deceived themselves. They saw now that it was nothing but jealousy. That's what it was.

At that moment, overwhelmed with shock and regret, it all collapsed into dust. Like a punch in the face the words "Ani Yosef" hit them. The words "Ani Yosef" are truly terrifying words, only that we don't think. Because no matter how great you are, you will always be blind to your own faults.

And that terrible day of dread is coming, when suddenly you will have to appear before the throne of not just a nothing-king of Egypt, but before the Great Judge Himself, Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And He will say two words to us, just two words: "Ani Hashem"! And when we hear those terrifying words, all of our buildings that we constructed all our lives, our life-long justifications, will collapse into nothing.

Lion of Yehuda



Yehuda was moser nefesh and he made himself the spokesman. He spoke with diplomacy but still he spoke, and he spoke tough. And that's how Binyomin was saved.

Now, I want to tell you something. This following principle is my own; I didn't hear it from my rebbes and therefore I take the responsibility for it. If it's not good, I'm to blame. But I'm inclined to say that this parsha is one of the reasons why the Am Yisroel today is made up of

Yehudim: the people of Yehuda. Not only are we called Yehudim but to a very great extent, we are Yehudim.

Are all Jews today from Yehuda? No. But most of them are. Some are from the tribe of Binyomin, some are from the tribe of Levi. All Kohanim and Levi'im come from the tribe of Levi. And there is a small admixture from all the other tribes too – it's a fact that we have a little from every tribe among us. But we are mostly of the tribe of Yehuda.

Now, what is the importance that we descend from Yehuda? Why not one of the other shevatim? It wasn't an accident. Nothing is an accident but something so big like this, the future of our people?

There's something there. And so, it's a fair question: why is it that Yehuda was the one who turned out to be the Jewish nation? What about all the other brothers?

I think that this story is one of the more important reasons. Because we see that Yehuda had a certain quality of gevurah, and in order to be successful in anything, especially as a Yehudi, you have to have a backbone. I think that's the reason why Yehuda became greater than his brothers.

The Result of a Good Deed

Every mitzvah you do is alive forever. When Yosef Hatzadik harnessed the horses to greet his father it had a special koach, an special ability to exert influence 210 years later, because it was what we call a mitzvah.

Let's say your father lives out of town and you've settled here in Brooklyn; if you know your father is coming to visit you so you're not merely going to wait at home until he knocks on the door. That's Americaneez, it's minhag America. But al pi Torah — and al pi seichel too, by the way — if your father and mother are coming, it's proper

to go to the airport or to the railroad station to meet them. This should be considered superfluous to be said but today it has to be mentioned.

And so, we understand that when Yosef Hatzaddik went out to greet his father, he was doing what any good Jew would have done — it was a mitzvah. But we're learning something new. We think that a mitzvah is something like a job well done; we did it and we'll be paid off in the next world and finished. But we're learning now that a mitzvah is much more than just a written record — a mitzvah is a living creature!

Pay attention now; I didn't say 'a creation,' I said 'creature.'

Rabbi Yehuda Halevi in his Kuzari tells us that a mitzvah is an actual living entity. Of course, it doesn't live like we live. It doesn't have to be fed or be bathed. But it's a living thing, something that has its own type of existence.

When you put on tefillin, when you nail a mezuzah to your door, when you say birkas hamozon after eating, when you give a penny to a poor man for tzedakah, when you say shema Yisroel, when you mention yetzias Mitzrayim, when you fulfill any one of them, you're creating an eternal creature, something that will exist forever. And not only it exists but it continues to exert an influence.

Seeing the Secrets of the World

Yaakov Avinu understood the great power of seeing things in this world. He knew that the tremendous emotion of seeing his beloved son would awaken within him a very great reaction of excitement and gratitude to Hashem.

Of course, he would be grateful to Hashem anyhow; but Yaakov wanted more than that. He was always searching for ways and means of becoming more aware of Hashem, and he knew that nothing could

compare to the effect of actually seeing his son – the intense gratitude and love of Hashem that would pour from his soul would be unmatched. And that's why he undertook the journey to Egypt.

You shouldn't disdain what you're hearing now. As you sit at your table on Shabbos and you're looking around at the faces of your children; maybe everybody is talking, eating, whatever it is, so you remember what we said here. You look at your child's face and you're thinking, "Ah! What a beautiful face! What a beautiful experience this is that Hashem is giving me! I love this child! And the next one too. "Such a sweet face – I love this child! Thank You Hashem for this gift!" You love every one of them tremendously and it should be translated into stimulating your love of Hakadosh Baruch Hu more and more.

There's a great happiness in seeing your children. Even if your child is not a gadol batorah, but he walks b'derech hayashar, he's a shomer torah umitzvos, it's a tremendous happiness to see his face.

If Hashem gives you normal good frum children, you should be so happy; you should enjoy them. Enjoy them and thank Hashem every time you see them. You enjoy the child's face and while you're doing it, you're thinking, "I'm not doing it merely because I want to have nachas; I'm doing it because I want to love Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who gave me this tremendous experience to see my child's face. And so the purpose of seeing is to make an effect on your neshamah.

"When you feel anxiety about a future event, imagine the worst and accept it. This has a very calming effect. For example, if you are afraid that you will miss a bus and feel anxiety, imagine you have already missed it and accept the consequences. If you are afraid that you will be fired from your job, imagine you have already been fired and accept it." ~ R' Zelig Pliskin.



וּבְנֵי בִנְיָמִן בֶּלַע וָבֶכֶר וְאַשְׁבֵּל גֵּרָא וְנַעֲמָן אֵחִי וָרֹאשׁ מֻפִּים וְחֻפִּים וָאָרְדּ
Binyamin's sons: Bela, Becher…Chuppim and Ard. (46:21)

The names that Binyamin gave his sons were unique in the sense that each name in some way alluded to Yosef and the troubles that he had encountered.



Chazal (Sotah 36b) elaborate upon the meaning of each name. It demonstrates to us how overcome with grief Binyamin was over the loss of his only brother (from the same mother, Rachel Imeinu). Of particular interest is the name Chuppim, which he gave "because he (Yosef) did not see my chupah, marriage canopy, and I did not see his chupah."

The lesson to be derived from here, comments the **Ponovezher Rav, zl**, is the degree of grief with which Binyamin lived his life. During all the years that Yosef was missing, never did Binyamin's faith and hope waver that perhaps, by some remote chance, Yosef, his lost brother, would return.

What a powerful lesson and example of **השתתפות בצער הזולת**, sharing in the pain of another Jew.

Every time Binyamin would call or speak to one of his ten sons – and it was often – he was reminded of Yosef and of the travail that he was experiencing. If his brother was suffering, so would he.

How did his personal suffering ease Yosef's plight? It did not, but, when one Jew suffers pain, his brother should feel it, because we are all family.

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, was wont to underscore the name Chuppim, Binyamin's second youngest son. With this name, Binyamin recalled two aspects of his separation from Yosef: "He did not see my chupah; and I did not see his chupah."

The Rosh Yeshivah taught that this is an understandable milestone for Binyamin to record. How much he would have wanted his brother to share in his simchah, joy; to dance with him, to play an integral role at this special event in his life. This is all comprehensible and acceptable. The fact that he grieved over his personal lack of attendance at Yosef's marriage canopy is in and of itself a plateau of emotional sharing and caring which goes beyond the norm.

Imagine, Binyamin lamented the fact that he could not share in his brother's joy. This is pure selflessness at its apex. He wanted to share and give joy to his brother on his auspicious day, and, if he could not, he had a reason to grieve.

This is the pinnacle of **השתתפות**, sharing, because it is all about "him," not "me." The only way that one can achieve such an elevated level of caring is by always thinking only of others and not of oneself.

"We do not need any merits to have our prayers answered. All we need is to know is that we do not deserve anything and understand that everything that we have in life is an undeserved gift." ~ The Imrei Yosef.



וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן־אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו 'Then he fell upon his brother Binyamin's neck and wept; and Binyamin wept upon his neck.' (45:14)

Chazal (quoted by Rashi) comment that Yosef and Binyamin wept over the destruction of the Sanctuaries that would be burnt in their respective territories: the two Batei Mikdash that would stand in Binyamin's portion of Eretz Yisrael, and Mishkan Shiloh in the portion of Yosef's son, Ephraim.

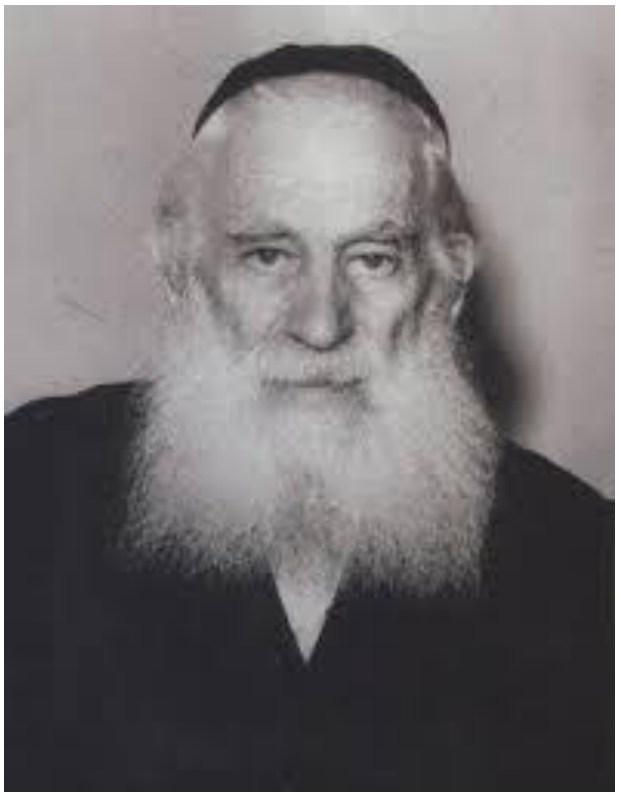
The question is obvious: Why weep over the destruction of the



other's territory? What about his own personal loss? Yosef should have wept over the Mishkan, and Binyamin should have poured out his emotion over the Batei Mikdash.

The question came up during the emotional meeting between two Admorim, Chassidic leaders, who, albeit having survived the Holocaust by escaping from Europe, saw the tragic decimation of their Chassidus with the murder of thousands of their followers.

The Belzer Rebbe and the Gerrer Rebbe, **the Imrei Emes**, met in Eretz Yisrael. These two leaders of the largest Chassidic courts in Poland were devastated by the destruction. The anomaly of Yosef and Binyamin's "misplaced" fears arose. Their answer was succinct and typical: "One weeps for his friend's destruction. One does not cry over his own losses. He moves on and rebuilds." One takes the pain of loss and replants it as the foundation of his next achievement.



The Ponovhezer Rav, zl, lost his yeshivah and most of his family during the Holocaust. He came to Eretz Yisrael physically broken and emotionally distraught. Yet, he did not for one moment defer to his pain. He made up his mind to apply all his strength to rebuilding.

He was asked how he was able to reconcile himself with the pain of the loss of his congregation, his yeshivah and his family.

He replied, "Every tear is another brick in the Ponovezh infrastructure. Every krechtz, moan, is another shtender, lectern, in its bais hamedrash. I am applying the pain as a building block, as the muscle, the source of energy, for continuing to build."

Perhaps we may supplement an alternative thought. When a community sustains a major calamity, its leader experiences a dual misfortune. He feels for the loss of the community; its pain, its

deprivation. He also feels a personal and private bereavement. These were "his" community, "his" students, "his" friends, "his" colleagues.

A true leader does not allow his personal pain to control him. He moves on. He has to think of others. Another leader, however, can be sensitive to his colleague's personal pain.

Yosef wept for Binyamin's personal loss, his private pain over the loss of the Batei Mikdash, because he knew that Binyamin would not weep for himself – only for others. Likewise, Binyamin cried for Yosef's loss, since, after all, someone had to.

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו '***But his brothers could not answer him, because they were left disconcerted before him***.' (45:3)



Rashi explains that the brothers were overwhelmed with shame [**מִפְּנֵי הַבּוּשָׁה**]. The humiliation of confronting Yosef after all these years, facing the error of their original decision, was too much. It agitated them to know that before them stood Yosef. It brought dread to their minds, and prompted their anxiety: "What is going to happen now?"

All of this is understandable. Fear is an acceptable reaction at such a time, but shame? Why should shame take center stage over fear? Indeed, at the end of Parashas Va'yechi (50:15) when the brothers acknowledged that now that Yaakov Avinu had left this world, and it was they and Yosef – without any parental interference – they had reason to become anxious. They wondered if now that their father's

protection was history, Yosef might take revenge. Even after years of reconciliation with Yosef and living in Egypt as beneficiaries of his extraordinary generosity, they feared repercussions.

If this is how they felt now, they surely felt fear when they first heard the words, "Ani Yosef, I am Yosef." Why does Rashi say that they were disconcerted due to the **בּוּשָׁה**, embarrassment?



Horav Gershon Liebman, zl, Rosh Yeshivah of Novoradok in France, explains that this allows us a window into the extraordinary level of yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven, evinced by the Shivtei Kah, tribes of Hashem, the brothers/sons of Yaakov Avinu. For them the emotion of embarrassment superseded the emotion of (personal) fear.

Fear is an unknown: Will I be punished? Will I not be punished? Will I get into trouble for what I did? Will I not? **בּוּשָׁה**, embarrassment is an absolute reality. It is the cognitive realization and acknowledgement that one has done something negative for which he is ashamed.

When this bushah involves men of such spiritual stature as the Shivtei Kah, it constitutes **בושה נצחית**, eternal shame. Such shame trumps any physical fear that they might have felt. Thus, all they were concerned about was the spiritual humiliation with which they would now be compelled to live.

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי... וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו גְּשׁוּ־נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגָּשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה *'And Yosef said to his brothers, "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" … The Yosef said to his brothers, "Come close to me, if you please," and he said, "I am Yosef, your brother… me, whom you sold to Egypt.'"* (45:3,4)

Anyone who reads these pesukim is struck with the same questions: Why did Yosef repeat, "I am Yosef"? He stated in pasuk 3, "I am Yosef," and immediately in pasuk 4, he repeated, "I am Yosef." Furthermore, the first time that he "introduced" himself, his brothers' reaction was one of fear and disconcertment. Why in his second "introduction" did he reiterate, "Whom you sold to Egypt"? Obviously, this was a sore point, as their reaction evinces. Why rub it in?



The Sfas Emes offers a powerful explanation which teaches us an important lesson in avodas Hashem, serving the Almighty. When Yosef originally introduced himself by saying, "Ani Yosef," the brothers were frightened. They saw before them a wholly righteous, totally committed Yosef, who, despite having lived in the decadence of Egypt, far removed from the spiritually pristine environment of his home, had been able to maintain himself on a spiritually refined plateau.

Imagine, had he not been deprived of a Jewish home for this period, he would have been that much greater. This was a compelling reason to be frightened.

When Yosef observed his brothers' reaction, he became concerned, because they were wrong in their assumption. Thus, he countered,

"Ani Yosef…whom you sold to Egypt." He was in effect saying, "Do you want to know how I achieved such spiritual distinction? It was specifically because I was in Egypt, away from home. My eminence in Egypt is a result of my ability to overcome temptation, pain, loneliness, filth, and a harsh physical and spiritual environment. All these years of travail since 'you sold me' to Egypt transformed me from the Yosef at home with remarkable potential, to the Yosef, viceroy of Egypt, replete in my spiritual observance and commitment. Egypt was the spiritual crucible that honed and tempered me for this position."

We have no idea what catalyzes our spiritual achievement, but, in all probability, the very travail that might have embittered us and provoked serious questioning on our part has become the catalyst for our success.

A distinguished rosh yeshivah, who has earned a reputation as a gaon and tzaddik, related how he had achieved such distinction:

During his youth, he was among the elite students in a premier yeshivah in Eretz Yisrael. A well-to-do businessman chose him as a chosson, son-in-law (obviously the young couple met and were attracted to one another). Sadly, this man used much of his wealth to pamper his spoiled children. (This is not always readily apparent when boy meets girl.) Thus, it did not take long before the young husband realized that as far as his wife was concerned, his primary function in their marriage was to cater to her irrational whims. She acted as if he were another one of the many toys that her father had purchased for her.

In short time, they divorced, and the girl's family initiated a smear campaign that practically destroyed his reputation and emotional well-being.

One of his friends encouraged him to pay a visit to the tomb of **Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai**. He listened and spent some time there

immersed in fervent and passionate prayer, storming the Heavens for a positive ending to his travail.

One night, thinking that he was alone, he raised his voice in prayer, "Hashem! I can no longer take it … I am about to give up hope…Please have mercy on me in the merit of the holy tzaddik who is buried here. Help me!"

As soon as he concluded his prayer, he noticed that another Jew had been in the room where he was praying. The man approached him and asked, "Please tell me your story. Perhaps I could help. If not, I can at least listen. At times, having someone who will listen is in and of itself comforting."

The man listened to the entire bitter story of this young man's life: his outstanding success as a scholar; his failed marriage; and the ensuing slander to which he was subjected. It was a bitter tale, but then many people endure various challenges – both physical and emotional; some are able to navigate through them better than others. This young man was apparently drowning.

The stranger addressed him, "You are a scholar, and, as such, you are certainly aware that the tzaddik that is interred here endured much travail and pain, years of living in hiding without family, so that the government who wanted him dead would not succeed with their plans. He had no food, no clothing, but he kept on studying Torah amid terrible depravation. It is because of what he experienced that he was able to reach the pinnacle of success that he achieved.

You should know that some of our greatest and most illustrious gedolim, Torah giants, climbed the ladder of success on rungs of pain and affliction. They reached the apex of Torah scholarship through toil, sweat and tears.

Your present experience will catalyze your ascension to the heights of Torah and yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven. Never lose faith; never give up hope. Follow the lesson taught by Rabbi Shimon bar

Yochai, and you, too, will one day look back at this travail as the catalyst for your success in Torah."

It was a moving and inspiring speech, but it was not enough. The young man was a delicate soul who had been thrown around like a rag, and persecuted by a spoiled wife and her doting, foolish father who was responsible for her immature attitude toward life. He required something more, someone contemporary who had suffered and endured. He needed to hold onto someone to whom he could personally relate.



The stranger continued, "Let me tell you about someone whom I personally know, an individual who achieved the epitome of righteousness, a miracle worker whose connection with Heaven was evident, who was guided by Ruach HaKodesh, Divine Inspiration, on a regular basis. I refer to **Horav David Moshe, zl, m'Kretchnif**, Admor of Rechovot.

One day, a close student asked him what turning point in his life had catalyzed his incredible rise to spiritual eminence. The Rebbe replied: 'Auschwitz. Prior to the Holocaust, I was just another student. When I came to Auschwitz, I decided that I was dedicating my life wholly to Hashem. I would do it all: keep every mitzvah with utmost mesiras nefesh; self-sacrifice; study Torah, regardless of the danger; sing zemiros on Shabbos, even though there was no such thing as a Shabbos meal. As I carried heavy cinder blocks on my shoulders, however, I sang Shabbos zemiros. - Whatever I have achieved in the realm of spirituality is solely due to my experience in Auschwitz!'"

The Jew concluded with a simple, but profound, insight, "Do you know the difference between a train and an airplane?



An airplane can go anywhere with great speed. A train can only go so fast and is limited to areas that can support rails. The real difference, however, is something else. A plane is not encumbered, while a train is land-based and, thus, can only travel where there are no obstacles in its path. A plane simply flies over the obstacles. Once you detach yourself from the ground, from your attachment to earthiness, you will soar. Hashem has mercifully taken you 'off the ground.'

The world that you lived in until now turned against you. You have been granted the opportunity to soar to the Heavens. Change your life and return to the bais hamedrash which used to be your home, and you will see in due time that nothing will stand in your way."

The young man listened and, for ten years, he immersed himself in Torah study. His fear of Heaven became strengthened, as did his Torah erudition.

These ten years were his spiritual gestation period during which he merited an unprecedented feeling of closeness to Hashem, an encyclopaedic knowledge of Torah, and a lofty attitude toward mitzvah observance – achievements which could not have been realized without the travail that refined him by "lifting him off the ground," so that he could soar to the Heavens.

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־קֹלוֹ בִּבְכִי וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁמַע בֵּית פַּרְעֹה ***'He cried in a loud voice. Egypt heard and Pharaoh's household heard.'*** (45:2)



When Yosef wept, the entire country heard; so respected was he in Egypt. Word quickly spread throughout the palace and then throughout the country: Yosef was weeping!

Chazal (**Bereishis Rabbah**) state that Yosef's cries were conciliatory in nature, meant to assuage his brothers' feelings of guilt and shame.

Why was he appeasing them? He was the victim. They were the "aggressors." It should be the other way around.

Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl (cited by Bad Kodesh), posits that herein lies an important concept concerning interpersonal relationships. Just as the "Shulchan Aruch," Code of Law, addresses the rights of the victim who was slighted, hurt by his fellow, so, too, a complete set of laws addresses how the victim should act vis-à-vis his assailant.

We have laws concerning the method and the amount of payment that the mazik, damager, must pay his victim. We have laws that teach how one asks for forgiveness, and how he expiates his sin. Likewise, we have laws regarding the manner in which the victim should accept the apology, admission of guilt and ensuing penance in order to absolve the perpetrator.

Let us face it; when someone harms us, we neither jump for joy, nor are we ready to forgive the aggressor. Let him sweat it out, just as I sweated it out. I suffered; let him suffer. I am going to stretch this out for all it is worth. This is human nature, and it is, thus, natural for people who have been hurt to act in this manner.

We are different. Our Torah, as interpreted by Chazal, teaches us not to be vengeful, not to make our provoker, assailant, antagonist, suffer as we have suffered. When someone seriously offends me, I am not interested in his apology. Let him leave me alone. He has done enough damage. I am neither interested in seeing his face, nor in hearing his contrition. If anything, I want to see him squirm. I would like him to owe me forever. Let him not feel that he has gotten off with an apology.

People often employ a similar attitude when it comes to paying back a favor. Since I want the person for whom I did a favor to always be in my debt, I do not accept favors from him. Of course, the official "reason" is that I do not like to accept favors, because I am not comfortable being beholden to others. The real reason, however, is that I enjoy when people "owe" me.

This is wrong. When someone wants to give me a gift, I should accept it with a smile. Likewise, when someone begs my forgiveness, I should respond positively, with a smile: "Sure, I forgive you."

This was Yosef's message to his brothers: "I bear no grudge. I forgive you wholeheartedly. As I have nothing against my younger brother, Binyamin, so, too, are my feelings toward you amicable."



יְמֵי שְׁנֵי מְגוּרַי שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמְאַת שָׁנָה מְעַט וְרָעִים הָיוּ יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיַּי '***The years of my dwelling are 130; few and terrible were the years of my life***.' (47:9)

Our Patriarch, Yaakov Avinu, stood before Pharaoh, and, when asked his age, Yaakov replied, "The years of my dwelling are 130; few and terrible were the years of my life."

What provoked Yaakov to add that his life was short and miserable? Why not just answer the question? How old are you? 130 – end of conversation. Obviously, Yaakov felt that simply stating his age was

insufficient. It was necessary to explain the kind of life he had endured. Why?



Horav Shlomo Wolbe, zl, distinguishes between "dwelling" in the world and "living" in it – or between mere existing and living life to its fullest, maximizing the potential of one's life.

If Pharaoh wanted to know the Patriarch's age, how long he had been existing/dwelling in this world, then the answer was 130. Yaakov intimated that this period could not be defined as living, however, because these years were few and terrible.

How does Yaakov define "terrible"? The Patriarch added, **וְלֹא הִשִּׂיגוּ אֶת־יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי אֲבֹתַי בִּימֵי מְגוּרֵיהֶם... וְאֵלֶּה יְמֵי שְׁנֵי־חַיֵּי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר־חָי** "***And they did not attain the years of life of my ancestors in the days of their dwelling… And these are the days of life of Avraham that he lived***" (Ibid 25:7).

Avraham Avinu's 175 years on this world were filled with "life." Yaakov implied that while he spent 130 years on this world, he could not say that all of these years were filled with "life."

How did Yaakov define life?

Apparently, he lived differently than we do. To him, living meant living with Ruach HaKodesh, Divine Inspiration, and with **השראת השכינה**, the Divine Presence, hovering over him.

There were years during which he was deprived of Ruach HaKodesh, due to the sadness that enveloped him. Being alienated from Hashem, despite good physical health, does not define life. Life without Hashem is just not living. True life means utilizing our given

time on this world to living it to the fullest spiritually. A material, physical good time does not mean that one has "lived." He has existed.

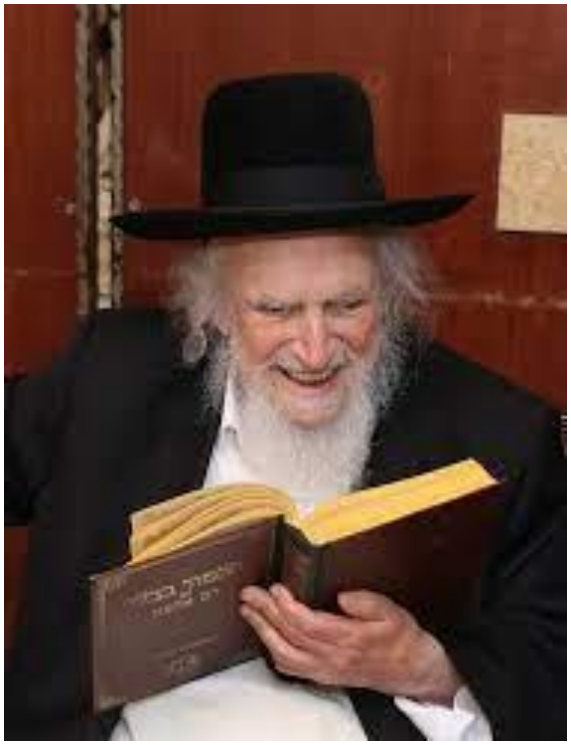
The story is told of a man who visited a certain town and was shown its cemetery. As he walked from grave to grave reading the tombstones, he was shocked to see that everyone in the town had died at a young age. On one tombstone, he read that the deceased had been a mere twelve years old when he passed. Next to him was someone who barely lived ten years, and soon the man was baffled because he had met a number of people and most of them were in their twilight years. Had there been a major epidemic of which he was unaware?

When he asked his guide to explain this anomaly, the man replied that, in this town, age was calculated on a different scale. The duration of a person's life was not measured by how many years the man had actually "breathed," but by how many days of his life were used productively.

Many of the people buried in the cemetery had lived well into their senior years, eighty, ninety – even one hundred years old, but they had not made the most of their lives. Much of their time was wasted on frivolity and foolishness, futility after futility, sitting around doing little to nothing, talking for no purpose, living lives devoid of spirituality, value and meaning. They were recipients of G-d's greatest gift – life – and they had wasted it.

It goes without saying that, for a Torah Jew, the definition of life is a life of Torah. Each and every day of our lives must be spent productively. Thus, Torah study must be the primary focus of our existence. It is our life-force.

Our goal must be Torah learning per se, not necessarily its mastery and accumulation of knowledge, but just simple learning and more learning for the sake of learning.



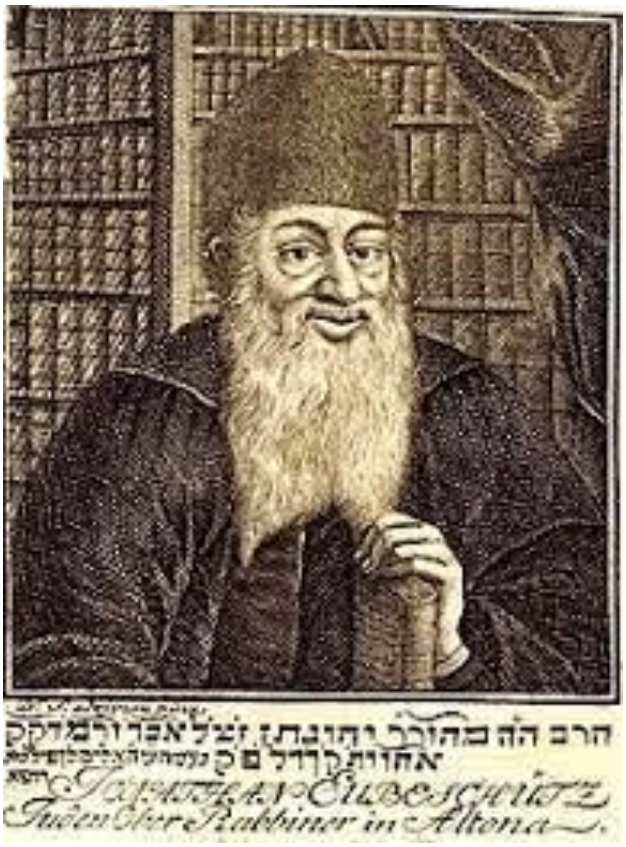
A poignant analogy of the meaning of Torah study as our life force may be gleamed from the hesped, eulogy, given by **Horav Shmuel Auerbach, zl**, for his saintly father, **Horav Shlomo Zalmen, zl**:

"When the doctors told us that blood was spurting from my father's lungs," Rav Shmuel said, "I reflected, this is the blood of Torah, the blood of ahavas, love, of Torah. "When one learns Torah in his youth, its words become ingrained in his blood. This is especially true when one has no food, for then the Torah becomes his food.

In my father's home, they had no food, and, instead, he consumed divrei Torah, subsisting on it. These divrei Torah became the components of his blood during his childhood." This is the meaning of a "lived" life.

וְלֹא־יָכֹל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק לְכֹל הַנִּצָּבִים עָלָיו וַיִּקְרָא הוֹצִיאוּ כָל־אִישׁ מֵעָלָי וְלֹא־עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ בְּהִתְוַדַּע יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו *'Now Yosef could not restrain himself in the presence of all who stood before him, so he called out, "Remove everyone from before me!"'* (45:1)

Yosef was taking an enormous chance with his life. He was one person – not characteristically physically strong. Standing opposite him were his ten brothers, each of whose individual strength was without peer. Indeed, if any one of them would have lifted a finger against Yosef – he would have been smitten. All ten together could easily have taken down Egypt. Yet, Yosef sought no protection, asking that no one remain in the room with him at this moment of truth, the moment in which he would reveal himself to his brothers.



In his **Tiferes Yehonasan, Horav Yehonasan Eibeshutz, zl**, takes the question further. The brothers sought to do away with Yosef because they saw that Yaravam ben Nevat would descend from him. Now, they certainly had reason to buttress their earlier fears. Yosef was the viceroy of Egypt (from what little they saw), and he was married to Osnas, the daughter of a pagan priest. Bedecked in the garb of Egyptian royalty, with an Egyptian name and Egyptian wife, they had every reason to believe that Yosef would produce Yaravam. Why did he take the chance of being alone with them?

He did not want to embarrass his brothers in front of the Egyptians. Even in the decadent society that was the mainstay of Egyptian culture, it was considered very wrong to sell a brother into captivity – and certainly to want to kill him!

To reveal the truth to the Egyptians would be most damaging and humiliating to Yosef's brothers. Thus, he took his chances. If they killed him – he was prepared to die, rather than publicly shame his brothers.

It is difficult to know what goes through a person's mind when he is overwhelmed with debt, with no way out. People will do just about anything, regardless of its effect on other innocent people, just to ward off the debtors who are breathing down their necks.

The saintly **Horav Aryeh Levin, zl**, was once called to court concerning a loan upon which he had signed as a guarantor. The Tzaddik of Yerushalayim (as he was reverently called) did not have an extra penny to his name. It was inconceivable for him to be asked

to sign on a loan which he certainly could not pay back. Yet, the court had before it a contract which indicated that he had affixed his signature in support of the loan. Now, if the borrower did not have the funds for repayment, Rav Aryeh must pay.



Rav Aryeh entered the courtroom to find the crooked borrower hiding himself in a corner, ashamed to confront Rav Aryeh. The judge asked Rav Aryeh, "Is this your signature?"

The signature was clearly a forgery, but Rav Aryeh would never embarrass the borrower in court. He instead replied, "Yes, it is mine."

As the result of his "signature," Rav Aryeh was ordered to pay back the loan which he had "guaranteed." There was one problem – Rav Aryeh had no money. He made a payment plan in which, over a number of years, every month 28 lira was paid to the lender, all because Rav Aryeh refused to embarrass a man who had forged his signature.

Great story – but does one have to refrain from embarrassing a thief?

By forging Rav Aryeh's signature, the borrower had committed an act of larceny. Are we adjured to be sensitive to his feelings? Apparently, the answer is yes.

"Hashem doesn't give to those who worry, only to those who ask." ~ R' Elimelech Biderman.

וּלְאָבִיו שָׁלַח זֹאת עֲשָׂרָה חֲמֹרִים נֹשְׂאִים מִטּוּב מִצְרָיִם וְעֶשֶׂר אֲתֹנֹת נֹשְׂאֹת בָּר וָלֶחֶם וּמָזוֹן לְאָבִיו לַדָּרֶךְ '***And to his father, he sent the following: ten he donkeys laden with the best of Egypt***.' (45:23)



We often neglect to acknowledge that we are pawns in a cosmic chess game, all of us part of a Divine plan. Each and every one of us has his/her designated place as the various moves are made, until the ultimate move, when the advent of Moshiach Tzidkeinu takes place.

Commentators express this idea time and again as they address the story of Yosef HaTzaddik: his alienation from his brothers; his sale as a slave, which led him to Egypt; his descent to Egypt as the precursor for his family's departure from Eretz Yisrael in order to be reunited with him in Egypt; our forced bondage which lasted 210 years, until the experience of our redemption, which led to our receiving the Torah and returning to Eretz Yisrael forty years later. - History in a nutshell.

All history is actually the ability to observe Hashem's Divine Hand in the manipulation of events – and our open-minded ability to learn from these experiences.

Having said this, we cite the **Maharal m'Prague** (Gevuras Hashem 10), who offers a powerful insight into Yosef's gift which he sent his father, Yaakov Avinu. The Torah states: **וּלְאָבִיו שָׁלַח זֹאת עֲשָׂרָה חֲמֹרִים נֹשְׂאִים מִטּוּב מִצְרָיִם** "***And to his father he sent the following: ten he-donkeys laden with the best of Egypt***." (45:23). Yosef

expected Yaakov to descend to Egypt. Why was he sending him such gifts? Why did he specifically send ten donkeys?

Maharal offers a powerful insight. Everything that Yosef did had a deeper meaning, an allusion from which Yaakov would derive the true meaning.

While donkeys are animals of burden who are able to work very hard, they do not know what they are doing. (It is not as if other creatures are powerful intellectuals; donkeys seem to be characteristically devoted more to laboring than to thinking.) Their masters load them with merchandise, but they are unaware of what they are carrying, or why. The donkey is the proverbial animal that is led around, follows orders, "asks no questions," carrying out its mission with total equanimity.

Yosef was indicating to his father that he should harbor no animus towards his ten sons for what had happened to him– both his ill treatment and eventual sale, for they knew not what they were doing when they sold him. This was all part of Hashem's plan to bring Yaakov and his family down to Egypt. Yosef's descent into the spiritual and moral wasteland of Egypt was the beginning of the process. When the brothers sold Yosef, they were not aware of what they were doing.

The Maharal writes that Yosef was intimating to his father, "Do not punish them. They were unaware what they were doing. It was a Heavenly decree." His brothers were no different than a loaded donkey that does not know why it is carrying a load.

If Yosef was a great tzaddik who could see through the veil of ambiguity surrounding his life experiences, then certainly Yaakov, b'chir ha'Avos, chosen one of the Patriarchs, was availed this perspective. Why was it necessary for Yaakov to be "reminded" by Yosef that everything that happens is part of a Heavenly decree?

Perhaps Yosef's message was: "I know why you are not rebuking my brothers. I know that you are not ignoring my painful experience. I understand that you care about me and my pain, but you need to see what happened as a Heavenly decree."

There are times when children expect and even demand a reaction from parents to support their claims. When they receive no such reaction, they are hurt, feeling that their parents do not care enough about them. Unfortunately, they are so involved in their own little worlds that they are unable to see the larger picture – as the parents see it. This engenders anger and strains relationships.

Yosef intimated to Yaakov that he knew; he understood; there were no taanos, complaints. He accepted his father's decision, because, in fact, he agreed with it.

וְאֶת־יְהוּדָה שָׁלַח לְפָנָיו אֶל־יוֹסֵף לְהוֹרֹת לְפָנָיו גֹּשְׁנָה וַיָּבֹאוּ אַרְצָה גֹּשֶׁן ***'He sent Yehuda ahead of him to Yosef, to prepare ahead of him in Goshen.'*** 46:28



Rashi teaches that Yaakov Avinu dispatched Yehudah on a mission to Egypt for more than merely making arrangements for the family's arrival. The Midrash interprets לְהוֹרֹת as "to teach." This implies that Yaakov sent Yehudah to establish the first yeshivah in Egypt.

The "Yeshivah Gedolah of Goshen" set a precedent for all time. Torah education must be a community's priority number one. A city without a makom Torah, place where Torah is studied, lacks the most critical component of its Jewishness. A Jewish community without a makom Torah is not Jewish!

Horav Moshe Yaakov Ribicov, zl, popularly known as the Sandler/Shoemaker, derives another lesson from Yaakov. Every activity, endeavor, which a person takes on, must be focused on Torah. "What will this endeavor do for Torah?" should be one's primary question. If the Torah component is not integral to the endeavor, the entire endeavor is lacking.

This may be compared to one who is building a house. Before beginning the project, he should imagine where he will place his study/room for Torah study, prayer, solitude for spiritual seclusion. This room, which will be used primarily for spiritual purposes, should take precedence in his house. Everything else should fit in around his study.

The place for development in Torah has primary significance. When one prioritizes the Torah in his every daily endeavor, he elevates his life from the mundane to the spiritual. This is the meaning of focused Jewish living.



וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן־אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו **'Then he fell upon his brother Binyamin's neck and wept; and Binyamin wept upon his neck**.' (45:14)

The casual reader of Biblical text, who refuses to look beyond the simple translation and delve into the profundities of the Torah's interpretation, sees an emotional meeting between two brothers who had been separated for twenty-two years. - This might be the case if this were a secular novel, and the two heroes were simple people.

When an encounter is recorded in the Torah for posterity and the players are Yosef and Binyamin, two members of Shivtei Kah, one must be obtuse to view this meeting superficially.

Chazal illuminate the scenario when they tell us that this was no simple emotional crying over a long separation; rather, Yosef saw the destruction of the Batei Mikdash which were built in Binyamin's

territorial home in Eretz Yisrael. Binyamin wept over the Mishkan in Shiloh which was situated in Yosef's portion of Eretz Yisrael.

One never ceases to be amazed at the denseness manifest by secular commentators, who absolutely eschew the truth. Having said this, let us now understand why Yosef wept over Binyamin's destruction, and Binyamin wept for Yosef's troubles. One would expect each one to mourn his own personal adversity.

Horav Aharon, zl, m'Belz, and the Imrei Emes, zl, asked this question shortly after these venerable Admorim arrived in Eretz Yisrael following the cataclysmic Holocaust tragedy which claimed the lives of tens of thousands of their chassidim, along with millions of their Jewish brethren.

In a meeting with the remnants of their chassidus, they presented this question. In order to better understand and appreciate their response, I take the liberty of quoting a story which was related by Rav Yitzchak Hershkowitz, Shlita, in Nitzotzos. Chabad Lubavitch had a chain of clandestine yeshivos that operated under the radar of the Soviet authorities.

The KGB were on the prowl, looking for any infraction on the part of the Jewish refuseniks. To be caught meant a quick trip to Siberia or another one of Russia's wastelands, exposed to the elements and subject to daily deprivation and beatings. - There is no doubt that those who came to learn, as well as those who did the teaching, were individuals of a most elevated spiritual status.

Horav Yechezkel Fagin, zl, was one of these unique mentors whose devotion to spreading Torah knew no bounds. One time, he convened a group of students whom he felt were not devoting enough energy to davening, Torah study and middos, character trait, development. Even the finest student requires a little nudge every once in a while. He spoke with extreme emotion, and his words were well received. The young men began to weep, expressing their remorse concerning their failure to be more devoted to their spiritual growth.

Suddenly, one of the students whose turn it was to stand guard as a lookout, to warn the group of KGB police in the area, came running in to notify them that it appeared that the KGB were making a sweep of the area. The danger was very real. If they were caught – they would be in serious trouble. No excuse would suffice. To leave meant being subjected to intense questioning concerning why they were there in the first place.

Immediately, those gathered around the table came up with suggestions about how to avert a disaster. One suggested running for their lives. Another suggested shutting the light, thus giving the impression that the house was empty. Another said that they should put newspapers and secular reading material on the table, so that the KGB would not suspect any wrongdoing on their part.

With the blessing of the Almighty, the KGB halted their search before they came to their house. They were now able to return to the table to continue their learning.

Prior to continuing his lecture, Rav Fagin said, "I just saw something strange. Explain to me what is your greater fear: physical adversity or spiritual hardship?"

Before they could respond, he continued, "How is it that when I spoke to you concerning your lack of spiritual ascendancy, you responded with remorse; yet, when you feared for your lives, you came up with various ideas on how to solve the problem? When your lives were in danger – not a single one of you cried! You immediately went to work seeking solutions."

One of the students replied, "Did you think that when the KGB comes knocking at our door, we would sit around with folded hands and cry? What would that help? When they come, one either hides or runs away. Crying helplessly is of no consequence!"

"Aha," said the Rav. "Now, I understand. There is no place for tears when you must move quickly and decisively. You know that crying will

be of little consequence. It is a time for action. When it comes to issues of spirituality, suddenly you have time, you cry, feel bad, and slowly seek a solution to your spiritual morass. Why rush?"

The Rav explained to them that weeping is an excuse, a delay tactic to ward off a confrontation with reality. Crying solves no problem. It relieves one's emotions as it delays his reaction to the issue at hand. One who is serious about his desire to change and grow spiritually has no time for tears. He acts decisively and definitively – immediately.

This is the response the holy tzaddikim gave to their question concerning Yosef and Binyamin weeping over the other one's troubles. - "When it comes to someone else's adversity; one cries. When the troubles are his own; when they are present – one acts. There is no time for weeping. We must immediately begin to rebuild. This is our tzarah, trouble."



וַיִּסַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וַיָּבֹא בְּאֵרָה שָׁבַע *'So Yaakov set out with all that he had and he came to BeerSheva.'* (46:1)

The Midrash Rabah asks where Yaakov Avinu went. Chazal respond, **וַיִּסַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ וַיָּבֹא בְּאֵרָה שָׁבַע , לְהֵיכָן הָלַךְ, אָמַר רַב נַחְמָן שֶׁהָלַךְ לָקוֹץ אֲרָזִים שֶׁנָּטַע אַבְרָהָם זְקֵנוֹ בִּבְאֵר שָׁבַע - לקוץ ארזים** -"*To cut down the cedar trees which his grandfather, Avraham Avinu, planted in Beer Sheva.*"

I have referred to this Midrash a number of times, but upon perusing it again, I am struck with two questions. Yaakov is on his way to greet his long-lost son, Yosef, for whom he had mourned for twenty-two years.

Can one ever begin to imagine the excitement that coursed through the Patriarch at this time? His son that he had given up for dead was not only alive but had achieved the epitome of monarchy in the most depraved country in the world!

Imagine, a Jew, reviled and castigated by the world, accomplishes the impossible – and is revered, admired, and even loved! Yaakov must have been bursting with joy, effusive in his excitement. One would expect him to take the quickest route and use the speediest means of travel. Why did he make a stop in Beer Sheva to cut down cedar trees?

If his goal was to transport these trees to Egypt, he could have sent his sons. Alternatively, once he had reached Egypt, had seen Yosef, and had spent some quality time with him, he could have taken a short trip to Beer Sheva to retrieve the trees. - Making Beer Sheva part of his itinerary raised eyebrows.

Apparently, an important lesson can be derived from here. Second, if Yaakov felt it that important for him to go to Beer Sheva – fine – but why did he include his entire entourage in his trip? Why did his entire family have to accompany him on his tree-cutting expedition?

Apparently, this was no simple event. It was a lesson for generations, to be passed on to his progeny, and they to theirs.

Yaakov went to retrieve the cedars planted by Avraham. These cedars would one day be the Kerashim, Beams, of the Mishkan. The cedars represented the most vital component in Klal Yisrael's fabric – the Torah. Without the foundation of the Torah, Yaakov could not have gone down to Egypt. Yes, he missed his son, but love for a child must be predicated upon the foundation set forth by the Torah. Children must know that their parents love them, but that they love Hashem even more. Children must know and appreciate the value of Torah.

In order for children to appreciate Torah's value, they must observe this feeling emanating from their parents. Yaakov's children saw him as a loving father whose transcendental values of eternity superseded even his love of them. Furthermore, the children saw that his values were a legacy from the past. It was his grandfather who had planted the cedars which Yaakov would now transplant on

Egyptian soil – for his future descendants to take with them into the wilderness.

When they built the Mishkan, it was raised upon the foundation which Avraham and Yaakov had established. This was the lesson that Yaakov wanted to impart to his family. Unless they stood by and watched, it would have had very little meaning.

There is nothing like firsthand perception, actively seeing it. I recently had occasion to see a young student attending shul on Shabbos, away from home. He was alone in shul with some friends. He never left his seat, davening the entire time, not even conversing with his friends, who were not maintaining perfect decorum.

I wondered what secret ingredient his parents possessed: what had they put into his cereal; what "threats" had they imposed on him?

Upon sharing my feeling with the boy's mother, she explained that her son had not been allowed to go to shul on Shabbos until he had been able and prepared to sit out the entire session next to his father and daven. The boy had been taught values when he saw his father daven.

When children, regrettably, see their father sleeping late and arriving at the end of Shacharis for the Torah reading, or just in time to join in the festivities at the kiddush club, he receives an entirely different lesson.

Our children remember what we show them. When they see us talking in shul – they will talk. When they see us davening – they will daven. We are the first line of defence for our children's positive growth. Unfortunately, we can also be the greatest offenders.

When you replace "Why is this happening to me" with "What is this trying to teach me?" – Everything shifts.

וַיְבָרֶךְ יַעֲקֹב אֶת־פַּרְעֹה *'And Yaakov blessed Pharaoh.'* (47:7)

The blessing that Yaakov Avinu gave to Pharaoh had an enormous effect on Egypt's agricultural bounty. Indeed, Rashi explains that, following Yaakov's blessing, the Nile River rose up to "greet" Pharaoh and then irrigated the land.



The Satmar Rav, zl, related that, in the twilight of the life of his grandfather, **the Yismach Moshe**, the heads of the community approached him with a complaint. Apparently, the sage davened privately in a room off the main bais medrash. This bothered them. They added a few more foolish critiques, which they felt granted them permission to refuse him his meager salary and to search for a replacement.

Clearly, people have not changed in the last hundred years. Excuses for replacing spiritual leadership are becoming more transparent, but no one seems to care.

The Yismach Moshe replied to them, "I would like you to take a count of how many fires our community has experienced in the last eighteen years (that he had been Rav). Also, please confirm for me how many women have miscarried a pregnancy. You will discover that, during my tenure as Rav of this community, there has neither been a fire, nor has a woman miscarried. Thus, I feel you owe me a salary for protecting the welfare of the city."

People take their spiritual leadership for granted. To merit having the gadol hador, preeminent Torah leader of the generation, as Rav, yet quibble about his practice at davening alone, bespeaks severe obtuseness of the mind. Yet, it is quite common, often fueled by an

overactive ego, the result of wealth or other form of self-aggrandizement.

A similar idea may be gleaned from the pasuk which relates the Egyptians' request for seeds, so that they could plant and sustain themselves of the harvest, וְתֶן־זֶ֣רַע וְנִֽחְיֶ֗ה וְלֹ֤א נָמֻת, "***And provide seed so that we may live and not die***" (Ibid 47:19).

Rashi explains that, according to Yosef's timetable, Egypt was destined for two more years of hunger, so that seeds would not grow. Once Yaakov Avinu appeared in Egypt, however, his merit brought an end to the anticipated hunger.

The story is told that when the **Shaagas Arye, Horav Arye Leib Gunzberg, zl**, arrived in Metz to accept the position of Rav, the community was effusive with praise and excited over its good fortune. As one of the generation's preeminent gaonim, brilliant Torah scholars, he overwhelmed the city's scholars with his encyclopedic knowledge of Torah and ingenious penetrating analytical skills. There was, regrettably, one sad note: He had already reached an advanced age (by the standards of the day). He was seventy years old.

The Shaagas Arye sensed the change in mood when they gazed at his aged body and his long, flowing white beard. The people seemed nervous, almost tense and upset.

In an attempt to alleviate their fears, he shared with them the following dvar Torah: "The Torah teaches us that when Yaakov met Pharaoh, the king asked the Patriarch, 'How old are you?' The Patriarch replied that he was one hundred thirty years. He then added, 'Few and bad have been the days of my life, and they have not reached the lifespans of my forefathers' (ibid 47:9).

Why was it necessary for Yaakov to add this last statement, which comes across like an apology for appearing to be so old? Furthermore, why was Pharaoh concerned with Yaakov's age? Since

when do we greet someone and immediately question him concerning his age?

"Rashi alludes to the explanation when he writes that, upon Yaakov's arrival, Egypt prospered like it never had before. The hunger that had been devastating the country ended. The Nile River was irrigating the land like never before. Pharaoh feared that it was all going to come to a halt – very soon.

When he took one look at Yaakov, he became nervous. The Patriarch looked like an old man. This is why Yaakov told him that he had experienced an extremely difficult life. He had aged prematurely, and, in fact, he was much younger than his forefathers had been when they died. Pharaoh could rest assured. Yaakov was not 'leaving' in the near future.

"Likewise, my dear friends, I will have you know that I have had a very difficult life, which has taken its toll on my physical appearance. My body has sustained much travail. I assure you, however, that I will be Rav of Metz for at least twenty more years. You may rest assured."

We do not recognize the contributions of our Torah leaders to our physical and material existence. We think that we benefit from them only in the spiritual dimension, but what do they have to do with our material lives?

Their mere presence provides merit which would otherwise be unavailable to us. This is something which we should never take for granted.

'Hashem does everything. One does not bang his fingers below until it was decreed from Above.' ~ Talmud Chulin 7.

וְלֹא־יָכֹל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק לְכֹל הַנִּצָּבִים עָלָיו ***'Now Yosef could not restrain himself in the presence of all who stood before him.'*** (45:1)

Rashi explains that Yosef could not allow the Egyptians to be present when he was putting his brothers to shame. The Midrash goes further, claiming that Yosef had placed himself in great danger, for if his brothers had decided to kill him, no one would have known one way or the other. He said, "Better I should be killed than I should humiliate my brothers in front of the Egyptians."

Embarrassing someone is an egregious sin for which one loses his portion in Olam Habba, the World to Come. **Ish L'reieihu** quotes **Horav Yosef Chaim Blau, Shlita**, Rav of Ashkelon, who adds another rationale to explain Yosef's willingness to sacrifice his life rather than shame his brothers in public.

Yosef sought to atone for his earlier sins as a youth, when he had tattled on his brothers. The message he was conveying to his father was that his brothers were up to no good. This caused them great embarrassment. Thus, he wanted to repair his earlier indiscretion by preventing his brothers' shame.



The following story is told concerning **Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl**: He was attending a conference of gedolei Yisrael, the most prominent rabbinic leaders of the time.

During the course of the conference an issue arose which required a special subcommittee, to be comprised of a select group of whom we might call the "executive leadership."

As is often the case, there is the general membership and, exclusive of them, are the executives, the movers and shakers, who are the

individuals that establish policy and make the decisions on which everybody else "votes."

The conference chairman announced that the next meeting was to be attended by a select group of rabbis, to whom an invitation had been extended and whose attendance was crucial to the meeting. The chairman was acutely aware that if the meeting were to be opened up to the entire assembly nothing would be accomplished. It was not as if the other rabbinic leaders were less distinguished, it was just impractical to invite everyone – only a select few. The problem was: no one was leaving the room.

The chairman once again announced that the meeting was only for those who had received prior invitations. Again, no one budged.

The chairman became indignant and announced that, if necessary, he would have those who did not have invitations physically removed from the room. Still, no one moved from their seats.

Finally, the entire room stood in shock as Rav Elchanan rose from his seat and shuffled out of the room. When he did this, he was soon followed by a number of leaders who "also" did not have invitations. What happened?

Rav Elchanan realized that it was embarrassing for some of the rabbinic leaders to get up and concede that they had not been included among the movers and shakers. When they saw Rav Elchanan Wasserman, one of the undisputed gedolei hador, leaving the room they also left. They did not know, however, that the venerable gaon returned by a back door. He was not going to allow anyone to feel ashamed, so he also walked out. Once he left, it was no longer embarrassing to leave.

Greatness is defined not by the respect one receives, but by the respect one gives.

וַיֶּאְסֹר יוֹסֵף֙ מֶרְכַּבְתּ֔וֹ וַיַּ֣עַל לִקְרַ֔את יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל אָבִ֑יו גֹּ֚שְׁנָה וַיֵּרָ֣א אֵלָ֔יו וַיִּפֹּ֖ל עַל־צַוְּארָ֑יו וַיֵּ֥בְךְּ עַל־צַוָּארָ֖יו עֽוֹד *'Yosef hitched his chariot and went up to meet his father… He appeared before him, fell on his neck, and he wept on his neck.'* (46:29)



Yosef made a point to harness the horses personally in preparation for his long-anticipated meeting with his father. It would be no ordinary meeting. It was Yosef and Yaakov Avinu, two individuals whose relationship with one another was unusual, in the sense that Yosef was a spiritual replica of his father.

Separated for over two decades, one can only begin to imagine the pent-up emotion that was welling up within each one – father and son. Yet, we see a number of anomalies concerning this meeting.

Yosef hitched the chariot himself, probably out of excitement and growing anticipation. "Yosef came within view of his father." This is obvious; why state it? Clearly, if his father fell on his neck, he came into his father's view.

This question is addressed by a classic answer of **Horav Leib Chasman, zl**: Yosef had his own personal reason for seeing his father. Twenty-two years is a long time. He had left as a teenager and was now presenting himself as an adult, a world leader. How his heart must have pounded as he came closer and closer to that moment.

A righteous person such as Yosef, however, does not think only of himself. What about his aged father's feelings? As much as a son yearns to see his father, it is only a minute emotion compared to the

father's feeling toward his son. Yosef empathized with his father's feelings.



Yosef had two feelings coursing through him that day. On the one hand was his personal longing for his father; on the other hand, he recognized his father's yearning to see his long-lost son.

How does one process these two emotions? Which one dominated Yosef's heart?

The Torah gives us the answer with the words, **וַיֶּאְסֹר יוֹסֵף מֶרְכַּבְתּוֹ** "***Yosef hitched his chariot***." What was his rush? Why did he not wait for one of his servants to do it for him? Rashi explains, "So as to stir himself to honor his father."

It was all about his father. Everything that he did – in thought and deed – was directed towards his father. His Kibbud av consumed him, so that nothing else mattered – not even his own feelings.

With great effort, Yosef suppressed his emotions and directed all of himself, every aspect of his being, to focus totally on the mitzvah of Kibbud av. This is underscored by the Torah when it says, **וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו** "***He appeared before him***." It was all about him: Yaakov. It was as if "Yosef" played no role in the historic meeting, for all of his thoughts were focused on his father.

Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita, applies the Mashgiach's explanation to elucidate why Yaakov chose that moment to recite the Shema. In Meseches Kallah Rabbasi 3, Chazal teach us the magnitude of the mitzvah of deferring one's personal wishes to perform the will of Hashem.

They derive this from Yaakov, who refused to kiss Yosef, because the Patriarch was unsure if, during Yosef's exile in the morally bankrupt Egypt, he might have fallen under the allure of a pagan woman.

Can one begin to imagine Yaakov's devotion to Hashem? He was a loving father who was about to meet his son for whom he had mourned for twenty-two years. Surely, he was filled with longing, anticipation, incredible pride at his son's success – and yet, despite all of this, the Patriarch did not for one moment disregard the minutae of halachah and the demands of kedushah, holiness. - He refused to kiss his son, because, maybe, on the outside chance, his son's spiritual character had been tainted during his long exile. That day, the spirit of prophecy – which had left Yaakov when he commenced his mourning for Yosef – had returned. What more did Yaakov need? What greater proof of Yosef's fidelity to maintaining his spiritual integrity did Yaakov require before he kissed Yosef?

Until he was absolutely certain that Yosef was still "with the program," Yaakov would not indulge his deepest fatherly emotions. He would not yet kiss his son.

How did he achieve such an unprecedented level of devotion?

Rav Bergman explains that this is Yaakov Avinu. He was an individual who accepted the the yoke of Heaven Above to the fullest extent, who lived by the axiom, **ואהבת את ה' אלוקיך** , "***You shall love Hashem, Your G-d***," **בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאודך**, "***With all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might***."

To Yaakov, these were not mere words to be repeated by rote. There was no lip-service in his service to Hashem. It was tangible; it was real. He carried these words engraved on his heart and imbedded within his soul.

At the moment that he served Hashem, every fibre of his being was engaged. There was no compromise. At that moment, every human

emotion paled in comparison. Even the joy of reunion, following twenty-two years of inconsolable mourning, was nothing compared to the minutest doubt concerning spiritual integrity. - This was Yaakov Avinu's Shema.

Yosef also "said" Shema. After all, if Yaakov was reciting Shema, should Yosef not also have been reciting it?

Rav Bergman explains that, indeed, Yosef was expressing the Shema differently. What better way could there be for him to proclaim his acceptance of the yoke of Heaven than by doing exactly what he was doing – in the manner that he executed his Kibbud av?

Harnessing the chariot with his own two hands, racing off to Goshen as fast as he could go, with the single-mindedness of subduing his own emotions and thinking of nothing else other than honoring his father – this was Yosef's Shema! Is this not a compelling expression of acceptance of Heaven's yoke?

How did Yosef conclude his Shema? He kissed his father. This was surely his father's greatest conceivable pleasure. They both "said" Shema that day – just with different expression.



וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי '***And Yosef said to his brothers, "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?***'" (45:3)

Yosef was revealing his true identity to his brothers. The first question that he asked after he identified himself was, " **הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי?**", "***Is my father still alive?***"

One wonders at the timing of this question. During the time that Yosef's brothers appeared before him, they mentioned their elderly father several times. Why did Yosef suddenly ask a question whose answer was obvious?

Each in his own way, the commentators suggest an interpretation of Yosef's question. In his popular "Maggid" series, **Rabbi Paysach**

Krohn relates a poignant story that offers a new meaning to the question, "Is my father still alive?"

The story is told about a little boy by the name of Matisyahu, otherwise known as Motti. He was a sad, withdrawn child, the product of a broken marriage. He heard nothing from his father. His mother had remarried quickly to a man who had limited time or patience for him. It was no wonder that the child was depressed and reclusive, maintaining few friendships. It is difficult to be friendly to a boy who is carrying the world's problems on his little shoulders.

He attended a yeshivah only because his grandmother wanted him to have a religious education. He had a loving and caring rebbe who did everything to make Matisyahu smile. His rebbe would try to draw him into the classroom dialogue, but to no avail. Matisyahu sat in the rear of the classroom in a world of his own.

Each week, the rebbe discussed the parsha narrative in a manner that included his students in the story. He would ask questions which elicited surprising responses from his young charges.

On the week of Parashas Vayigash, the rebbe was relating how Yosef and Yehudah disagreed concerning whether Binyamin should remain in Egypt. In the Torah narrative, Yehudah was beginning to lose patience with Yosef. He insisted that their aged father needed his son at home. He could not survive the loss of yet another son. He described how the Torah relates that Yosef could no longer contain himself; he could no longer continue to hide his identity from his brothers. At last he was prepared to reveal his true identity. "I am Yosef," he burst out "Is my father still alive?" he asked.

The rebbe turned to the class and asked, "Why did Yosef ask such a question? His brothers had just finished telling him that they must take Binyamin home in order to protect the health of their aged father. Yosef knew that his father was alive. Why did he ask an unnecessary question?"

The students pondered the question. The rebbe scanned the room for answers. Suddenly, a little hand appeared at the rear of the room. The rebbe was taken aback to see that Matisyahu, the boy who was always quiet, who never raised his hand, wanted to say something.

The rebbe, understandably shocked, looked at Matisyahu and asked, "Yes, Matisyahu, do you have an answer to the question?" "Yes. I think I do," he said. "I think I know what Yosef meant."

"Yosef was well aware that his father was alive," Matisyahu began. "Yosef did not ask, 'Is **your** father alive?' He asked, 'Is **my** father alive? Does he still think about me? Does he still care about me after all these years of separation? Does he still think of me as his son?' That's what Yosef meant when he asked, 'Is **my** father still alive?'"

Tears welled up in the rebbe's eyes as he realized what Matisyahu was implying. As a result of his life experiences this child understood what the other students were unable to comprehend.

Matisyahu was talking about Yosef, but he was actually referring to himself. He was describing the sad, frightened boy that sat alone in the back of the class. Matisyahu could well relate to the Yosef who was separated from his father at a young age.

While this may not necessarily be the true meaning of Yosef's question, its message should be clear and thought-provoking. - Children have feelings and sensitivities. Although they do not always readily express themselves, their eyes, their actions, or inaction tell the story. - A perceptive parent or teacher can look at a child and sense his hurt, feel his grief, and reach out to him with gentleness and compassion. Only in this way can the true nature of the child begin to shine. The frightening aspect of this situation is what does or does not happen to those children whom no one notices.

וַיִּסַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וַיָּבֹא בְּאֵרָה שָׁבַע "***So Yisrael set out with all he had, and he came to BeerSheva***." (46:1)



Yaakov Avinu was on his way to Egypt to finally be reunited with his long-lost son, Yosef. Why did he stop in Beer- Sheva? It should not normally have been a part of his itinerary.

The Midrash replies that Yaakov stopped to cut down cedar trees that had originally been planted by Avraham Avinu. Yaakov knew that one day Klal Yisrael would be liberated from Egypt, and they would build a Mishkan, Sanctuary, in the desert. These cedar trees would serve as the lumber for the Mishkan.

What is the significance of these cedar trees and why was it crucial that they be the ones that were planted by Avraham Avinu?

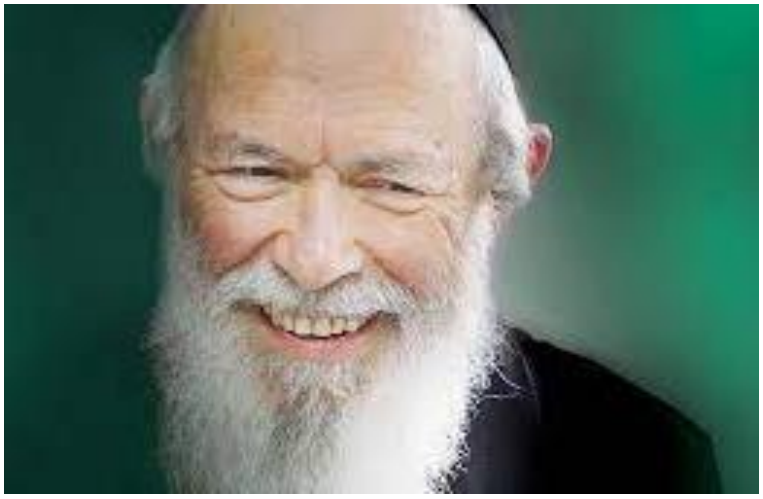
Horav Eliyahu Schlesinger, Shlita, explains that people by nature attribute their success to their own endeavor, "כֹּחִי וְעֹצֶם יָדִי," "***my power and my strong hand***."

"I did it without anyone's help" is the prevalent attitude among so many people. People forget that they are part of a historical continuum, that there were others before them who laid down the foundation for their success.

The Talmud in Taanis 23b relates how Choni Ha'magal once questioned an old man who was planting a carob tree, "Why are you planting a tree that will not produce fruit for another seventy years?" The man responded, "My ancestors planted carob trees for me to enjoy. I am doing the same for my descendants."

Yaakov was teaching his children an important lesson. History does not begin today. It is a continuation of events dating back in time. Just as the wood that they would use for the Mishkan was derived from trees planted generations earlier by their grandfather, Avraham, so, too, do their own roots date back to another time. They must build upon the foundation of the past, so that their future will be one of stability. - Indeed, what they have was prepared for them by the blood, sweat and tears of their predecessors. - This timeless lesson applies accordingly today as well.

כָּל־הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַבָּאָה לְיַעֲקֹב מִצְרַיְמָה "***All the souls coming with Yaakov to Egypt***." (46:26)



Rashi observes that although Yaakov had seventy family members, the Torah nonetheless refers to them as "נֶפֶשׁ," soul, in the singular. He attributes this to the fact that they all worshipped one G-d. Thus, they collectively became one unit.

Horav Yitzchok Zilberstein, Shlita, asks why in the brachah of "בּוֹרֵא נְפָשׁוֹת" do we begin with the plural, "נְפָשׁוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחֶסְרוֹנָן" -"***Who creates numerous living things with their deficiencies***," and close with "לְהַחֲיוֹת בָּהֶם נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חָי"- "***with which to maintain the life of every being***," in the singular?

He explains that Klal Yisrael remains one – united under Hashem Yisborach. Each Jew is joined with his brother and friend. The nations of the world are nefashos rabos, many souls – each one out for himself, his religious persuasion and expression of his individual faith. He is not part of a unit.

The blessing begins by acknowledging that Hashem created many souls, a reference to the nations of the world, to humanity. He created them for one purpose, "with which to maintain the life of every being," to sustain and minister to the needs of Klal Yisrael. - If they do not fulfill this mandate, their existence is unjustifiable.



It once occurred during the time of **Horav Yom Tov Lipa Teitelbaum, z.l.**, the author of the **Kedushas Yom Tov**, that a gentile anti-Semite was promoted to a very high government position. He prohibited the citizens of the surrounding communities which were under his rule from purchasing any goods from the Jews. Understandably, this incurred a tremendous financial loss for the Jewish community.

Once, this anti-Semite was riding his horse past Rav Teitelbuam's house. Some members of his community, who happened to be waiting to speak with him, commented that perhaps the Rav might go out and "convince" him to retract his edict, as the financial situation of the Jewish community was dismal.

The Rav went out and approached the gentile. His attempt at persuasion fell on deaf ears. The community was destined to starve.

Suddenly, the Rav raised his voice and screamed loudly, "***If you are not the cause for us to be sustained, then your own existence is unjustified***."

As soon as these words were uttered from Rav Teitelbaum's mouth, the anti-Semite fell off his horse and died. There was no justification for him to continue living.

וְהָיָה כִּרְאוֹתָו כִּי־אֵין הַנַּעַר וָמֵת "***It will happen when he sees the youth missing he will die***." (44:31)



An elderly chassid, a follower of **Horav Menachem Mendel, z.l., m'Kotzk**, came to the Kotzker complaining about his current financial straits. What disturbed him most was the fact that his grown children, whom he had supported with great mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice, manifested no gratitude. They were all quite capable of helping him in his moment of need. Yet, they completely ignored his financial circumstances. At a period in his life when he should have been retired and relaxing, he was compelled to work hard to support himself.

The Rebbe listened intently to the chassid. After he finished his diatribe, the Rebbe said, "You should not be shocked by your children's behavior. It is not something new. In fact, a similar situation reigned in the home of Yaakov Avinu. This can be inferred from Yehudah's dialogue with Yosef concerning the release of Binyamin.

Among his entreaties, Yehudah argued, 'It will happen when he sees the youth is missing, he will die.' Yehudah implored Yosef to take pity on Binyamin's aged father, who had suffered so much in his life. To sustain the loss of Binyamin would surely kill him. "

When we read this account, we are immediately confronted with a glaring question. While it is true that Yaakov would suffer greatly, what about Binyamin's ten sons, who would now be bereft of their father? Why does Yosef not have compassion on Binyamin's children,

who would probably suffer irreparable emotional and physical damage with the loss of their father?

"This teaches us," submitted the Kotzker with his head bowed down, "that parents feel their child's hurt – and sense their child's pain – much more intensely than children feel for their parents."

Horav Meir Yechiel z.l. m'Ostrovze gives the following rationale for this phenomenon. All the generations since Creation follow in a chain from the earliest generations to the present. The various attributes, personality and character traits are transmitted from father to son and on. In other words, everything comes to us from Adam HaRishon, who bequeathed it to his offspring.

This idea applies only to what has been transmitted from father to son. In regard to a son's compassion and sensitivity toward a parent, there is no precedent, because Adam HaRishon had no parents.

וְיוֹסֵף יָשִׁית יָדָו עַל־עֵינֶיךָ "***And Yosef shall put his hand on your eyes***." (46:4)



The Ibn Ezra infers from this pasuk that it is customary for the living to close the eyes of the dead.

Hashem was assuring Yaakov that Yosef would be there when he passed away. Yosef would arrange to take Yaakov out of Egypt to be buried in the Me'oras Ha'Machpeilah.

The custom is that the eldest son closes the eyes of his father, as the parent takes leave from this world.

The Yalkut Yehudah offers a poignant and meaningful foundation for this custom.

Closing one's eyes indicates peace of mind. When one sleeps, his eyes are closed. He is at peace with the world as he reposes in tranquillity. As a parent passes on, he is anxious about his children's future. Will life fare well for them? Will they retain their devotion to Torah, or will it wane with the passage of time?

By closing the father's eyes, the son communicates a message: Worry not, for I will continue to propagate what you have taught me. I will make sure that you will be able to rest peacefully.

Closing the eyes is the son's act of commitment to preserve and cherish his father's legacy, to maintain his devotion to an everlasting heritage. It is a unique form of saying good-bye which simultaneously represents the beginning of a new relationship between parent and child.



וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן־אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו "***And he (Yosef) fell on the neck of Binyamin his brother and cried, and Binyamin cried on his (Yosef's) neck***." (45:14)

Chazal note the word צַוְּארֵי- neck(s), is written in the plural. Did Binyamin have two necks?

They explain that when Yosef and Binyamin met, the Ruach Ha'kodesh, Divine Inspiration, rested on both of them. This enabled Yosef to see the future destruction of the two Batei Mikdash in Binyamin's portion. At the same time, Binyamin saw the destruction of the Mishkan in Shiloh, which was in Yosef's portion.

Chazal's basis for scrutinizing the pasuk seems questionable. The Torah also uses the plural for neck צַוָּארָיו in regard to Yosef. There was only one destruction in Yosef's portion. Why does the Torah use the plural in regard to Yosef?

We may suggest the following thought: Yosef and Binyamin did not simply mourn the destruction of these two edifices. They lamented the transgressions which caused these tragedies.

Although Chazal offer many reasons for the various destructions, they specify the prime catalysts for the destructions. The first Bais Ha'Mikdash was destroyed as a result of avodah zarah, idol worship. The second one was taken from us due to sinaas chinam among Jews.

The Mishkan Shiloh, however, was destroyed as a result of two specific transgressions, corruption and the denigration of the holy sacrifices. Consequently, Binyamim cried for the two aveiros which led to the downfall of Mishkan Shiloh.



וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרַיְמָה "***And these are the names of Yisrael's children who came to Egypt***." (46:8)

From the ensuing list of names, we see that all of Yaakov's children maintained their names. Only these original names are used whenever the children are mentioned in the Torah. - By recording these names, the Torah emphasizes the importance of keeping names of Jewish origin especially when facing dangers of assimilation, such as those which threatened Bnei Yisrael who entered the Egyptian exile.

Maintaining their Jewish names created for the Jewish people a moral and spiritual safeguard. It also served as a self- defence mechanism against the winds of assimilation. Indeed, one of the principle merits of Bnei Yisrael cited when they were redeemed from Egyptian bondage was that they did not change their names. This was their way of affirming their Jewish identity.

Horav Eli Munk, z.l., suggests that we consider another reason for enumerating each one of the tribes. In this instance, we see that all of the members of Yaakov's family lived together in perfect harmony. They were unified in the service of a single lofty ideal, and

they stood prepared to defend this belief against any incursion. Like the branches of a tree which are all nourished from one root, the seventy members of this Patriarchal family received their spiritual nourishment from one source. - This family served as the nucleus of Am Yisrael. Therefore, it is of great consequence to record the names of these family members for posterity.

Similarly, it is appropriate to accentuate this portrayal of an ancient Patriarchal family, resolute in faith, pious in action, and esteemed by Egyptian royalty.

Highlighting this distinguished family illustrates that the origins of Am Yisrael were neither from some recluse nomadic tribe, nor from a group of disoriented revolutionaries, nor from an august brotherhood of prophets, but rather from a family whose origins were untainted by any form of defilement.



"***And the sons of Binyamin were Bela, Bechar and Ashbel . . .***" וּבְנֵי בִנְיָמִן בֶּלַע וָבֶכֶר וְאַשְׁבֵּל גֵּרָא וְנַעֲמָן אֵחִי וָרֹאשׁ מֻפִּים וְחֻפִּים וָאָרְדּ (46:21)

Chazal cite the source for the name of each of Binyamin's sons. They explain that each name alludes in one way or another to Yosef, his only brother with whom he shares his mother, Rachel.

This is striking! Binyamin fathered ten sons. This was undoubtedly an amazing fountain of joy. Binyamin, however, did not lose himself in self-aggrandizement. Instead, he named every child, every source of joy, after his lost brother.

The Ponevezer Rav notes Binyamin's singular love and devotion to Yosef. Throughout all of these years, he never allowed his longing for Yosef to become obsequious. He felt every bit of pain that Yosef experienced. He sought to indelibly express this pain, so that he would never forget it.

This is the apex of sharing in another's pain! Not only are we required to help others in their time of need, but we are also

implored to impress upon ourselves their pain to the point that we never allow ourselves to forget it. Another Jew's pain is our pain. Likewise, another Jew's joy is our joy.

וַיָּקָם יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיִּשְׂאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם... וְכָל־זַרְעוֹ הֵבִיא אִתּוֹ מִצְרַיְמָה "***And Yaakov rose up from Beer Sheva, and the Bnei Yisrael carried Yaakov, their father… And all his children he brought with him to Egypt***." (46:5,7)



Horav E.M. Bloch z.t.l. makes note of the contrast between these two pesukim. Originally the pasuk states that Yaakov was carried by his sons, and it ends by remarking that all the children came along with Yaakov. This is enigmatic! Is Yaakov the leader, or is he being led?

Horav Bloch explains that indeed Yaakov was in charge, leading and guiding his flock, encouraging and preparing them for the long arduous journey through Egyptian exile. He was, however, old and frail, physically delicate from his many years of anguish. His condition demanded that he be carried. Nonetheless, Yaakov was their leader!

This should be a paradigm for the nature of the relationship between parents and children. In every situation, children should strive to seek their parents' guidance, regardless of their parent's age and state of health. In response, parents must aspire to be worthy of their position of leadership.

שָׂמַנִי אֱלֹקִים לְאָדוֹן לְכָל־מִצְרָיִם "***Hashem has made me a master over all of Egypt***." (45:9)



Yosef's statement regarding his influential position in Egypt hardly seems the proper news to relate to Yaakov. Would Yaakov be impressed and overjoyed with "nachas" that his son has become the Viceroy of Egypt?

We must therefore say that it is not the actual position which Yosef has assumed that is being emphasized, but rather it is Yosef's description of this position.

When one is elevated to a position, or receives a promotion, it is natural to say that it was either the result of the influence of an individual or a response to a specific action. Not so Yosef; he does not say that this position is due him because of a specific accomplishment, or as an award from a benefactor. Although there is an opportunity to mention these reasons, Yosef credits Hashem with his sudden transformation from lowly slave to Viceroy.

The expression שָׂמַנִי אֱלֹקִים -"***Hashem has placed me***" demonstrates to Yaakov, that Yosef has not deviated from his father's teachings. His faith in Hashem is as firm as when he first left home. This then is truly a great source of joy and happiness for Yaakov.

"The truth is that there is no essential difference between the natural and the miraculous. Everything that occurs is a miracle. The world has no other cause but the will of G-d." ~ R' Eliyahu Dessler zt"l.

ויסע ישראל...ויבא בארה שבע... ***So Yisrael set out…and he came to Beer Sheva***. (46:1)

The Midrash teaches us that Yaakov Avinu stopped in Beer Sheva by design. He went to chop down the cedar trees that his grandfather, Avraham Avinu, had planted years earlier. Fully aware that one day his descendants would build a Mishkan in the wilderness, he prepared the wood necessary for this holy endeavor.

We wonder if Yaakov's preparation of the wood was that important. Would it have been so bad if Klal Yisrael had needed to obtain the necessary materials for building the Mishkan when they were a little closer to the target date? Certainly, Avraham's cedars held great significance, but was it really necessary to preserve it for so long?

Horav Reuven Fine, zl, derives from here that in regard to ruchniyos, spirituality, one does not tarry. Delay, by even a moment, diminishes the impact, the inspiration and the value of the spiritual endeavor. Spirituality does not wait for us. Everything must be prepared, in waiting, for that auspicious moment.

This approach characterized the avodah, spiritual service, of the Patriarchs. They prepared; they set the tone; they made sure everything was in place. Today, this is the function of parents and teachers. We set the tone; we prepare the background, so that we can properly nurture spirituality into full blossom.

Every shul has an individual who prepares everything for the congregation. He sees to it that everything is cleaned up: the seforim are in their proper place; the tables are set; the chairs are pushed in, etc. When the congregants enter the shul, they walk into a room that is prepared for spiritual expression. This presents a more inspirational setting than walking into a room that is in disarray. - Life is about preparation. If we prepare properly, then we will one day enjoy the fruit of our labors.

לכו נרננה לד' – O' Come let us sing before Hashem.

The mitzvah concerning the observance of Shabbos as stated in the Torah, **זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ**; "***Remember the Shabbos day to keep it holy***," implies that cessation from labor on Shabbos proper does not fulfill the entire mitzvah; rather, the hallowing force of Shabbos must imbue the work week with sanctity.

Thus, we extend Shabbos a few moments to subtract a few moments from the work week that precedes and follows it. This is referred to as Tosfos Shabbos, adding on to Shabbos. In this way, our entire week is dedicated to Hashem, with Shabbos as the lodestar upon which we focus – all week – before and after Shabbos. Never should we forget the spirit of Shabbos and all that it implies.

While Maariv (**מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת**) officially ushers in the Shabbos, we pre-empt its entrance with six perakim, psalms from Sefer Tehillim. They begin with Lechu Neranenah and conclude with Barchu. Talmud Shabbos 119a relates that the sages would exchange their weekday clothing for festive garments in honor of the holy day when they were about to greet Shabbos.

Lecha dodi, "Let us all go together to greet the Shabbos Queen and receive it with festive ceremony." - The mekubalim in Tzfas would join together in greeting the Shabbos Queen.

Since this part of the davening is not actually part of the service, they would recite these mizmorim, psalms, from the Bimah, rather than the Amud.

"The righteous will always feel joy and never feel sad about what the Almighty has decreed upon them because they realize whatever He does is for their ultimate best." ~ Ibn Ezra.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

A Russian Jew once struck up a conversation with his seatmate on a bus in Israel, and in the course of the conversation, described himself as a Yom Kippur Jew.



His seatmate immediately thought that he meant that he went to shul only once a year on Yom Kippur. However, the Russian Jew explained to his new friend that he was referring to something else.

He was a soldier in the Russian army following WWII. In order to avoid serving on Yom Kippur, every year he would feign illness. Each Yom Kippur, he would show up at the army doctor and moan over his "toothache" and beg to have his tooth pulled. After his tooth was pulled, he was freed from his duties for the rest of the day.

The Russian Jew flashed a toothless smile to his seatmate, and said, "I was in the army for six years and I lost six teeth this way, but at least I never worked on Yom Kippur."

During the times of the Bais Hamikdash, one who experienced a miracle would bring a Korban Todah, a sacrifice of gratitude to Hashem. Nowadays, we say Mizmor L'Sodah in its place.

Why do we say Mizmor L'Sodah every day? Because not a day goes by that we don't experience miracles. ~ Olas Tamid.

It says in this week's Parasha... וְנַפְשׁוֹ קְשׁוּרָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ - "***His soul is bound up with his soul***." (44:30) - How did their souls become connected?

The word **קשורה** — "bound" — has the numerical value of 611, which is the same numerical value as the word "Torah" **תורה**. Yaakov taught Binyomin Torah and through their Torah study, their souls became connected. Torah is the language that unifies Jews of past, present and future generations.



A Story with Two Connections to the Parsha

Rav Yosef Lichter was a descendant of the *Rema* and was himself a Dayan in Europe before World War II. Rav Lichter and his three sons survived the war by disguising themselves as Polish peasants. They apparently were never in the Concentration Camps.

Yosef Lichter was meticulous in his observance of the practice of *Kiddush Levonah*. He used to quote the '*segulah*' that is mentioned in various sources that one will never die in the month in which he sanctifies the New Moon. He used to say that *Kiddush Levonah* is a 30-Day Insurance Policy.

When the Nazis were finally defeated and the Russians moved into Poland, the Russians imposed a curfew. It was prohibited to walk in the street after dusk. Rav Lichter did not want to violate his firm practice of reciting *Kiddush Levonah*, so he took his chances, went outside, and recited the prayer for sanctification of the new moon.

He was arrested by the NKVD Soviet Secret Police. They took this poor Jew down to a dimly lit basement in front of a Soviet judge.

They accused him of violating the curfew. The judge asked him in Russian, "How do you plead – guilty or not guilty?" Rabbi Lichter responded, "Not guilty" and then he began speaking in Yiddish. He figured "What do I have to lose? I'll tell him the truth!" He could have lost his life for this, but he felt that he had nothing to lose.

He told the judge, we have a religious custom to bless the new moon every month, the moon is only visible after dusk, and that is why I violated the curfew. Upon hearing this, the judge told the NKVD officers to leave the room. He then asked Rabbi Lichter – "Do you remember, long before the war, you were once walking home from *shul*, and there were a bunch of bullies beating up a little Jewish boy named Chaim? You stopped them and told them 'Leave the kid alone.'"

The Judge then looked at Yosele Lichter and said "I am Chaim!" He brought the soldiers back in and told them, "This person is a long time Communist. He is a Communist from before the war. He is a good person. He is for the masses. Leave him alone, take him back home, and make sure that he is not harmed."

This story has two connections to *Parshas Vayigash*. First, we see that when one is a nice person, it always comes back to his benefit. Second, this is yet another example of an "I am Yosef" incident. Just like when Yosef saw his brothers and announced to them, "I am Yosef" they were shocked, this is a somewhat similar story of "I am Chaim." "Since you stuck up for me in the past, now I am going to stick up for you now."

Yosef Lichter survived the war. He came to Borough Park. He had children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He was saved and lived into the 1960s because he learned the message of *eglah arufah* – that when someone cares about another person, one will eventually be repaid in ways that can save his or her own life! (**R' Frand**)



R' Elchanan Wasserman's Final Words

As he was being led to his death *al Kiddush Hashem*, the great *tzaddik*, **R' Elchanan Wasserman**, *zt"l*, addressed the crowd with several concluding words of *chizuk*. He said as follows:

There was a man seeking a livelihood, and like many did back in those days, he decided that he would become a farmer. His kind friend Shimon took him out to the field to show him how to manage a field. The first thing Shimon showed him was plowing. They went to the barn, got out the oxen, and attached them to the yoke.

"After they're secured," Shimon told him, "You walk them up and down the field and break up the dirt."

The new farmer looked at Shimon perplexed. "Is this how you grow things? It seems like you're only destroying the field."

Shimon replied, "Wait and see." The inexperienced farmer trusted him, and thus just watched.

After the field was ploughed, Shimon then showed him how to seed. They got a bundle of dry seeds from the previous year and started placing them into the torn-up ground.

"Ah, now I see why you broke up the dirt," the new farmer observed. "But why are you taking good-looking kernels and placing them in the ground? You're simply destroying good kernels!"

Here too, Shimon simply told him, "You have to wait and see."

A few weeks later, little saplings appeared in the ground in the same spots where the seeds had been planted. The young farmer again admitted his understanding of the reason behind the seeding. He

watched the stalks grow to full height after a few more weeks, and just as he thought they'd grown to full beauty, Shimon announced they were cutting them down and trashing them.

"What?!" the learner farmer exclaimed. "After all those weeks of growth you're going to destroy what you worked so hard over?" He thought that the end had finally come as all their weeks of waiting and hard work were being decimated.

"You have to wait and see," was all Shimon replied as he went on to crush the cut stalks, winnow the hay, and separate out the harvested wheat kernels.

"Ah, now I see. That was the only way to get the seeds out of the chaff."

This back-and-forth continued throughout the ensuing steps as Shimon then broke up the seeds even further to make flour, drowned the flour in water, making an inedible mush, and then put the mush into a burning oven, ostensibly to burn it to embers.

At each step, the newbie believed Shimon was simply destroying what he'd been doing, but when the fresh bread emerged from the oven and the new farmer tasted from their labor, he agreed that waiting for the answer was surely worth it.

R' Elchanan then delivered the upshot of his last words. "At times, it looks as if everything is over, but then you see that it continues… until the next time you think, 'now it's **really** over.'

We think like this farmer: 'This time it worked out, but now there's no hope.' But we must not think like this farmer. Instead, remember that the whole process is needed to bring out the delicious bread in the end, no matter how confusing and strange the in-between steps look." (*Lifanov Naavod, Tefillah,* p. 342)

Exchanging Hostages for Terrorists

Is it permissible to free hostages by releasing terrorists? **By Rabbi Hillel Raskin**



Halacha highlights the importance of redeeming captives but, at the same time, prohibits paying "above their value". How does this translate when discussing prisoner exchanges?

Some acharonim hold that the limit in these cases follows what other countries offer for such "transactions" based on historical precedents. Based on this, it would be permitted to perform a prisoner swap after the conclusion of a war when the accepted custom is to do so, even if the number of prisoners doesn't match. Other poskim, however, contend that the fair price tag remains one-for-one, and anything beyond that is against halacha.

Soldiers, some poskim claim, have a different status for this halacha, and their ransom isn't capped. Since the country sent them to war, they have complete responsibility for them, unlike a regular hostage scenario where the community doesn't have full responsibility for the captives.

Furthermore, just as one may redeem himself for any price, the same should apply if one commits in contract with someone else, as a country does with its soldiers.

However, releasing terrorists or even carrying out such negotiations is problematic. It is proven historically that many of the freed terrorists return to terror. Moreover, it is perceived as a weakness,

and it encourages terrorists to commit terror attacks, thinking that they will ultimately be freed.

In 5739 (1979), the **Lubavitcher Rebbe** strongly protested a prisoner swap when over 70 Arabs prisoners – including over 30 convicted terrorists – were exchanged for one Israeli soldier, when not long before, America and Russia had swapped five for two! Though a Jewish life has infinite worth, the Rebbe explained, they could have obtained the same soldier for many fewer Arabs. Furthermore, this crossed the red line of negotiating with terrorists who openly said they would continue their terrorism. The Rebbe called it a weakness and a diplomatic move to win favor in the eyes of the Americans and Arabs.

Moerover, said the Rebbe, putting terrorists in prison to begin with, rather than executing them, was a big mistake, since it invited pressure to release them at some point.

In conclusion, releasing prisoners in exchange for hostages introduces new angles that aren't dealt with in the Gemara's discussion on ransoming captives. These decisions must be weighed by experts on security and terrorism to determine which option will cause fewer Jews to be harmed and that is the correct route to take.

Parsha Potpourri Compiled by Ozer Alport

ויאמר יוסף אל אחיו אני יוסף העוד אבי חי ולא יכלו אחיו לענות אותו כי נבהלו מפניו (45:3)

When Yosef's brothers came to Egypt to purchase food during the years of famine, he was able to recognize them immediately, but after 22 years of separation, they were unable to identify him. As a result, he was able to subject them to a dramatic and frightening series of events. After accusing them of being spies, he incarcerated Shimon to force them to return with his maternal

brother Binyomin. After confusing them by inviting them to join him at a banquet, Yosef had his goblet planted in Binyomin's sack to frame him for stealing.

Finally, when Yehuda pleaded for mercy, explaining how much their father Yaakov would suffer if they failed to return with his beloved Binyomin, Yosef was unable to hold himself back anymore. He ordered all the Egyptian officers and servants out of the room and revealed his true identity to his brothers, telling them, "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?"

The entire episode and ordeal of the brothers' encounter with Yosef appeared so illogical and nonsensical that it seemed more like a bad dream than reality, yet in one split second, in just two words, **אני יוסף** – I am Yosef – suddenly the entire cacophonous picture became crystal clear. All the seemingly inexplicable events and details fell into place, and everything made perfect sense.

The history of the Jewish nation has been fraught with lofty highs and terrible lows. The life of every individual Jew follows a similar pattern. Many happy events seem too good to be true, while countless struggles seem too great to bear. Certainly, there seems to be no rhyme or reason to them, no interconnecting links weaving them together as part of a larger picture and greater plan.

The Chofetz Chaim writes that just as with Yosef's brothers, there will come a time when we merit Hashem's revelation in all His glory and splendor. Upon hearing just two words, **אני ד'** – I am Hashem – everything will immediately fall into place, and all our questions and difficulties will vanish into thin air.

"Of everything G-d created in His world, not one thing was created without purpose." ~Talmud, Shabbat 77b.

ואת יהודה שלח לפניו אל יוסף להורות לפניו גשנה (46:28)

After a tumultuous roller-coaster of events, Yaakov's sons returned to Canaan and informed him that his beloved son Yosef, who he had assumed was dead for 22 years, was alive and prospering in Egypt. Astonished by the remarkable turn of events and despite his advanced age, Yaakov prepared himself and his family for the lengthy journey to Egypt to be reunited with Yosef.

As they drew near to the section of Egypt called Goshen, our verse tells us that Yaakov sent his son Yehuda ahead of him to prepare for him the way. Rashi explains that "preparing for him the way" refers to Yaakov's instructions that Yehuda establish a house of study where he would be able to learn and teach Torah. Considering Yaakov's age and all that he had recently experienced, did this need to be his highest priority? Shouldn't he have first focused on getting reunited with Yosef and comfortably settling his family into their new homes?

The Shelah HaKadosh derives from Yaakov's actions and priorities that wherever a person goes, he should first ensure that his spiritual needs are in place and afterward attend to his more mundane concerns. Although Yaakov had many important tasks to attend to on his momentous journey, the Torah records his focus on establishing a house of study prior to his arrival to show us his true priorities so that we may learn from them.

Rav Moshe Feinstein writes that the biggest mistake made by the early immigrants to America was that they were so focused on trying to make a living that they neglected to make time to set up schools to provide religious education to the next generation. As a result, thousands of Jewish children were not given an opportunity to be properly educated about their religious heritage.

Now that we understand the value of taking spiritual considerations into account when making life decisions, we can appreciate the following anecdote: **The Stropkover Rebbe** was once purchasing an

apartment and narrowed the choices down to two. Each of them had various aesthetic and practical pros and cons, and it was difficult to decide which of them was superior.



Ultimately, he chose the apartment that had exactly 26 steps (the numerical value of Hashem's Name) ascending to it, as that would allow him to remember Hashem every time he entered or exited his home.

Although the level of spiritual sensitivity depicted in this story is clearly beyond us, its lesson is still relevant. We all make daily decisions concerning our families, our homes, and our jobs. As we evaluate our options, we should learn from Yaakov to view the world through a more spiritual lens and take that perspective into account when making our decisions.

ויאמר יוסף אל העם הן קניתי אתכם היום ואת אדמתכם לפרעה הא לכם זרע וזרעתם את האדמה (47:23)

When famine struck Egypt, the people had no choice but to purchase grain from Yosef, who had accumulated and stored a substantial supply during the seven years of plenty for this purpose. As the famine intensified, the people paid for the grain with their money and their livestock, later with their land and themselves.

Yosef responded by telling the Egyptians, **הא לכם זרע** – Here is seed for you. On a kabbalistic level, the Arizal suggests that Yosef was hinting to a different kind of seed: children. In a play on words, he writes that the reason several of the Avos (Patriarchs) and Imahos

(Matriarchs) were barren was because they did not have the letter ה in their names, which alludes to הריון (pregnancy).

Avrom and Sarai were unable to have children because both of their names lacked the letter ה. Only after Hashem added a ה to each of their names, transforming them into Avrohom and Sorah, were they able to conceive Yitzchok. Yitzchok also had great difficulty having children, as even though his wife Rivkah had a ה in her name, he did not have a ה in his name.

This also explains why Yaakov was able to have children with Leah, Zilpah, and Bilhah, all of whom had ה's in their names, but not with Rochel, who did not have a ה and was therefore unable to conceive. In an effort to become pregnant, Rochel gave her maidservant Bilhah to Yaakov, with the hope that by doing so, she would merit one of the two ה's in Bilhah's name.

Parsha Points to Ponder Compiled by Ozer Alport

● Just before sending his brothers back to Yaakov in Canaan, Yosef warned them (45:24) not to become agitated on the journey. According to one of Rashi's explanations, Yosef was advising them not to travel too quickly by taking large steps, as the Gemora in Taanis (10b) teaches that doing so causes a person to lose 1/500th of his eyesight.

Why doesn't a person become completely blind after taking 500 large steps?

Tosefos writes that while the first large step takes 1/500th of a person's eyesight, the second large step takes away less, as it only takes 1/500th of what is remaining. Since each successive large step removes less and less of a person's vision, even a large number of such steps will not render a person blind.

However, Tosefos questions why the first step should be more damaging than the successive steps. Tosefos answers that **כל התחלות קשות** – whenever a person starts something, it is more difficult at the beginning. Alternatively, Tosefos suggests that only the first large step causes any damage to one's eyesight, and at that point, once the person is accustomed to such large steps, successive ones no longer cause any harm.

● **True or False: Binyomin had ten sons.**

False. Although the Torah in Parshas Vayigash lists ten sons of Binyomin, the **Chizkuni** notes that in Divrei HaYomim (1 8:1-5), eleven sons are listed.

He explains that ten of them were born before Yaakov descended to Egypt and are mentioned here, and an additional son was born after he arrived in Egypt.

● Which act of Yosef in Parshas Vayigash teaches us that we must express gratitude for acts of kindness done for us by gentiles?



The Targum Yonason ben Uziel and Shelah HaKadosh write that when Potiphar wanted to have Yosef killed for infidelity with his wife, the Egyptian priests served as judges at the trial. They saw through the falsehood of the allegations and spared Yosef's life.

The Rosh, Chizkuni, and Paneiach Raza explain that the priests told Pharaoh to examine whose clothing was ripped, which would reveal who was the pursuer and who was fleeing.

When Pharaoh checked and found that Yosef's clothing was torn, he understood that Potiphar's wife was chasing him, and he was innocent.

Years later, when Yosef acquired for Pharaoh the land of the Egyptians in exchange for food, he allowed the priests to keep their land (47:22) as a way of repaying them for sparing his life.

● Yosef told his brothers (46:34) to tell Pharaoh that they were shepherds so he would allow them to live separately in Goshen. Rashi explains that Egyptians hated shepherds because they worshipped sheep.

Although it makes sense that they would despise anybody who eats sheep, why should they hate the shepherds who take care of them?

The **Sifsei Chochomim** answers that because shepherds are constantly around sheep, they see everything that the sheep do. By observing that they engage in the same activities as all other creatures, they realize that sheep are not deities and do not possess any special powers. The Egyptians therefore hated the shepherds because of their insight into the true nature of their gods.

The **Ibn Ezra** writes that because of their frequent exposure to the sheep, the shepherds drink their milk. The Egyptians viewed this as insulting and degrading conduct toward their gods and therefore hated them.

"The emotion of sadness is essentially selfish, as it is derived from an individual's feeling that something, either spiritual or material, is lacking that rightfully belongs to him. Such an outlook concentrates solely on the self, rather than on others." ~ Rabbi Chanoch Henoch of Alexander.

Dispel the Lies by Telling the Jewish Story to the World by M Davis



Israel is the only nation on earth that inhabits the same land, bears the same name, speaks the same language, and worships the same God that it did 3,000 years ago.

After World War II, at an elite prep school, classmates of former U.S. Ambassador John Loeb said, when shown images of concentration camps, "Well, we don't like Hitler, but at least he killed the Jews."

As repugnant as those words are, they're not as abhorrent as Holocaust denial, a refusal to even acknowledge that Hitler killed Jews.

Today we are facing a similar scourge of disinformation. We are now hearing people say that it was the Israeli government who killed 1,200 Israelis on October 7. Whether they believe their outrageous statements is unclear. What we do know is that ignorance about the history of the Jewish people and Israel abounds.

In recent years, ethnic studies classes have sprung up in schools across the country. These classes focus far too much on the oppressor/oppressed narrative, assigning a binary classification to every group of people.

In a plot twist no one could have foreseen, the Jewish people, the most oppressed people of all time, have now been classified as the biggest oppressors.

In a plot twist no one could have foreseen, the Jewish people, the most oppressed people of all time, have now been classified as the biggest oppressors. This new label has fueled much of the antisemitism we are now seeing, especially on college campuses.

In order to dispel the lies that have infested the minds of students, it is time to demand that Jewish history be part of the ethnic studies curriculum. Facts have a way of leading the way out of the darkness.

No, Israel is not a European colonist state. Only approximately 30% of Israel's population is of European origin. European Jews who immigrated to Israel were not colonialists. They did not represent a foreign power and never embraced any European connection.

Endless pieces of archaeological evidence show that Jewish people are indigenous to Israel and have lived there for over 3,000 years. Jewish presence in Israel preceded Muslim presence by at least one millennium.

The late Charles Krauthammer said, "Israel is the very embodiment of Jewish continuity: It is the only nation on earth that inhabits the same land, bears the same name, speaks the same language, and worships the same God that it did 3,000 years ago. You dig the soil and you find pottery from Davidic times, coins from Bar Kokhba, and 2,000-year-old scrolls written in a script remarkably like the one that today advertises ice cream at the corner candy store."

No, Israel is not a racist or an apartheid state. Arabs represent 20% of Israel's citizens and have equal rights. They are part of the Knesset and the Supreme Court. They have a notable presence in universities, hospitals, and the entertainment industry. In fact, Arabs who have Israeli citizenship have more rights and opportunities in Israel than they would have as citizens in any Arab country in the world.

Israel may be the only nation that has airlifted Africans to its country, giving them citizenship.

According to *Democracy Index* published by the Economist Group, in 2022 Israel's Democracy Index ranked higher than that of the United States. It is particularly noteworthy that Israel's democracy is considered stronger than the United States', given Israel's unique challenges fighting terrorists in its midst.

No, Israel does not engage in ethnic cleansing. In 1948, the Arab population in Israel was 156,000. Today it is 2,100,000.

Conversely, in 1948, the Jewish population in Muslim countries was close to 1,000,000. Today it is under 12,000.

No, the Jewish people are not a privileged group. For 2,500 years, Jews in Europe and Northern Africa were persecuted wherever they lived, facing expulsions, pogroms, and genocide.

In the United States during the first half of the 20th century, Jews were discriminated against and not permitted to work in many fields of employment. They were also not allowed to own or rent certain properties. Jews were not accepted as members of many clubs and organizations, and were excluded from resort areas. Many resorts would post signs such as, "Always a view. Never a Jew."

Colleges and universities enforced quotas to restrict the number of Jewish students and professors.

These laws and policies were eventually overturned, but unfair treatment of Jews continued and certainly still exists today. That the Jewish people were able to succeed despite the many hurdles placed before them should be a source of Jewish pride and an inspiration to others who believe they face injustices and inequities today.

No, the Jewish people, a mere one fifth of one percent of the world population, do not control the world, but they do punch above their weight in many metrics of academic and financial success, by factors

of five, 10, 25, 50, 100 times and more, depending on the metric. We should not shrink from our success, nor should we apologize for it or defend it.

We are the ones who are always accused of the most absurd crimes. No, we did not poison wells to spread disease. No, we did not kill Christian children to use their blood to bake matzah. No, we were not responsible for the 9/11 attacks. No, we did not create Covid. No, we did not use laser space beams to start wildfires.

Don't Let Others Define You

For far too long, we have let others define who we are. It is time for us to tell our own story.

We are the ones who march peacefully, proudly waving our flags, and singing with hopefulness. They are the ones who scream, harass, and burn flags, calling themselves progressives when in fact they have regressed into the world's oldest hatred.

They are the ones who tout freedom of speech, when for years they have shouted down any pro-Israel speaker during college campus events, denying them their right to speech.

We've extended our hands in peace numerous times, only to be met with total rejection without any counter offer, and renewed violence.

They are the ones who have been utterly silent about the 350,000 people killed in the Syrian war, and the 377,000 killed in the Yemen war. The lives of innocents killed during war seem to matter only if they can blame Jews.

We are the ones who have extended our hands in peace towards the Palestinians in 1947, 1948, 1967, 1973, 1994, 2000, 2008, and 2019, only to be met with total rejection without any counter offer, and renewed violence.

When offered a land of our own, a land consisting mostly of seemingly worthless desert, we are the ones who grabbed it with both hands and made that desert bloom.

We are the ones who created a modern, democratic, multiethnic country in an area where only repressive, monocultural regimes existed. We are the ones whose mission is to repair the world. Amidst our utmost sorrow, we are the ones who dance with unbridled joy in the streets of Jerusalem.

Throughout 2,500 years of exile, we are the ones who looked eastward towards Jerusalem.

We are the ones who fulfilled the seemingly impossible words, "If you will it, it is no dream."

Ours is the greatest story. We need to broadcast it to the world.

Parsha Pearls (Adapted from the Chachmas Chayim)

Who Said That?

אֲדֹנִי שָׁאַל אֶת־עֲבָדָיו לֵאמֹר הֲיֵשׁ־לָכֶם אָב אוֹ־אָח -***"My master asked his servants ... 'Do you have a father or a brother'*** " (44:19).

The question arises where Yosef asked his brothers such a question, since nowhere is it recorded?

The Damesek Eliezer therefore explains these words as a question "Did your master ask your servants whether we have a father or a brother?" Yet, we volunteered the information'.

This was actually a reproof on the part of Yehudah. He was hinting to Yosef that it is not the way of spies to volunteer such personal information. And the fact that they did should surely have served as a proof that they were not spies. In that case, Yosef's accusation was without foundation.

Retroactive Gratitude

אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה "I am Yosef your brother, whom you sold to Egypt" (45:4).

The Sfas Emes points out how Chazal explain the Pasuk (in connection with the breaking of the Luchos) "Asher shibarta" (which you broke) to mean 'ye'yasher kochacha she'shibarta' (that HaShem commended Moshe for having broken the Luchos, as the Gemara explains in Shabbos 87a).

Likewise, here, when Yosef said **וְעַתָּה לְאׇ־אַתֶּם שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה** - he meant to thank his brothers for selling him to Egypt, thereby enabling him to sustain the whole world, a merit he would have been unable to attain in Eretz Yisrael. And besides, due to his trials and tribulations, he reached his full potential in Egypt, and had plenty to be grateful to his brothers for - in retrospect, of course.

Yaakov and his Household Effects

וְעֵינְכֶם אַל־תָּחׇס עַל־כְּלֵיכֶם כִּי־טוּב כׇּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לָכֶם הִוא "And don't take pity on your household vessels, because the best of the land of Egypt is yours" (45:20).

Yosef knew, the **Da'as Zekeinim mi'Ba'alei Tosfos** explains, that Yaakov was meticulously fussy about his household vessels, even to the point of risking his life for them (see Rashi Vayishlach 32:25, and commentaries). So he urged his brothers not to spend too much time gathering all his things (**Sforno**), but to come quickly, since Egypt was a wealthy country, and everything was at his disposal.

Anger over things not working out in material and physical areas stems from a lack of emuna. ~ R' Eliyahu Meir Bloch

Abused Protectzia

אַל־תִּרְגְּזוּ בַּדָּרֶךְ -***"Do not quarrel on the way."*** (45:24).



Both **Targum Onkelos and Targum Yonasan** translate this as 'Don't quarrel on the way', a warning not to discuss his sale and fight over who was to blame for it (**see also Rashi**).

The Ba'al HaTurim however, translates it as ***'Don't make people angry***'. According to him, it is a warning not to use their relationship with the powerful viceroy of Egypt, to do things that would cause others to become angry, such as walking through people's private lands on their way down to Egypt.

Proteczia should be used to the full, but under no circumstances may it be abused.

Avoiding Suspicion

וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף בֵּיתָה פַרְעֹה ***"And Yosef brought the money into Paraoh's palace"*** (47:14).

The manager of a business will sooner employ someone who has no relations in the city. In that way, he eliminates the possibility of the employee funneling money or goods from the business to his relatives.

Before Yaakov and his family arrived in Egypt, says the **Sha'ar Bas Rabim**, Yosef did not find it necessary to place the vast amounts of public money that fell under his jurisdiction, under lock and key. This

only became necessary after their arrival because he did not want to fall under suspicion of embezzling public funds for the benefit of his family.

Chavrusah

In this week's parsha, the pasuk says, **ונפשו בנפשו קשורה** — "Yaakov Avinu and Binyamin's souls were connected (44:30).

The Baal Haturim explains that in gematria of **קשורה** equals **תורה**. The main way to connect with people is through learning Torah with them. Often, we find that our closest friends are those that we learn and grow together with.



Weekly Divrei Torah from the Passaic/Clifton community

Halachos Of Asarah B'teves by R' Ephraim Weller

1. Asarah B'Teves

1.1) The fast begins at alos hashachar of the 10th of Teves. After alos, it is forbidden to eat or drink.

1.2) Being that in the winter months alos hashachar is not so early in the morning, many people will want to wake up and eat before the fast begins. Before going to sleep the night before the fast (i.e., the night of the 10th), it is best to articulate aloud that if one wakes up before alos hashachar he will eat and drink. Having this in mind is also acceptable.

1.3) One who did not plan at all to eat before alos should not eat upon awakening; however, he may still drink (if it is before alos hashachar).

1.4) Within half an hour before alos, one should not start to eat anything that is considered a halachic meal (a k'beitzah of bread, cake, or the like).

1.5) Some psoskim hold that women may eat a halachic meal within half an hour before alos.

1.6) Pregnant and nursing women should consult a Rav regarding fasting.

1.7) One who has a medical issue, or feels weaker than usual, should consult a Rav regarding fasting.

1.8) It is worthwhile to note, that some poskim hold that one should refrain from listening to music on Asarah B'Teves.

1.9) Similarly, some poskim hold that one should not take a haircut or shave on Asarah B'Teves.

2. Asarah B'Teves on Friday

This year Asarah B'Teves falls out on Friday. Most of the halachos of the fast day are the same as when/if it fell/falls out during the week. However, there are a few pertinent halachos for when Asarah B'Teves falls out on Friday.

2.1) Even though it is permissible to shower, or bathe on fast days (besides for Tisha B'Aav and obviously Yom Kippur), many have the minhag to refrain from doing these activities. However, when Asarah B'Tteves falls out on Friday, one may (and should) prepare for Shabbos normally.

2.2) Some poskim hold that one should refrain from taking a haircut or shaving on Asarah B'Teves. This does not apply when Asarah B'Teves falls out on Friday. (Refrain from listening to music).

2.3) At Minchah, the Torah is read, and Aaneinu is added into Shemoneh Esrei. However, Tachanun and Avinu Malkeinu are not said.

2.4) One may taste the food that one is cooking for Shabbos, and then spit it out. A brachah is not said on this.

2.5) The fast must be kept until tzeis hakochavim. Even if one accepted Shabbos or davened Maariv early, he cannot eat until nightfall.

2.6) One cannot eat or drink (even water) until kiddush is said.

Holochos of Asoroh BeTeves that lands on a Friday by Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

The following is a brief summary of some of the Halochos relevant to the fast of Asoro BeTeves this year:-

● Those who want to eat in the morning before the beginning of the fast, should express this intention before going to sleep on Thursday night.

● It is permissible to eat any amount before 6.25.

● Care should be taken to repeat **קריאת שמע** before the meal. One should make sure that it is 'nacht' before making **קידוש**.

● For those who require a milk coffee after the fast, they can allow themselves to make **קידוש** on cake, drink the coffee, make a **ברכה אחרונה** and then have the regular meal after a break.

Alternatively, one can drink a milky coffee at the beginning of the meal on a separate table covering and proceed after having rinsed out the mouth [and eaten some **חלה**]. In this case one should make sure that there is at least a half an hour gap between having the milk and any meaty product during the meal.

Giving the Other Man the Benefit of a Doubt

Rabeinu Bachye writes in Chovos HeLevavos (Sha'ar HaK'niah 10) that someone once asked a wise man, "Why is it that you were able to become the leader of your entire generation?"

The wise man replied, "It is because I never met someone that I didn't see in him a quality that he is greater than me in. If he was smarter than me, I would say that he must have more Yiras Hashem than me, since his wisdom is greater than mine. If he had less wisdom than me, I considered that his final judgement at the end of our lives will be better than mine, and he will be held less accountable than I will be. This must be because my Aveiros were done on purpose, but his Aveiros were all done by accident.

"If he was older than me, I would reason that surely his Zechusim must be greater than mine, since he came to this world before me. If he was younger, I would think that he surely did less Aveiros than me, because he wasn't here as long as I have been. If we were the same age and we had had the same level of wisdom, I would say to myself that perhaps his heart is more devoted to Hashem than mine is, because I know of all my past Aveiros, but I don't know of any Aveiros that he committed.

"If he was wealthier than me, I would say that he can serve Hashem better than me because of his wealth, and he could give to various Tzedakah causes and support poor people more than I could. If he had less money than me, I would think that he was more humble than me, due to his being poor, and he is really a better person than I am. And because of this, I would honor all people and humble myself before them."

He explained that this was the reason he was appointed as the leader of all the people! [***Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.***]

בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו
תורה תבלין
A Torah Tavlin publication
34 Mariner Way Monsey NY 10952

משל למה הדבר דומה

ועתה לא אתם שלחתם אתי הנה כי האלקים ... (מה-ח)



There was a terrible storm at sea that wrecked a ship full of passengers. Unfortunately, only one lone survivor made it to shore alive. Upon arriving onshore, he realized that it wasn't an inhabited island but rather a small parcel of land in middle of the vast ocean. He asked *Hashem* for help.

After waiting a long time and no help seemed to be arriving, he decided to build himself a makeshift hut with the destroyed bits of the shipwreck.

Every day he invested a great deal of energy searching for food. He tried various ways to make signals in the sand in the hope that someone would notice him on the deserted island. But as the days turned into weeks, he began to lose hope. He constantly scanned the skyline for *Hashem's* helping hand, but try as he might, the situation seemed hopeless.

One day, as he returned from his food search, he found his little hut burnt to ashes. Losing all hope, he shouted out of anger, "Why G-d? Why do you never answer my prayers?"

A couple of hours later, a boat suddenly arrived at the shore to rescue him. The man, bewildered, asked the captain of the ship, "How were you able to track me down?"

The captain answered, "We saw your smoke signal and came to help!"

Now the man realized *Hashem's* magnificent plan.

Yosef Hatzaddik had many opportunities to bemoan his fate but instead remained firm in the belief that everything that happened to him was the will of *Hashem*. Therefore, when Yosef was finally faced with the challenge of his lifetime - a chance to take revenge on those that placed him in the predicament he was in, Yosef was ready to withstand the temptation and pronounced instead that everything that happened was *Hashem's* master plan!

תורת הצבי על הפטרות



וּכְתֹב עָלָיו לְיהוּדָה וְלִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל... וּכְתֹוב עָלָיו לְיוֹסֵף... וְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל *Yechezkel 37:16*

Yechezkel HaNavi was instructed to take two sticks and inscribe the names Yehuda and Yosef on them. He was then to place the sticks near one another whereupon they fused together into one, symbolizing the eventual unification of the two Jewish kingdoms, *Malchus Yehuda* and *Malchus Yisroel*.

Why was *Malchus Yehuda* referred to as *"Bnei" Yisroel* while *Malchus Yisroel* was referred to as *"Bais" Yisroel*?

R' Meir Simcha HaKohen zt"l (Meshech Chochma) explains that *"Bnei" Yisroel* denotes a male connotation, whereas *"Bais" Yisroel* implies a female connotation. *Malchus Yehuda* was called *Bnei Yisroel* since it housed the *Bais Hamikdash* and was considered the "main" kingdom in *Eretz Yisroel*. *Malchus Yehuda* also merited that all the Jews were *Oleh Regel* there on the three *Regalim*. The *mitzvah* of *Aliyah L'regel* was only required for men while the women stayed home. On the other hand, *Malchus Yisroel* was called *Bais Yisroel,* with its female connotation marking a clear reference to the women who stayed home and are considered the *"Ikeres HaBayis"* - the mainstays of a Jewish home.

Men and women have different roles in life. *Hashem* allowed both Jewish kingdoms to exist since they were each meant to serve a different purpose in life. Ultimately, in the times of *Mashiach*, *Hashem* will fuse the two kingdoms allowing those roles to be served by one merged kingdom, similar to the how men and women marry and utilize their individual strengths and roles to create a fused, wholesome Jewish home.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

The crowning glory of the renowned **Gerrer Rebbe, R' Pinchos Menachem Alter** zt"l **(Pnei Menachem)**, aside from his great devotion and prodigious depth in *Torah* learning, was his extraordinary *middos*. To properly appreciate his genius in *Torah*, one had to himself be a *Gaon* in *Torah;* to properly appreciate his exalted level of *avodah*, one had to himself be deeply connected to *avodah*. With regard to his *middos*, however, every individual - from the greatest *Gedolim* to the simplest of *Yidden* - were overwhelmed at his deep sensitivity, humility and kindness.

The *Gerrer Rebbe* was tasked with answering hundreds of *shailos* each day. People sought advice on a wide variety of matters, ranging

from halachic to health issues and *chinuch*, etc. One of the unique things about the *Pnei Menachem* was his ability to see the question in a totally different light than it had been presented by the petitioner, as illustrated by the following story:

One particular *Gerrer shtiebel* was remarkably successful. In the few years since its founding, it had welcomed many new *yungeleit*. A constant *kol Torah* reverberated throughout the building and the unique atmosphere of vibrant Chassidic camaraderie was a constant presence.

Due to its popularity and constant growth, it became extremely crowded. The *shtiebel* leadership decided that it was imperative to build an addition as they simply did not have enough room in their present accommodations.

Plans were drawn up, money was collected and raised, and the *shtiebel* embarked on an ambitious expansion and renovation.

When the renovation was nearing completion, they were faced with a question. In the old *shtiebel* the *aron kodesh* had been centered in the middle of the eastern wall, as is customary in most *shuls*. In the newly expanded *shtiebel*, however, the *aron kodesh* was no longer in the center of the wall, but located a bit off to the side.

There were those who felt that in order to ensure that the *aron kodesh* would be centered, as is traditional, a new one should be built. Others, however, were of the opinion that the *shtiebel* should not take on additional financial obligations - especially since the bank account had been emptied as a result of the construction. They felt that an *aron kodesh* toward the side of the room was not such a terrible thing. - The question was brought to the *Gerrer Rebbe*. How should they proceed?

How surprised they were to hear the *Pnei Menachem's* answer, one that showed how the *Rebbe* viewed the entire question through a different set of values.

"*Chas v'shalom*! How can you even think to cause pain to a fellow *Yid*?!" the *Rebbe* replied agitatedly. "Think for a second about the feelings of the person who donated the original *aron kodesh* in memory of a loved one. He invested so much money and so much effort into donating that *aron kodesh*. If you demolish the original aron kodesh and build a new one, that *Yid* will certainly be pained." - A decision based on *middos tovos*. (**Excerpted from "The Pnei Menachem" by R' Avrohom Birnbaum**)



The Zechusim of Others

Rav Avrohom Chaim Feuer cites the **Peleh Yo'eitz** (Ma'areches Kavod HaBriyos) which quotes a Medrash that teaches that one must stand up when a poor person passes by. This displays that he acknowledges that Hashem accompanies the destitute people. As the Pasuk in Tehilim (109:31) says, כִּי יַעֲמֹד לִימִין אֶבְיוֹן לְהוֹשִׁיעַ מִשֹּׁפְטֵי נַפְשׁוֹ ***Hashem stands at the right side of the needy***.

The Peleh Yo'eitz also writes that one should be careful to avoid even slight discrimination against those who may have less.

Rav Avrohom Chaim relates a story about **Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l**, who was especially attuned to the effects his actions would have when he was dealing with poor people.

One day, a car pulled up in front of the Yeshivah to take Rav Moshe to an important meeting. There was no time for delay. As Rav Moshe was about to get into the car, a poor man asked him for some Tzedakah. Rav Moshe gave him some money, but the man wished to

speak with Rav Moshe as well. The man drew out the conversation, and the driver who was waiting started to become impatient.

A few students attempted to tell the man that Rav Moshe was in a great hurry, but Rav Moshe motioned for them to wait.

After ten minutes, Rav Moshe excused himself, shook hands with the poor man, and finally got into the car.

Rav Moshe explained to the driver and to his students, "You must understand that to this man, the conversation meant more to him than the money. My Mitzvah of Tzedakah included showing him that I care about what he has to say, and that I am not too busy to speak with him!"

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages



In his later years, **Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, zt"l**, the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, was constantly sought after by people who would call and ask for his advice and for his Tefilos.

When he would be away in Bournemouth for his health, people would still regularly call him, and sometimes the Gaba'im would leave the phone off the hook, in order to save Rav Yehuda Zev's energy from all the requests.

However, the Rosh Yeshivah wanted to be available to help people. If it got too quiet, Rav Yehuda Zev would ask those around him to please check if the phone was working!

Parshah Thoughts by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי - What prompted Yosef to reveal himself to his brothers at the specific time that he did (45:3)?

Maharil Diskin answers that Yosef revealed himself when he recognized that his brothers had changed their ways. When Yosef saw that they were willing to sacrifice themselves for Binyamin, the other son of Rachel, it was the exact opposite of their willingness to sell him. Once he saw that they had changed, he realized that his role as a stranger was complete, and he could now embrace them as their brother.

Working on our Middos

Rav Chaim Brim, zt"l, was once learning with the **Chazon Ish, zt"l**, late at night in Bnei Brak. When they had finished their session, there weren't any more busses at that hour to bring Rav Chaim back to Yerushalayim, where he lived, so the the Chazon Ish invited him to stay the night by him. The Chazon Ish's brother-in-law, the **Steipler Gaon, zt"l**, also lived in that house.

Rav Chaim Brim said that that night, three great people were serving him: the Chazon Ish, the Steipler, and the Steipler's Rebbetzin. The Chazon Ish was giving the directions, and one person brought the Negel Vasser, one brought him some food, and so on. - Rav Chaim was very uncomfortable that they were all serving him, and he said to the Chazon Ish, "Please, this isn't necessary. There is no need to do all of this for me!"

The Chazon Ish replied, "Since when does an Esrog tell the person who holds it how he should be handled? Right now, you are a Mitzvah, and you shouldn't be telling the people who are obligated from Har Sinai to do this Mitzvah, how they should perform the Mitzvah!"

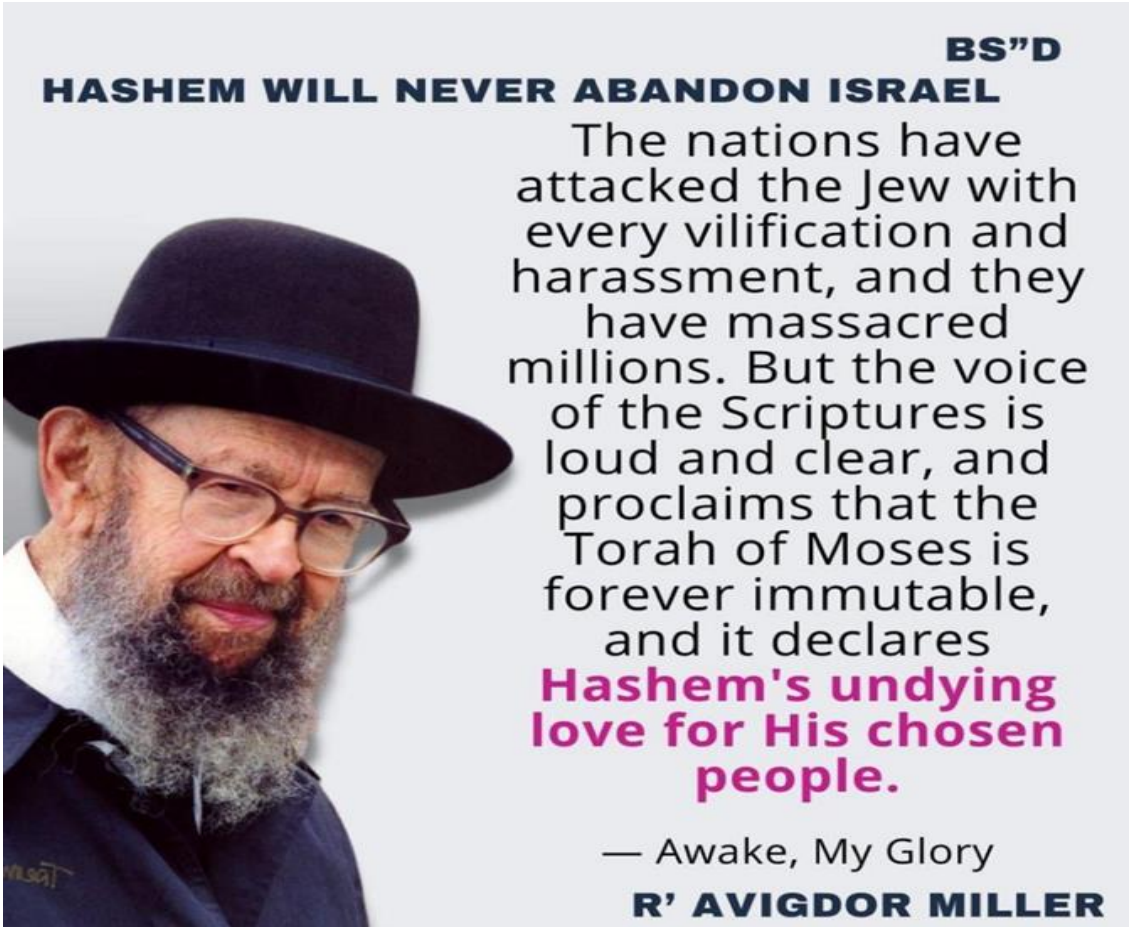
Rabbi Aharon Bassous - Beth Hamedrash Knesset Yehezkel

וְתֶן־זֶ֣רַע וְנִֽחְיֶ֗ה וְלֹ֤א נָמוּת֙ וְהָֽאֲדָמָ֔ה לֹ֥א תֵשָֽׁם, "*And provide seed so that we may live and not die, and the soil will not lie fallow.*" (47:19).

Why is it necessary for the pasuk to say וְהָֽאֲדָמָ֔ה לֹ֥א תֵשָֽׁם? What is being added to here? These words seem superfluous.

The prime purpose of land is to grow produce. If the field lies fallow too long, it will die. It will no longer be capable of producing.

Similarly, this can be compared to the purpose of living a Torah life. If a person stagnates in his Avodas Hashem, he might be walking, talking and breathing, but for all intent and purpose he is no longer living – he is dead, because the prime purpose of living is to be productive in Torah, Avoda and Gemillas Chasadim.





The Weekly Vort

● **בהתודע יוסף אל אחיו** – ***when Yosef made himself known to his brothers*** (45:1).

Rabbeinu Efraim writes: The letters of the word **בהתודע** , *when he made himself known*, can be rearranged to read **העבדות** , *the slavery*. This explains why Yosef ordered all bystanders to leave when he made himself known to his brothers. He did not want the Egyptians to hear his brothers' shame of having sold him into slavery. [**Nachal Kedumim**] (Torah Treasures)

● **והגדתם לאבי את כל כבודי במצרים** – ***Therefore, tell my father of all my glory in Egypt*** (45:13)

It seems odd that Yosef should be proud of the honor he received in Egypt and want to convey it to Yakov.

Be'er Moshe interprets the verse as teaching that Yosef attributed all the honor he received in Egypt to the merit of Yakov. The Be'er Moshe learns this out from interpreting the verse as follows: **והגדתם** , *tell him*, that **לאבי**, *to my father* is accredited all of my honor.

The Sages teach it was so imperative for Yakov to come to Egypt that had Yosef not been in Egypt to orchestrate his father's arrival, Yakov would have had to be dragged there in chains (Midrash Rabbah 86:2, and Shabbos 89b).

In order to spare Yakov this pain, his son rose to great power in Egypt. Thus, Yosef wanted Yakov to know of his son's honor, which was entirely in his merit. (**The Torah Treasury**)



Rav Elya Meir Bloch zt"l, 28 Teves

◣ R' Elya Meir Bloch brought the Telshe of Lithuania to America. A lone survivor of his family, he set aside his personal grief to establish the great Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, Ohio. R' Elya Meir was a *Gadol* of many talents. As a Rosh Yeshiva and Rebbi, his *shiurim* were masterpieces. His gift of writing was remarkable. His energy was boundless. His self-discipline allowed him to apportion every one of his precious moments appropriately to either his family, *talmidim*, the yeshiva, his

community or Klal Yisroel. He was a man of uncompromising truth. The driving force of his life was always his Torah learning.

◣ R' Elya Meir was born in Telshe on Simchas Torah 5655 (1894). His birth date was indeed a portent for his life – a continuous joy in learning Torah. He was a golden link in the Telshe dynasty – his father R' Yosef Leib Bloch was the Rav and Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe, and his maternal grandfather, R' Eliezer Gordon, was the founder of the Telshe Yeshiva.

◣ R' Elya Meir was primarily influenced by his father, who was a gifted pedagogue, and who put great effort into training R' Elya Meir and his two older brothers – R' Zalman (Menahel of the yeshiva), and R' Avrohom Yitzchok (who became Rosh HaYeshiva).

◣ After his marriage to the daughter of R' Avrohom Moshe Kaplan of Memel, R' Elya Meir spent 8 years in his father-in-law's community – learning and given *shiurim* for the *baalei battim*. Twelve years before the outbreak of WWII, his father summoned him back to Telshe, where he served as a Rosh Yeshiva under his father, and later under his brother, R' Avrohom Yitzchok hy"d.

◣ In 1940, when the Russians occupied Lithuania, they ordered the yeshiva vacated to be used as a military hospital. The last night there was a *mishmar* in the yeshiva until dawn. When the communists came to vacate the building, the *Bnei Yeshiva* were not yet ready to leave. They movingly davened *Shacharis*, read from the *Sefer Torah*, and returned it to the *Aron Kodesh*. After davening, when R' Elya Meir removed the *Sifrei Torah* from the *Aron Kodesh*, the *bachurim* broke out in tears. R' Elya Meir lifted his hands and, in a choking voice, called out, "*Ribbono Shel Olam*, this is the third time that I have had to remove the *Sifrei Torah* from the yeshiva. Once, during the lifetime of my grandfather R' Leizer, when a fire destroyed the yeshiva. Again, during WWI. This is the third time. I pray that just as you helped me return the *Sifrei Torah* to the *Aron Kodesh* before, grant me the merit to return the Torah to its resting place a third

time." It was not until two years later that R' Elya Meir placed the *Sifrei Torah* into the *Aron Kodesh* in the Telshe Yeshiva – which was then situated in a private home in Cleveland.

◣ During the tense months between the Russian invasion and the Nazi onslaught, the Roshei Yeshiva made every effort to inspire the *bachurim* to apply themselves to Torah learning more than ever before. R' Elya Meir used the time to speak to the *bachurim* about *Kiddush Hashem*, and how they were privileged to merit learning Torah in the face of adversity. The yeshiva sent R' Elya Meir and his brother-in-law R' Chaim Mordechai Katz, to America, in order to raise the funds needed to move the yeshiva to America or Eretz Yisroel. They only learned of the Nazi invasion once they had arrived in America. It would now be impossible to bring the yeshiva over; they would have to recreate Telshe in America.

◣ Although they had no idea of the fate of their families, their hours were devoted exclusively to reestablishing the yeshivah. Only later were they to learn that R' Elya Meir's wife and four children, and R' Mottel's wife and ten children, had been consumed by the Holocaust. R' Elya Meir chose to establish the yeshiva in Cleveland. Many skeptics predicted he would be back in New York within six months. Today, the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland is one of the prominent yeshivos in America.

◣ R' Elya Meir and R' Mottel established the yeshiva with much self-sacrifice. They lived in the yeshiva, ate their meals with the *bachurim*, learned with them, and dealt with their individual problems. They began with a few *talmidim* who had escaped from Europe, and some American boys sent from Baltimore by Rav Yehudah Davis. It was difficult, as they had to introduce the American boys to true advanced European-style Torah learning.

◣ The first building, located in the home of Mr. Yitzchak Feigenbaum, opened in 1941. Those present at the *Chanukas HaBayis*,

who had known the glory of Telshe in Lithuania, openly wept at the sight of the modest yeshiva building.

Ironically, R' Elya Meir, who had suffered so much personal loss, was the one who comforted the others. He was always the source of *simcha* and exuberance. He would be the one to break out in dance on Yom Tov, sing *zemiros* at *Shalosh Seudos*, and sing *grammen* and Yiddish songs on Purim.

◣ In 1945, on the day that R' Elya Meir received confirmation that his family had perished, he wrote in his writings: *"Should someone look at these writings, let him not judge me as callous and cruel for having delved into the words of Torah after such terrible information... I feel that I can never come to peace (with myself) without the toil of Torah... without fulfilling the sacred duty which now falls upon the survivors... My first call of duty must be laboring in Torah. I am indentured in the service of my people... Of what importance are the woes of the individual when compared to the duties of the Klal?"*

◣The *talmidim* felt a warmth and closeness to their Roshei Yeshiva. But R' Elya Meir was equally strict in upholding his principles. Once the first group of *talmidim* decided to take off from *Motzei Shabbos seder* to go out for some innocent distraction. The next day, R' Mottel told them there would be no *shiur*. Sunday night, R' Elya Meir gave his regular *shmuess*. For three hours he gave them scathing *mussar*. He told them that he did not open the yeshiva to cater to American society… that he was a messenger of the Roshei Yeshiva that they had left behind in Europe, and they would never have agreed to such a yeshivah... He stated that whoever does not have the courage to close a yeshivah when it departs from its goals has no right to open one. He said it was better to destroy the yeshiva now than to let it continue, for a yeshivah without a foundation would ultimately crumble. At the end of the *shmuess*, he shouted, "Take the keys and close the yeshivah! Tomorrow you will go home!" The

next morning, when the boys came to their regular *shiur*, R' Elya Meir told them to pack up and leave. They did not move. He then said, "There is only one condition under which we will keep the yeshivah open. If each of you will give us a *tekias kaf* – your hand and your solemn word – that you will not go any place where you have the slightest doubt we may disapprove. If not, you can all leave today." All the boys gave their word, and they first began to understand what "Telshe" means.

◣ If a student presented a line of reasoning in a *shiur* that R' Elya Meir felt was illogical, and refused to be corrected, R' Elya Meir would attack him verbally. Yet after the *shiur* he would wrap his arm around him and say, "Such is the way of Torah. You must ask, and not pay attention to my anger. I enjoy your questions."

◣ He was a man of uncompromising truth. His Torah interpretations were formulated with extreme effort to produce Torah thoughts that were absolute truth. Though he was a gifted orator and writer, he never used words that would mislead or convey a false impression. When in Eretz Yisroel, he once began walking barefoot over sharp stones to immerse himself in the *Yam Kinneret*. A man asked him what he was doing, so R' Elya Meir replied that he wanted to say that he had bathed in the *Kinneret*. The man said, "Why go to all the trouble? Who's to stop you from saying it?" R' Elya Meir was astonished! He later commented, "It used to be said, 'If you can tell the truth, why tell a lie?' Now people say, 'If you can tell a lie, why bother with the truth?'"

◣ When **R' Elya Meir Bloch** heard of a departure from the strict standards of truth and honesty, he became outraged at the resulting desecration of Hashem's Name. At one Telshe alumni convention, when the former *talmidim* expected to hear a profound and inspiring *shmuess*, R' Elya Meir began with forceful words, "*Men tor nisht zein a ganov* (One is not allowed to be a thief)." In an agitated voice, he told the assembled that on a recent trip, he had been short of

cash, and had asked an acquaintance to lend him $100 until the next day. When he detected reluctance on the man's part, R' Elya Meir asked incredulously, "I said I will bring you the money tomorrow. Don't you trust me?" The man, who knew R' Elya Meir quite well, shamefully replied, "It's not that I don't trust you, Rabbi. It's just that I've had a bad experience." R' Elya Meir had been beside himself, as he realized that another *talmid chochom* had borrowed money from this man and had not repaid the debt. He continued speaking in distress to his *talmidim*, "Do you understand what matters have come to? A businessman does not trust a Rosh Yeshiva with $100 until the next day because of a 'bad experience'! You came here expecting to hear some deep thoughts. You may go back home and say that you came to Cleveland to hear the Telshe Rosh Yeshiva say, '*Men tor nisht zein a ganov!*' "

◣ He never desisted from speaking out against wrongdoing. He spoke strongly against late Sunday morning breakfast *minyanim*, viewing them as *avodah zarah*, since they made a special day of Sunday. He was among the first to warn of the dangers of television, and to declare it forbidden, quoting the *pasuk*, "*You shall not bring an abomination into your home*." He used every opportunity to speak against yeshivah *bachurim* attending college, despite the effect on yeshivah enrollment. At the annual banquet of the yeshiva, aimed at soliciting funds from the community, he would deliver long addresses about the problems of the city and the world, never considering that his *Daas Torah* might alienate some. At one banquet he spoke for close to an hour, chastising the local Jewish community for not having participated in a memorial gathering for the Chazon Ish.

◣ In the early years, many outsiders including Conservative and Reform rabbis, would attend the meal after the yeshivah's *hakafos* on Simchas Torah. R' Elya Meir was never inhospitable but would inevitably speak out against the Reform and Conservative movements on these occasions.

◣ R' Elya Meir made a point of demanding *kavod haTorah* from his students; there was really no need to, for his very presence commanded respect. He was a prince of Torah, yet most humble. He told his students, "Don't you think that I realize that I make myself foolish in your eyes when I insist that you stand up for me? But what shall I do? That is the *halachah*, and I must teach you the *halachah*."

◣ R' Elya Meir was a complete *talmid* of his father, R' Yosef Leib. He imparted his Torah knowledge and philosophy and conducted himself in the very same manner. He referred to his father as "der Rebbi" or "der Futter." He felt committed to transmit R' Yosef Leib's thought system. His own *shiurim* were original masterpieces, yet invariably based on a principle of one of his father's *shiurim* and his learning methodology.

◣ R' Elya Meir's *shiur daas* took the place of the *mussar shmuess* in other yeshivos. The *bachurim* would anticipate this *shiur*, vying for the best seats. Though it was officially scheduled for an hour, the *shiur daas* was rarely over on time. During Elul he would speak for as long as 2 hours. He spoke of responsibility for the *Klal*, of discipline and of *seder*, of toiling in Torah, of the greatness of Chazal, and more. There was always a practical *mussar* for the *talmidim*. When some attempted to guess for whom certain words were intended, overlooking the ideas presented in the *shiur*, R' Elya Meir compared it to those who pick out and nibble the raisins, leaving over the whole challah.

◣ He conducted *mussar vaadim* – sessions with small groups of selected students. The focus of these *vaadim* was a *sefer*, but it was only a springboard for open discussion in Torah *hashkafah*, recollections of old Telshe – anything that he felt could develop the student's thinking and convey *daas Torah* as it applied to them.

◣ R' Elya Meir encouraged his *talmidim* to enter the field of *chinuch* and *hafotzas Torah*. He would speak of the role of the *manhig* (leader) as "min hahar el ha'am" – from the mountain [Sinai] to the

nation" – there was no stopping off in between at home. And he lived by this credo. At times R' Elya Meir would return from a trying trip or a convention, and head directly for his study to spend the entire night preparing his *shiur*, then to the yeshiva, and only after delivering the *shiur*, would he rest.

◣ R' Aharon Kotler, in his *hesped* for R' Elya Meir, described him as a *yachid b'doro* (unique in his generation) in his approach to working for the *Klal*. R' Aharon relayed that R' Elya Meir had a definite opinion on matters and would fight for his position. Yet when the majority of *Gedolei Torah* had decided otherwise, he would submit to the majority and was just as strong as before in carrying out their position – which had now become his position.

◣ He could live in harmony with those whose ideas he fought and would treat them with the utmost respect.

Though he differed, and constantly battled against Mizrachi ideals, he cooperated with the Mizrachi leaders on matters of common communal interest. They, in turn, held R' Elya Meir in great esteem and affection.

◣ R' Elya Meir maintained strict *sedorim* for his own learning, which could not be violated except for emergencies. But he had one *kaballah* which was inviolate – to learn at least an hour a day.

◣ On the second night after he underwent his last major surgery, R' Elya Meir lay critically ill, with tubes attached to various parts of his body. He could not move and he could hardly speak. After a while, he said to his visitor, R' Chaim Dov Keller, "*Lernen* (learning)." R' Keller took a *chumash* and learned with him the *parsha* with *Rashi*. R' Elya Meir glanced at the clock from time to time, and when half an hour had passed, he said "*Genug* (enough)." He was extremely fatigued, and closed his eyes to rest for a while. Then he again said, "*Lernen*." After another half hour of learning, he said again, "*Genug*" with a smile of satisfaction on his face. He had finished his hour of learning.

◣ R' Mottel Katz and R' Mordechai Gifter once visited him in the hospital. R' Elya Meir turned to them and said, "From the time that I arrived at my full senses, I never missed my *kabbalah* to learn at least an hour a day, with one exception, when I was wheeled into the operating room before dawn and did not regain consciousness until after dark. But now I feel that to learn would be a question of endangering my health. But I will not permit myself to forgo learning unless you *pasken* for me that I may."

◣Towards the end, when he was terminally ill, R' Keller mentioned to him an observation he had made on a passage in the *Ketzos Hachoshen*. As soon as R' Elya Meir heard the "Ketzos" mentioned, his eyes lit up, a smile crossed his face, and his voice became strong and clear. He said, "I made the same observation in one of my *shiurim*." He then discussed the *Ketzos* with an enthusiasm and liveliness that belied his faltering physical state. He passed away only two days later on a Shabbos morning, right after making *Kiddush* for his Rebbitzen in the hospital.

◣ One of his daughters, Chasya, survived the Holocaust. She married R' Eliezer Sorotzkin of Kiryat Telshe Stone in Eretz Yisroel. R' Elya Meir remarried in America, and he had two children – R' Yosef Zalman, Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivah Eitz Chaim in Monsey; and Miriam, who married R' Dovid Barkin, Rosh Yeshivah in Telshe.

◣ R' Elya Meir always said that a Rebbi for Klal Yisroel can only be a *mislamed* – one who is continuously learning. He explained that Moshe Rabbeinu was bidden by Hashem to show two signs to the Jews that he was to lead them – his staff turned into a serpent and his hand became leprous when he removed it from inside his chest. Rashi explains that the snake indicated that he had slandered the Jews (like the first serpent) by saying they would not believe him and the leprosy was a punishment for having suspected innocent people. Moshe Rabbeinu was in essence saying, "Look! I've suspected you wrongly and have spoken *lashon hara* against you." R' Elya Meir

explained that though this declaration does not seem like a claim to leadership, it was! Moshe was demonstrating that he had made mistakes, but was ready to learn. He was telling the Jews, "I can teach you, because I myself can learn." R' Elya Meir epitomized this teaching.

◣ *The yahrzeit of R' Elya Meir ben R' Yosef Leib Bloch zt"l is on 28 Teves (1955). May his merit protect us.*

Fascinating INSIGHTS

High Hopes





Although Moshiach hasn't come yet, there is no need to despair. This can be compared to one who flips a coin: there still remains a 50/50 chance that it will land on heads or tails. The same can be said regarding Moshiach — although he hasn't come yet, it doesn't decrease the chances of his arrival now.

R' Chatzkel Levenstein explained that when a person is waiting for a bus and many busses already passed that weren't the bus he needs, he will still look up in anticipation the next time another bus approaches. This is because this may be the bus he has been waiting

for. The same applies with Moshiach. Even though he didn't come until now when it seemed that current events would dictate his coming, we still should anticipate him anytime something happens that can lead to his arrival.



Unbreakable

For one to live authentically, he must be connected to the creator, as it says **ואתם הדבקים בה' אלה-כם חיים** – '*you who cling to Hashem are living*.'

There was a tzadik from Brisk, R' Nachum Eliyahu, whose profession was selling women's jewelry. To protect himself spiritually, when he recited in **קריאת שמע על המטה** the words **בידך אפקיד רוחי** – '*in Hashem's hand do I entrust my spirit*' (in **אדון עולם**), he would say: "Hashem, if you know I will act properly tomorrow, then return my neshama to me. Otherwise, keep it with you."

The Sefas Emes is bothered about why Hashem arranged the information regarding the whereabouts of Yosef to be kept hidden from Yaakov. He explains that although Yaakov was terribly pained that his **בן זקונים** was taken from him, his ignorance of Yosef's location was a kindness from Hashem. This is because it would have been even more painful for Yaakov to have known that Yosef was sold to Mitzrayim—**ערות הארץ** - a place of impurity—as he had no greater desire than to raise his children as servants of Hashem.

When the shevatim said **עוד יוסף חי וכי הוא משל בכל ארץ מצרים** - '*Yosef is still alive, he is the ruler in Mitzrayim*', they also meant that Yosef was alive spiritually, despite being in Mitzrayim. "*He ruled in Mitzrayim*" means that he ruled over his evil inclination, despite being in such an impure place.

From Yaakov's view, a life of impurity as the King of Mitzrayim would be worse than death!

The pasuk continues **ויפג לבו כי לא האמין להם**, Yaakov didn't believe them. What Yaakov didn't believe was that Yosef was spiritually alive, although he may have been physically alive, since being a king, Yosef could have any desire fulfilled. When did Yaakov believe them? When he was shown the wagons, which were a sign of the Torah topic he and Yosef had been studying when they were separated— **עגלה ערופה** . Because this showed Yosef was alive spiritually, **ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם** – '*the spirit of Yaakov was revived.*'

In Czarist Russia children as young as eight were forcefully inducted into the army for service of up to 25 years. A woman once came to **R' Yisrael of Rizhin** to bemoan the fact that her son had been abducted by the Russian army. She said, "If only I would see the grave instead of knowing that he is alive but transgressing Torah commandments!"



Jews throughout history remained connected to Hashem—whether in the enslavement in Mitzrayim, the crusades, the Holocaust, or in other devastating circumstances.

Not too long ago, a container was discovered with a paper inside in the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto, on which were written these remarkable words:

My name is Yossel ben Yossel Rockover from Tarnipol and I am a chassid of the ***Gerrer Rebbe****. I am here in the Warsaw Ghetto as it is going up in flames. My wife and child—a 7-month-old baby—were hiding in the woods and were murdered. Two other children of mine,*

I don't know where they are. The three children who were with me were murdered yesterday.

I am left with nothing, and these are my final hours on this world. I am 40 years old today and I served Hashem with **התלהבות** *, passion. My request is that I should be able to serve Hashem* **בכל לבבך בכל נפשך ובכל מאדך** *. I can testify with full emuna that my trust in Hashem hasn't changed an inch (* **כמלא נימא** *) and I completely believe in each of the thirteen principles of faith.*

I remember what my rebbe told me many times about a man who fled the Spanish Inquisition and arrived in Amsterdam. After escaping with his family and coming off the ship, a bolt of lightning hit, which killed his wife. Later a wave came and took away his two children.

The man then stood on the deck of the ship and said the following: "Hashem, you did many things to make me turn away from you. I am informing you that I believe in you no matter what you do. Nothing can make me stop believing in you and being an honest Jew and a servant of Hashem."

I feel now like that Jew who escaped the Spanish Inquisition…

In a similar vein, on a wall in Cologne, Germany, where Jews had hidden from the Nazis, an inscription was found that read: "***I believe in the sun even when it's not shining. I believe in love even when not feeling it. I believe in G-d even when He is silent***."

After such astounding words, we can understand Rashi's comment - **וְרַנְּנוּ גוֹיִם עַמּוֹ כִּי דַם עֲבָדָיו יִקּוֹם וְנָקָם יָשִׁיב לְצָרָיו וְכִפֶּר אַדְמָתוֹ עַמּוֹ** (Devarim 32:43). That in the future the non-Jews will praise us by saying, "***See the excellent feature of the Jewish people. They cleaved to Hashem through all the travails and didn't abandon Him***…"



Peace in Family

The Maharal translates the words **כי נבהלו מפניו** literally: "***They were frightened by his face***."

Because if the *pasuk* means that they were afraid of *him*, it would say **כי נבהלו ממנו** "***They were frightened from him***."

The Maharal explains that they saw Yosef in a different light, as though he had a brand-new face that they never saw before, and this frightened them.

At first, the brothers viewed Yosef as a murderer, a *rodef*, someone who desires to harm them. This is the reason they believed they had permission to kill him or to sell him to Mitzrayim. But now they saw that they had erred. They saw a new Yosef, a new face. Yosef didn't want to kill them. If he did, he could have done so several times since he was the ruler of Mitzrayim, and they were at his mercy.

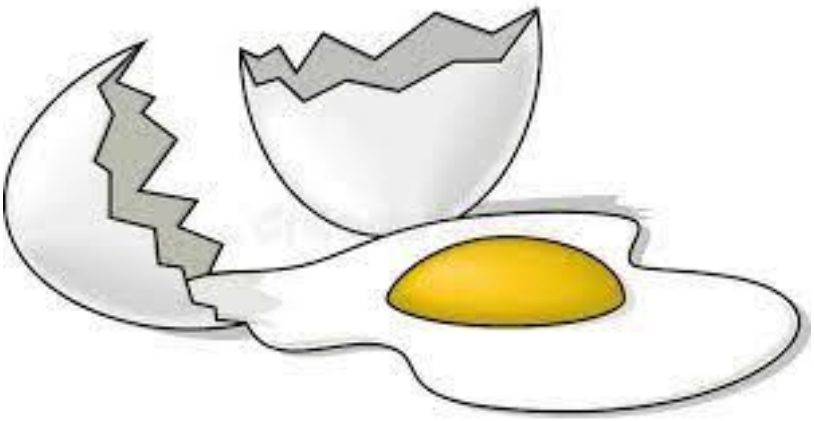
The brothers realized they were mistaken, and that's why they were so frightened. They were frightened by the magnitude of their error and how severely they had sinned.

There are times when we think someone is against us, someone is cruel to us, etc. but it is possible that we aren't seeing things correctly.

Practice seeing this "new face" in the people around you, and then you will be friendly and at peace with everyone.

Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt 'l told the following story. He heard it from **Reb Zalman Chaim Rivlin *zt'l***, who heard it from **Reb Nachum of Shadik *zt'l***:

Once, an egg merchant came to the rav of his city, covered from head to toe in eggs and eggshells. He told the rav what happened.



"Like I do every day, I bought a basket of eggs in a nearby village and brought them to sell in town. A customer asked me to deliver eggs to his home. I said that I first needed payment. He became angry and hit my basket with his stick. All the eggs broke, and I became dirtied with egg yolks. I want him summoned for a *din Torah*!"

The Rav sent his *shamesh* to summon that person for a *din Torah*. The *shamesh* was afraid because this person was renowned in the city as a *moser* — someone who slandered the Jewish community to the local government — and everyone in the town was afraid of him. But the Rav told him not to be scared and to do his mission.

The *shamesh* went to the *moser's* home and told him, "The rav summons you to a *din Torah*." The *moser* ridiculed the *shamesh* and refused to go. - The *shamesh* relayed the *moser's* insolent response.

The Rav said, "Go to his home and summon him again. This time, warn him that he will be placed in niduy, ex-communication if he doesn't come." - This time, the *moser* slapped the *shamesh* and repeated that he would not come to court.

That Shabbos, the *moser* was called up for an *aliyah*. The Rav quickly rushed to the *bimah*, and in front of everyone, he said, "*Rasha*! You are in *niduy* because you didn't come to *beis din*. You may not receive an *aliyah*."

The *moser* stepped down. Under his breath, but loud enough so people could hear, the *moser* said, "I will take revenge on the Rav."

A few days later, the Rav traveled to a neighboring village to be *sandek* at a bris. His student, Reb Nachum Shadik, and others were

with him. From a distance, the students saw the *moser*. "We are in great danger," they told the rav. "The *moser* is chasing us, and he will soon catch up."

The Rav became deep in thought. Soon, the *moser* arrived, and in a surprisingly humble voice, he said to the Rav, "I want to hit your *talmidim*. Please, let me hit them."

"No!" the Rav reprimanded. "You may not touch them." - "Then let me spit on them?" - "Also, not." - "Forgive me for all the trouble I caused you."

"If you will receive the egg merchant's forgiveness and pay for the eggs you broke, I will also forgive you."

The *moser* gave the Rav ten rubles and said, "Give it to the egg merchant. It will cover the cost of the eggs. And the extra money is to appease him, so he should forgive me."

The Rav took the money and said, "I will give over the money. I am certain that he will forgive you. And I also forgive you." – They parted on friendly terms.

The students were shocked by the *moser's* humble demeanor. Reb Nachum Shadik asked the rav how it happened. "How did the *moser* change his nature so quickly? He was rushing to harm us. How did he suddenly become so gentle?"

The Rav replied, "My rebbes taught me that the solution to every problem could be found in the Torah. As the *moser* was pursuing after us, I thought of the *pasuk* **כמים הפנים לפנים כן לב האדם לאדם**. This *pasuk* teaches that people are like mirrors. If you love your fellow man, you can be certain he loves you too. If you hate someone, this is a sign that he hates you. - I realized that if the *moser* hates me, it must be that I hate him as well, and if I love him, he will love me back.

I began searching for his qualities and finding ways to judge him favorably. I thought about how he was probably raised without

chinuch and doesn't know how to act properly. I thought such thoughts until I loved him. This automatically spurred him to think positively towards me, and he didn't want to hurt me anymore."

Reb Nachum asked, "Why did he want to hit and spit on us?"

"He hated you because you still hated him. Had you loved him, he would feel positive towards you as well."

Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick

וְאֶת־יְהוּדָה שָׁלַח לְפָנָיו אֶל־יוֹסֵף לְהוֹרֹת לְפָנָיו גֹּשְׁנָה 46:28



The **פָּסוּק** says that Yaakov sent Yehuda ahead to Mitzrayim to prepare a place for them to stay. Rashi explains **לְתַקֵּן לוֹ בֵּית תַּלְמוּד שֶׁמִּשָּׁם תֵּצֵא הוֹרָאָה** - that he sent Yehuda ahead to prepare for them a Bais Medrash so that they can have a place to learn.

The Taam VaDaas says that by sending Yehuda ahead, Yaakov was giving Yosef a message that even if he is second to the king and very busy, he must make sure that there is a yeshiva established where he lives so that he can always have a place to go and learn.

We learn from here that no matter how busy someone is, they have to always make sure to set aside time to learn. [**ספר עלינו לשבח**]

Horav Mordechai Pinchas Teitz זצ"ל



Horav Mordechai Pinchas Teitz זצ"ל

In the early 1950's, Horav Mordechai Pinchas Teitz **זצ"ל** noticed that many of the older people did not know how to learn gemara. He decided to start a learning session on the radio every motzai Shabbos and learned a daf of gemara each week.

After the first year, Rav Teitz made a melaveh malkah for all of the people who listened to his daf hashavuah. He was very happy when he saw that there were over 1,400 people who learned with him!



Ups & Downs by Michael Winner

אָנֹכִי אֵרֵד עִמְּךָ מִצְרַיְמָה וְאָנֹכִי אַעַלְךָ גַם־עָלֹה "***I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up***" (Bereishis 46:4).

The Kedushas Levi notes that the word "bring you up" is doubled when written in the Torah, being it's written twice in Hebrew. He explains the reasoning as follows:

When a student is not so bright, his teacher needs to condense his teachings in a way the student will grasp the material. When the student is bright however, the teacher has no need to.

When Yaakov was living in Eretz Yisroel, he had the ability to grasp things easily. His service to Hashem was clear. However, he was afraid that by living in Egypt, with all the surrounding impurities, his ability to serve Hashem will dimmish greatly.

In response to this, Hashem promises him that He will "go down" with Yaakov. Being that Hashem will "condense" his teachings, so Yaakov will be able to understand. When Yaakov (technically, his children) will eventually return to Eretz Yisroel, both he and Hashem (hence the double language) will return to the higher level of service. Yaakov will be on a higher level to understand, and Hashem will also "teach" on a higher level for Yaakov to understand.

From here, I believe, we learn an important lesson that can be applied to our everyday lives.

There are times, where life gets hectic. It could be for good things, children being born, weddings to plan, etc. and it could be for not-so-good things. Either way, life is constantly throwing curveballs at us. And when such curveballs are thrown, it's very easy to get depressed about one's spiritual life because as you are dealing with the curveball, you have no time to focus on the spiritual.

For example, let's take some guy working an eight-hour day, and going to learn gemara every night for two hours. Life is good. Then something happens. I don't know … something big happens at work where he needs to spend a bit more time, and his daughter gets engaged. Now he's dealing with two big things, which take his time away. Now, for a month's time, he simply cannot make it to go learn. It gets easy to get depressed about this. He's so busy with "this world," he cannot put his focus on "that world."

So, it's good to be prepared. In cases like this, he needs to understand that gemara is perhaps out of the question for now. He doesn't have the time or the headspace. However, mishnayos are smaller and easier "to digest" during such turbulent times. Perhaps

putting focus there during smaller bits of time that he has free, is a good plan to execute.

It's important to remember that it's Hashem throwing the curveballs at us, and it's up to us to change our stance accordingly. If He is putting us in a situation where it's impossible to maintain our normal spiritual life, then we adapt to it and focus on maintaining our non-normal spiritual life.





Shortly after he was married, the gaon **Rav Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg** visited **Reb Baruch Ber** and asked for a letter of semichah, attesting to his ability to render halachic rulings.

Reb Boruch Ber was well aware of Reb Chaim Pinchas' greatness in Torah even as a young man. However, he refused to give him the letter he requested, in keeping with his principle of granting *semicha* only to talmidim who had spent at least two and a half years learning in his yeshivah.

Shortly after Reb Chaim Pinchas had left the house, Reb Boruch Ber asked someone to go after him and call him back before he reached home.

When he returned, Reb Baruch Ber told him he'd decided to give him the *semichah* after all. Friends asked Reb Baruch Ber why he had changed his mind and what was so important about intercepting Reb Chaim Pinchas before he got home.

Reb Baruch Ber explained, "He's a young *avreich* who's just married. When he would have arrived home, his young wife would have asked him whether he'd received the *semichah* from me. If he would have said no, she would have immediately become upset, before he had a chance to explain the reason for my refusal. In order to spare her that distress, I decided to make an exception and grant him the *semichah*."

Yehudah tells Yosef, "It will happen that when our father sees that Binyomin is missing and he will die…"

The question is; why would Yaakov Avinu be niftar if Binyamin wasn't there? They would explain to Yaakov that Binyomin was **still alive**!

One answer is that Yaakov Avinu knew that **מצרים** was the center of **טומאה** in the gantzeh velt! If Binyomin was taken there, the damage to his ruchnios was reason for Yaakov Avinu to become so distraught to the extent that he would leave the world.

An alternative answer is that Yehudah was telling Yosef as follows, "If we come in the door **without** our brother Binyomin, *it's true*, that when we will explain to our father **why** Binyomin is not with us and we would tell him he was not niftar on the road our father would not be niftar from **צער**. However, when we walk in the door without Binyomin **before** we even have a chance to explain ***why*** he is missing it will be too late. The **צער** on seeing he is gone will be so much **צער** for our father that we will cause him to immediately leave the world, before we will even get a chance to explain to him that he's alive and is okay.

From Rags to Riches



Once, there was a king who had a unique ring. This ring was very precious to him, so when he found an ugly scratch on the jewel, he was furious.

Experts from all over the world were called to try to repair the ring, but none succeeded. Finally, when the king had nearly despaired of ever repairing his ring, a jeweler from a distant city was found. This jeweler was wise in his ways and explained to the king that the scratch was not a blemish but the beginning of a design. He explained that the incomplete design was none other than the royal family's emblem.

The jeweler skillfully cut out the rest of the emblem from the initial scratch and presented the ring to the king. The king was thrilled with his repaired ring and loved it even more than before.

Yissurim (troubles) are the scratch on the ring of life from which we can grow. Not always do we understand Hashem's ways, but we believe that He always sends us troubles as a prelude to good.

Use your personal yissurim as a chance to get closer to Hashem and reach perfection. Take your scratches and turn them into opportunities to grow. - ***When you change the way you see things, the things you see change***.

"The worst fault a person can have is to forget his intrinsic greatness as a human being." ~ R' Shlomo of Karlin zt"l.

Reb Yoel R. On The Parsha

וְהִנֵּה עֵינֵיכֶם רֹאוֹת וְעֵינֵי אָחִי בִנְיָמִין כִּי־פִי הַמְדַבֵּר "***And behold, your eyes see along with the eyes of my brother, Binyamin, that I speak to you with my own mouth.***" (45:12)

Rashi says - that Yosef told his brothers שֶׁכְּשֵׁם שֶׁאֵין לִי שִׂנְאָה עַל בִּנְיָמִין אָחִי, שֶׁהֲרֵי לֹא הָיָה בִּמְכִירָתִי, כָּךְ אֵין בִּלְבִּי שִׂנְאָה עֲלֵיכֶם - "*Just as I do not have anything against my brother Binyamin, who was not involved in selling me, so too I do not have anything against you.*"



How was Yosef able to accomplish this? How did he put years of jail, the degradation of being sold as a slave, and the complete separation from his father all behind him? Not only did Yosef forget about what the brothers had done to him, he even named his son Menashe, **כי נשני אלקים את כל עמלי** - *for Hashem has made me forget all my trouble*. He named his son for the ability to forget all his troubles from the past. How did Yosef master this astounding ability to forget and forgive?

Yosef told his brothers his secret: וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ וְאַל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־ מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה כִּי לְמִחְיָה שְׁלָחַנִי אֱלֹקים לִפְנֵיכֶם... וְעַתָּה לֹא־אַתֶּם שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה כִּי הָאֱלֹקים - '***And <u>now</u>, do not be sad, and do not get angry that you sold me here, for it was to preserve life that Hashem sent me before you… And <u>now</u>, you did not send me, but rather Hashem…***' (45:5,8)

Why did Yosef repeat the word – **ועתה**- *now*? Just skip the word, *now*!

The answer is the secret that preserved Yosef's true identity; it is the secret of **ועתה** - *now*.

Yosef lived in the present, so the past was automatically forgotten. This is what Yosef said: **ועתה אל תעצבו** - **now** —after your *teshuva*— there is nothing to be sad about. Do not start digging up the past, regretting that you sold me. Now that you did *teshuva*, my enslavement has become solely an act of Hashem.

This is difficult to explain but easy to understand. There are different levels of now. Anything that we can see, hear, smell, feel, or taste is in the now. Anything that is actionable is in the now. Anything and everything else is in the past or future.

All the sadness, anger, and stress that we humans just cannot let go of, belong to thoughts of the past or future, not to thoughts of now. Because we cannot do anything about the past or the future, thoughts about them are stressful.

There is no greater tool to bring one success than his own mind. And there is no greater tool for self-destruction [**Rabbi Yosef Farhi**]

SEFAS TAMIM
FOUNDATION • Emphasizing Everyday Emes

Chizuk - Inspiration

A Kollel student of a certain Yeshiva approached his Rosh Yeshiva and informed him that he could no longer afford to be learning in Kollel and that he feels the time has arrived to accept a position in the working world. The Rosh Yeshiva perceived a sense of sadness in the Kollel man's demeanor and said: "You should realize that now you have an opportunity to sanctify the Name of Hashem on a very great level.

How so? By being a shining example of integrity within the work force."

He then proceeded to give him advice along the lines of the following: "My advice to you is to be reliable. Show up to work on time and refrain from unnecessary talk. Make sure that your words always have a positive effect on people. Be Modeh al HaEmes – admit the truth and acknowledge your mistakes - do not blame others. Show that you are willing and able to fix your mistakes. When there is disagreement between you and another worker, look at the disagreement from the other worker's perspective – this is also part of the Middah of Emes. Finally, never compromise your integrity.

Sticking to these ideals will bring you both success in your working environment and will be a source of great Kiddush Hashem.

Rabbi Avrohom Ebstein - Guaranteed Salvation

The story is well known of the **Brisker Rav** at the time he fled the Nazis. Moving from checkpoint to checkpoint, he had instructed his family to saturate their thoughts with the fact of 'Ein od mil'vado.' They had continued to make their way, until abruptly, a Nazi guard caught up to them. Immediately, the Brisker Rav knew the reason: his mind had momentarily diverted from concentrated thinking on 'Ein od mil'vado.' Recognizing this, he regained his focus and strengthened himself, and the Nazi guard left them alone.

Integrating the thought of ein od mil'vado is a true and tried practice, stemming back years upon years.

A store owner once caught news that the town's tax collector would be going from store to store, inspecting and ensuring that each business owner had paid their due taxes. Knowing that the tax collector would unfairly press the owner to pay much more than required, he sought the **Beis HaLevi's** counsel. The Beis HaLevi, recognizing the trouble the owner found himself, headed to his

seforim shelf and pulled out the sefer **Nefesh HaChaim**. And there, for the next two hours, the Beis HaLevi and the owner sat together and engrossed themselves in learning the section about ein od mil'vado, going over and over it, again and again.

Two hours later, there was a knock at the door. It was the store owner's wife. "They left," she said. The taxi collector had been going from house to house and placed a red mark on the owner's door before he and the other collectors headed to a lunch break. When they returned, they noticed the red mark, and mistakenly thought that this had been the last house they checked. In fact, however, they had never gone inside, and it had been the first house they wanted to check when they returned from lunch. Miraculously, the store owner was spared any issues whatsoever.

A 23-year-old man by the name of R' Chaim was one of many who had been picked up by the Nazis and charged with various allegations. Faced with this difficult predicament, what came to mind was what he learned at age seventeen. In just a few minutes he would be speaking to the Nazi officials; what could he possibly do or say? Knowing that no argument would be convincing enough to spare him a terrible end, he asked for five minutes alone. They were granted.

For the next five minutes, R' Chaim deeply engrossed himself in thoughts of ein od mil'vado. Turning to Hashem, he ingrained into every fiber of his being over and over: "I know there is no other power than Hashem. I know these Nazis have no power. It is only You who have any power in the world, and when I completely connect myself to You, You are there to save me." For those five minutes, R' Chaim's focus was completely riveted to these thoughts.

When the time had ended, he returned to the Nazi official, who looked him square in the face. "You remind me of my son," said the Nazi. "I can't bring myself to shoot you. Get out of here quickly!" And with that, R' Chaim ran away, and his life was spared.

Such is the power of ein od mil'vado. When we attach ourselves to Hashem, we connect to the ultimate conduit of blessing and channel Heavenly salvation in ways that are truly wondrous and lifesaving.

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְאַל־יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדֶּךָ כִּי כָמוֹךָ כְּפַרְעֹה (44:18)

Parshas Mikeitz concludes with Yehuda meekly accepting Yosef's decision to sentence them to slavery for stealing his goblet, acknowledging that Binyomin had been caught red-handed and they deserved to be punished (44:16). It is therefore surprising that just two verses later, Parshas Vayigash begins with Yehuda harshly questioning Yosef's authority and fairness (Rashi - **שֶׁדִּבֵּר אֵלָיו קָשׁוֹת** 44:18). What happened in the interim that caused Yehuda's attitude to change so drastically?

Rav Shimon Schwab explains that Yehuda's initial reaction when Yosef's goblet was found in Binyomin's sack was sincere. He was genuinely troubled that his brother had been caught committing such a terrible crime. However, after Yehuda had a moment to reflect on this development, he remembered that he had personally guaranteed his father that he would bring Binyomin back (43:9), which gave him the courage and conviction to confront Yosef and stand up to him.

Along these lines, **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel** once asked one of his talmidim to become the mashgiach in a certain yeshiva. The student was also close to **Rav Avrohom Yaakov Pam** and asked his opinion about taking the job. Rav Pam felt that he was still too young and was not yet ready for so much achrayus (responsibility).

When Rav Nosson Tzvi heard about Rav Pam's concern, he called him and said, "With the achrayus comes the kochos (abilities)." Rav Pam was very moved by Rav Nosson Tzvi's perspective and often repeated

it to his talmidim, telling them that when a person assumes additional responsibility in life, he will discover within himself the energy and maturity needed to carry out his new obligations.

Similarly, in Parshas Behaaloscha, a group of rabble-rousers complained about the Manna and expressed their desire to eat meat instead. Moshe responded (Bamidbar 11:12-13) by asking Hashem if he had given birth to the nation and lamented his inability to supply them with the tremendous amount of meat required to meet their demands. If Moshe knew that he lacked the means to give them what they wanted, why was it relevant to discuss whether he gave birth to them?

The Sfas Emes explains that Moshe's excuse that he could not fulfill their desires was only valid because they were not his biological children. Even though it was seemingly im-possible to find enough meat for so many people in the middle of the desert, if Moshe had in fact given birth to them, he would have felt such a strong achrayus to provide for them that he would have somehow come up with a way to do so.

Applying this concept to our own lives, **Rav Yisroel Reisman** notes that many people are so busy with their daily responsibilities to their families and jobs that they are left with little time for learning Torah and doing mitzvos.

When we say Shema twice each day, we are supposed to accept upon ourselves the yokes of Hashem's kingship and doing mitzvos. If we do so correctly, we will develop within ourselves a sense of achrayus for Torah and mitzvos that is no less important than our other feelings of responsibility, at which point we will automatically find the time and energy to fulfill our newfound obligations, just as we learn from Yehuda, Rav Nosson Tzvi, and Moshe Rabbeinu.

This Week in Jewish History, as published by the OU

[11 Tevet]

● 100,000 Jews of Sicily expelled, 1492.

[12 Tevet]

● Yechezkial prophesied the downfall of Egypt and the triumph of Bavel, 587 b.c.e.

● A violent earthquake rocked Eretz Yisrael seriously damaging the walls of Jerusalem and Tower of David, 1033.

● Another Mordechai and Esther (of Medzibezh) saved the Jews from Chmielnicki's army, 1648.

[13 Tevet]

● First issue of the Hebrew printing press of Amsterdam (the Siddur), 1627.

● Rumanian Jews were excluded from the medical profession, 1868.

[14 Tevet]

● Jews of Laibach, Austria expelled, 1515.

● Window Purim. celebrated by the S'fardic community of Hebron.

● Population of Israel reached three million, 1971.

[15 Tevet]

● First printed edition of Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, Soncino, Italy, 1488.

[16 Tevet]

● Emperor Joseph II of Austria issued an Edict of Toleration in 1782 which repealed most restrictions on Jews that had been imposed by the Church. [Nice? No! The intention of the edict was not the emancipation of the Jews but their assimilation. Similarly, Napoleon's efforts had similar motives. On the other hand, the

emancipation of the Jews in England and Holland beginning in the 17th century, stemmed from liberal policies rather than anti-Jewish prejudices and hopes of assimilating and converting Jews. Ironically, the former type of motivation was often successfully fought by Jews who saw what was behind the easing of restrictions against Jews. The latter type of removal of restrictions often led to an increase of assimilation.]

[17 Tevet]

● The organization of the Jewish community of Rome was approved by the pope, 1524.

● The yahrzeit of the Dubno Maggid, 1804.

[December 23]

● Emancipation of the Jews of Hungary, 1867.

● The Pope bans conversion of Jewish children without consent of their parents, 1420

[December 24]

● The desecration of a new shul in Cologne, Germany sparked a wave of anti-Jewish incidents throughout Western Europe, the Americas, Australia, and Africa, 1959. [If you think that these kind of things can't happen today – think again!]

[December 25]

● Anti-Jewish riots in different parts of Austria, 1312.

● King of Sicily requires Jews to wear a special badge, 1369.

● Anti-Jewish riots broke out in Warsaw, 1881. ("Oh, they don't mean much; they'll stop soon; we'll be okay here in the future").

● Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat met in Ismailia, Egypt, 1977.

[December 26]

● Barcelona granted the right to exclude Jews for all time, 1424.

● Religious freedom granted to Jews (and Catholics) in Brazil, 1634.

[December 27]

● Followers of Zecharia of Kiev were burned in Moscow, 1503, on charges of Judaizing.

● Rumanian Jews were excluded from the medical profession, 1868.

[December 28]

● The organizational meeting of the National Council of Young Israel took place, 1912.

[December 29]

● New York City authorities warn Jews about incompetent and unscrupulous mohalim who were causing the deaths of many Jewish infants, 1870.

● The ship, "The 29th of November", with "illegal" Jewish immigrants, was driven off the coast by the British, 1947.

The Fire Fighter: One Miraculous Tale Leads to Another by Rabbi Nissan Mindel

Once, **Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi**, known as the **Alter Rebbe**, came to a small town. During his short stay in that town, a fire broke out in one of the wooden houses. The local firemen had a hard time keeping the fire under control, and soldiers from a garrison stationed nearby came to help extinguish it. But a strong wind fanned the flames and sparks were flying in the air, threatening to set the whole town ablaze.

Several worried townspeople came to the saintly Rebbe and told him of the danger. Rabbi Schneur Zalman asked to be shown where the fire was, and he was led to the blazing house. He stood there for a few moments, leaning on his walking cane, and gazing intensely at the

blaze. Suddenly, the wind stopped, and the fire began to subside. Within a few moments the fire was brought under control, and everybody breathed a sigh of relief. The town was saved!

Everybody talked excitedly about the wonderful miracle which was brought about by the saintly Rebbe. The soldiers returning to their barracks told their general of the miracle that the saintly Rabbi performed before their very eyes.

The general sent his orderly to ask the Rabbi to appear before him. The general greeted Rabbi Schneur Zalman with respect and reverence. "Are you, perhaps, a son or a grandson of the saintly **Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov?**" the general asked him.

"I am indeed his "grandson," but in a spiritual sense, for I am a disciple of his disciple," the Alter Rebbe replied.

"Well, then I was not wrong in my conclusion, and I am not at all surprised that you should have supernatural power." Saying this, the general brought out a leather-bound volume, and pointing to it, he continued:

"Let me tell you a wonderful thing that happened to my late father, which he recorded here in his diary. It happened when my father was stationed with his troops near the town of Mezhibozh. He had received no word from his wife for a long time, and he was very worried.

Seeing how troubled the general was, some of his friends said to him: 'There lives in this town a saintly Rabbi, who is known as the 'Master of the Good Name'. People tell wonderful things about him and say that there is nothing hidden from him. Why not go and see this saintly man?'

"My father, the general, decided that there was nothing he could lose by seeing that saintly man, and he sent his orderly to the Baal Shem Tov to arrange a time to visit him. " - The orderly returned and told my father that the Baal Shem Tov said he was too busy.

This infuriated my father. He sent the orderly back again to the Baal Shem Tov to tell him that if he refused to see him, he (my father) would billet his soldiers in the Jewish houses, and there would not be a single Jewish home which would not have to provide food and lodging for one or more soldiers.

"This threat was very serious, for not only were the Jews of the town poor and unable to afford the burden, but it was also close to the Jewish festival of Passover, and the soldiers would bring chometz into the Jewish homes! But when the orderly returned, he brought the answer that although the saintly Rabbi is too busy, a time had nevertheless been fixed for my father's visit!

"Promptly at the appointed time, my father and his orderly came to the house of the Baal Shem Tov. Through an open door leading from the living room, they saw the saintly Baal Shem Tov sitting in his study, his head bent over a book.

By force of habit, my father went up to a small mirror hanging on the wall to smooth his hair. As he looked into the mirror, a strange sight unfolded before his eyes. Instead of seeing a reflection of his own face, he saw a familiar road, the road leading to his own hometown. Not believing his eyes and thinking that his imagination was playing tricks on him, he called his orderly to the mirror.

The orderly was no less amazed. Presently, the road seemed to pass by them, and they found themselves on the familiar street where the general lived. The door of the house opened, and my father saw his wife sitting at her desk writing a letter. As if looking over her shoulder, they saw that she was writing a letter to him! In it she begged him to excuse her for not writing for so long, for she was occupied with the pregnancy and birth of his new child-a boy! Both she and the baby are fine, and she longed for him to come home and see his son!

"You can imagine how excited my father became. Forgetting where he was, he rushed back to his quarters, and there, on his desk, was

a letter for him from his wife. He opened it and read it over again and again. It was exactly what he had seen in the mirror in the Baal Shem Tov's house!

"I am that baby about whom my mother wrote to my father in that letter! You can see the whole story recorded by my father in his diary."

Concluding his amazing story, the general asked the saintly Rebbe to bless him. "Be good to the Jews, and the A-lmighty will bless you," the Rebbe replied, "for so it is written in the Torah: **וּמְבָרֲכֶיךָ בָּרוּךְ *'They that bless you [Abraham] shall be blessed*.'" (Bereishis 27:29)



וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב עוֹד־יוֹסֵף בְּנִי חָי 'My son Yosef is still alive.' (45:28)

The great Happiness of Yaakov Avienu was not that Yosef Hatzadik was ruler of Eretz Mitzrayim (land of Egypt). Rather it was that my son is alive, that the **צלם אלקים** - Divine Image, did not die by him, and he remained as before.

As it is known that the righteous men that are not blemished are called Chai - Alive. [• **Sefer Divrei Shmuel – Slonim.**]



Ohr Torah

The words **ויגש אליו יהודה ויאמר בי אדני** may also be a reference to drawing close to Hashem in Tefillah. The words **בי אדני** can be translated to mean, 'the L-rd is within me.'

A Yid must always remember when he prepares himself to daven that he has an actual part of Hashem's G-dliness, inside him, his Jewish soul, on whose behalf he is communing with his Maker.





NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"L

When Jews Cry

וְלֹא־יָכֹל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק לְכֹל הַנִּצָּבִים עָלָיו... וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־קֹלוֹ בִּבְכִי *'Yosef could not restrain himself due to all the people present… he raised his voice and cried.'* (*Bereishis* 45:1-2)

Yosef Cries Again and Again

Yosef's tears that flowed when he revealed his identity to his brothers after so many years is a natural reaction and is quite understandable. However, we see from these *parshiyos* that the Torah emphasizes how Yosef cried again and again. It wasn't just once.

When Yosef 's brothers came to Egypt the first time, he heard them speaking among themselves about him. Some of them expressed regret over having sold him, and he started to cry. When they came the second time, he cried when he saw Binyamin. And here, where he told his brothers that he is Yosef, he cried yet another time. And it didn't stop with this:

He fell on the shoulder of his brother Binyamin and cried, and Binyamin cried on his shoulder. Later he reunited with his father Yaakov. What happened there? Yaakov recited *Shema,* and Yosef "cried on his shoulder". He cried again. At the end of the *parshah,*

when his brothers offer themselves to him as slaves, what was his reaction? – Yosef cried when they spoke to him.

The *Torah* recounts that Yosef did not just happen to cry; he could not hold himself back from crying. He was a real crier. And this was true not just of Yosef. His mother Rachel, too, was known for her crying. She cried all the time, to the point that *Hashem* needed to say to her: **מִנְעִי קוֹלֵךְ מִבֶּכִי וְעֵינַיִךְ מִדִּמְעָה** - Stop your voice from crying and your eyes from shedding tears. (*Yirmeyahu* 31:15).

Yosef was not just an individual. He represents the Jewish people as a whole. Yosef is every Jew. So if the *Torah* tells us that Yosef constantly cried, it shows that crying is a Jewish trait.

I always thought that Jews cry because they have a lot of troubles. But we see that Yosef cried no matter what happened. He cried from the beginning to the end, even when nothing troublesome took place.

When he saw that his brothers regretted having sold him, he should have been happy. So why did he cry?

When he sees his brother Binyamin, and later his beloved father Yaakov, what's so terrible? Why is he crying again? The answer is that Jews by nature cry a lot.

In our times, we have other ways of describing a *bachur* who went off the *derech,* but they used to say, "He doesn't cry in *Vehu rachum.*" If a Jew doesn't cry in this part of the *tefilah* it is a sign that something is off with him. However, in our modern world, men don't cry at all. Even at funerals, only the women cry.

In previous times, Jews would cry at all sorts of times. What is so great about crying, that it is a characteristic of Jews in general and of *Yosef Hatzaddik* in particular?

It says in the introduction to *Sefer Toras Ha'olah,* written by the **Rema**, that when the prophet Yirmeyahu saw the destruction of *Beis Hamikdash,* he fell down on the sticks and stones and cried.

The renowned Greek philosopher Plato asked him about this: "You are the sage of the Jews. Why are you crying over sticks and stones?" He also asked him, "Why should you cry over the past? Whatever happened, happened. A wise man does not cry over the past, he rather builds the future."

Yirmeyahu replied, "You are a great philosopher. You must have questions in philosophy.

Plato answered, "I have questions, but I don't think there is anyone who can answer them."

Yirmeyahu said, "Ask me your questions and I will answer them."

Plato asked, and Yirmeyahu resolved all his difficulties, to the point that Plato was not sure if Yirmeyahu was a man, or an angel with heavenly wisdom.

Yirmeyahu then said to him, "I want you to know that all my wisdom is from these sticks and stones. And regarding your question about why I cry over the past, I will not answer you, because it is a very deep matter, and you won't be able to understand it. Only a Jew can understand the profundity of crying over the past."

When Yirmeyahu told Plato that he can't understand it, he didn't mean that Plato is stupid. Plato was a noted philosopher and had a very high IQ. Yirmeyahu rather meant that Plato is a non-Jew, and that is why he is incapable of understanding the matter, because even the simplest Jew is greater than the greatest of non-Jewish philosophers.

The *Alter* of Kelm wrote a letter, published in *Sefer Chochmah u'Mussar,* in which he quotes a piece of philosophy from Aristotle (about whom the **Rambam** writes that his level of understanding was the greatest that human intellect can attain without prophecy). Then the *Alter* writes, "And I, despite my poverty of understanding, am wiser than him, because I am a Jew, and he is a non-Jew."

Plato the non-Jew could not understand, but we can understand why Jews cry so much. As mentioned, it is a Jewish trait to cry, and we need to understand why.

Yosef is highlighted as someone who cries, so let us understand Yosef and what he represents.

Hashem's traits of *chesed, gevurah, tiferes* and so forth, include Yosef 's *midah* which is called *Yesod.* **The *Zohar*** explains this *midah:* It unifies that which is in heaven and on earth. (*Zohar* 3:257a)

This means that the *tzaddik,* represented by the *midah* of Yosef, unifies and connects heaven and earth. There is a vast gap between heaven and earth, as we know. Yet, the *midah* of Yosef connects and unifies them.

An evil person disconnects the Kingdom of Heaven from the earth. Although he admits that G-d created the world, which is a known and recognized fact, he claims that G-d is high up there in the heavens, sitting on His lofty Throne of Glory.

The *tzaddik* proclaims a different message: **מְלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ** – "***The whole earth is full of His glory***." We are always in the presence of the King. *Hashem* is here, with us, involved in every detail of our lives.- *A tzaddik* is someone who lives his life in perfect closeness to *Hashem.* - This attitude ties heaven to earth. This is the unique *midah* of *Yosef Hatzaddik. A tzaddik* is someone who lives in such a way that all his wishes, desires and longings are based on the sense that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is here with him all the time. This is why Yosef is called *Yosef Hatzaddik.*

There was no one who connected heaven and earth like he did. Just as the Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth geographically, so ancient Egypt was the lowliest place on earth spiritually. It is the only place that the Torah expressly commands us not to go back there, because of its terrible lowliness.

In Egypt itself there were all kinds of places, and Yosef was in the lowest place of all Egypt. He was in the same house with the wickedest woman to be found. On the other hand, *lehavdil,* the highest place we can speak of is the heavenly Throne of Glory.

Yosef bridged the immense gap between the heavenly Throne of Glory and the impurity of Egypt. He was placed in the most difficult *nisayon* that could be imagined, in the most awfully lowly place on earth. And, so to speak, he brought *Yaakov Avinu* there, together with the *Shechinah Hakedoshah,* for the likeness of *Yaakov Avinu* is engraved on the heavenly Throne of Glory.

This is the most awesome connection that could possibly be made. He connected himself to Heaven, and he connected Heaven to himself. Since then, he is called *Yosef Hatzaddik.*

Now we can understand why Jews cry, and why non-Jews fail to understand it.

The strongest force to connect between two very distant points, for instance between two people, one in *Eretz Yisrael* and the other in America, is love. Love is the bridge that transcends time and space.

For instance, imagine a Torah giant such as the **Chasam Sofer** speaking to his little son, trying patiently to teach him to say the verse **תורה צוה לנו משה**. What connects them? What bridges the gap? - Love.

The height of love is a heart-to-heart connection, and this connection is expressed by getting emotional. This is the opposite of being cold and unmoved.

Hashem is so far from us that we can't even conceive of His nature. If so, it would seem quite impossible to create a connection between us and *Hashem.* This is why Plato could not understand why Yirmeyahu was crying, because crying results from connection and relationship.

It is obvious that if Yirmeyahu would cry over his father's death, Plato would not ask him why he is crying. In such a case it would be clear what the crying is all about, because a feeling of relationship engenders crying. But it was beyond the comprehension of Plato, as a philosopher, that one could feel emotion for and personal relationship with G-d, so he mistakenly assumed that Yirmeyahu was crying over sticks and stones.

Yirmeyahu said to him: You see the destruction of *Beis Hamikdash* and you ask why I am crying? If my only child was drowning in the ocean, you would not ask me that, because you would understand that I can't hold back. I want you to know that also now, I am crying because I can't hold back. I am crying because my emotions are all worked up. I long for my Creator.

You are a philosopher. You work only with your mind. You don't utilize emotions. For you, G-d is a concept, that's why you think that G-d is in heaven and you are on earth, and there is no connection between the two. But when I think of *Hashem,* I think of a beloved father. I get emotional and I cry. This is why He is here with me.

The power of crying, the power of feeling emotion, is the force that unifies and connects heaven and earth. This is why Jews constantly cry and get worked up about things. Our problem nowadays is we hardly cry. If we would cry more, everything would be different.

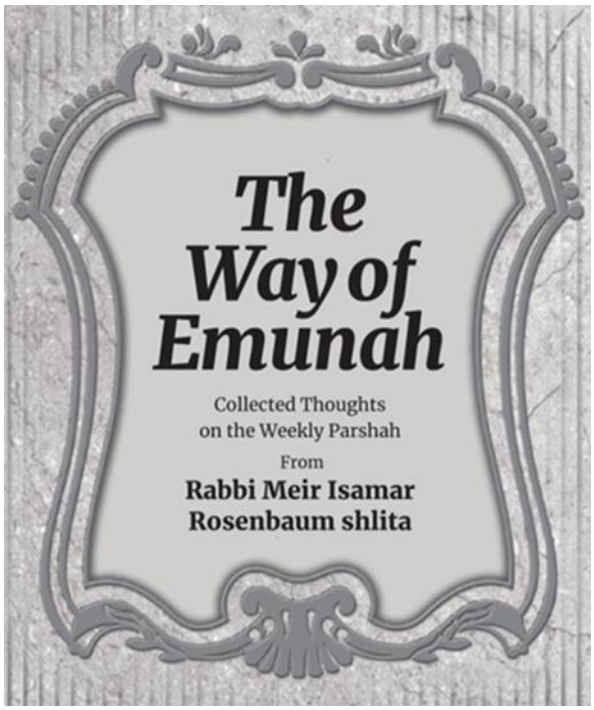
I think this is biggest decline in our generation. We do everything we should, *baruch Hashem*. We perform *mitzvos* very meticulously. Our *tefillin* and *arba minim* are very *mehudar*. The same goes with our Torah learning. This is all very good. But we do it all in such a cool, unemotional way. Our faces don't show emotion and excitement when we do a *mitzvah.*

If we don't get emotional about *tefilah,* about Torah learning, about all matters of *kedushah,* this is a sign that our connection with *Hashem* is not as it should be. Emotion is the foundation of

everything. We cannot connect with *Hashem* by intellect alone. We need to add emotion.

The whole liturgy of our *tefilah* is worded in a way that arouses emotion. The very word *tefilah*, evokes connection. *Chazal* teach us that *tefilah* is service to *Hashem* that we perform with the heart. *Tefilah* is performed mainly with the heart, not with the mind.

We need to pray with feeling. This is why Yosef cried so much. Since his *midah* was connecting heaven and earth, he was full of emotion. He cried all the time. Crying is a Jewish trait.



One Who Thanks Hashem Can Ask for What He Needs

Sefer Tiferes Shlomo (Parshas Vayeirah) cites the Gemara (Brachos 54A) that says that one should "give thanks for the past and cry for the future." He explains that if a person wants to ask Hashem to help him in the future, he first must thank Him for His past kindness.

This is seen from the pasuk (Tehilim 118:1): **הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ** (***Praise Hashem, for He is good. For His kindness is forever***.) This means that one should first praise and thank Hashem for goodness He has provided in the past and then daven for His kindness to continue forever.

For this reason, we recite in davening on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur: "***And for all of this, He is blessed and exalted… and write us for a good life***." - We first thank Him for the goodness of the past year, and we are then able to daven for a good upcoming year.

Yehuda's Words Created Angels

וְלֹא־יָכֹל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק לְכֹל הַנִּצָּבִים עָלָיו 'And Yosef could not bear all those standing around him.' (45:1)



The Chidushei Harim zy"a (quoted in Likutei Yehuda) asks who these people were who were "standing around him"?

He answers that Yehuda's words created angels. A malach is called a "nitzav" (stander, see Zechariah 3:7). Thus, those "standing around" were angels. Yosef was unable to bear all of the angels that were created from Yehuda's holy words.

He Banged on The Table so as Not to Hear the Brachos and Haftorah

Sefer Otzros Yisroel (page 172) relates that a chosson once came to the **Shinover Rov zy"a** and told him that his aufruf would be that Shabbos. He asked the Rov if he could travel to the city where the aufruf was taking place and attend the simcha.

When the chasidim heard this, they began to shout at the chosson and to ask how he dared to ask the Rov to exert himself to such an extent. However, the Rov said that he was willing to make the trip, and he did, in fact, attend the aufruf.

When the chosson was called up for the aliyah of Maftir, the Rov began to loudly bang on the table. He was making so much noise that no one could hear the brachos or the Haftorah.

The people thought that the Rov was banging due to his extreme hislahavus; however, he later said, "When the chosson came to me, I noticed that he has a stutter. I realized that he wouldn't be able to

say the brachos correctly and that this could cause the mechutin to break off the shidduch. Therefore, I decided to travel to the aufruf so that I could bang on the table and drown out the sound of the brachos."

Trusting Hashem is a Segulah for Parnassah

וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ וְאַל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה כִּי לְמִחְיָה שְׁלָחַנִי אֱלֹקִים לִפְנֵיכֶם *'And now do not be sad…for it was to provide sustenance that G-d sent me before you.'* (45:5)

The Lisker Rebbe zy"a (Sefer Ach Pri Tevuah) explains this pasuk by noting that Hashem's name of "Elokim" has the same gematriah as the word "**הטבע**", (The) nature. (86)

He states that it is known that if a person attempts to live a "natural" life, he is not assured that he will have sufficient livelihood and that he will not lack sustenance. If, however, a person places his trust in Hashem, he will lack nothing, as is clearly stated in the **Chovos Halevavos**, Shaar Habitachon.

From the story of Yosef, it was obvious that Hashem guides every detail of this world. The Shevatim sold him as a slave, yet Hashem orchestrated events to make him into a king, which led to the Shevatim being provided with food to eat during the years of hunger.

This chain of events clearly displayed that Hashem is in charge of all occurrences and that He rules over "nature." Thus, when he said that Elokim sent him to Egypt before the brothers in order to provide sustenance, he was saying that Hashem's rule over nature – which is represented by the name "Elokim" – sent him to this land in order to display how He provides for all those who trust in Him.

The Egyptians Broke Their Idols

וַיְלַקֵּט יוֹסֵף אֶת־כָּל־הַכֶּסֶף הַנִּמְצָא בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן בַּשֶּׁבֶר אֲשֶׁר־הֵם שֹׁבְרִים וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף בֵּיתָה פַרְעֹה '***And Yosef collected all the money…with the grain that they were buying, and Yosef brought the money into Pharaoh's house***.' (47:14)

Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditchoiv zy"a (quoted in Divrei Shaul) and **Rav Meir of Premishlan zy"a** (quoted in Divrei Meir), both explain this pasuk as follows:

Chazal say that Yosef acquired all of the money in Mitzrayim. The coins in Egypt had images of idols on them, so how was Yosef permitted to take their idols when we know that it is forbidden to derive any benefit from such things?

The pasuk answers this question when it says that they gave idols '**בַּשֶּׁבֶר**'. This word indicates '*shevirah*', breaking. The halacha is (Avodah Zara 42A) that a non-Jew can break his own idol and thereby remove its status as a forbidden object.

Thus, Yosef commanded the gentiles to break the coins before they gave them to him. Therefore, it was permitted for him to take them.

The Segulah of Giving One-Fifth to Charity

וּנְתַתֶּם חֲמִישִׁית לְפַרְעֹה וְאַרְבַּע הַיָּדֹת יִהְיֶה לָכֶם לְזֶרַע הַשָּׂדֶה וּלְאָכְלְכֶם... '***And you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four parts shall be yours for seed for your fields, for your food***…' (47:24)

Sefer Ach Pri Tevuah sees from this verse a hint that one should give a fifth of his income to tzedakah. If one does this, he will merit seeing much blessing from the remaining four-fifth. - He concludes by saying: "***Every Jew who gives one-fifth of his possessions to tzedakah will certainly have all goodness now and forever***."

Rabbi Rafael of Bershadi [Russia] רָפָאֵל מִבֶּרְשִׁיד Zy"a- 15th of Teves 1751 - January 14, 1827 was a Hasidic tzaddik famous for his extreme modesty and absolute honesty.



● No Compromise with The Truth

Rav Refoel of Bershad zy"a was a student of **Rav Pinchos of Koretz zy"a**. He placed special emphasis on the middah of emes and often said, "It is stated (Mishlei 23:23): 'Buy truth and do not sell it.' There are times when one is forced to 'sell' all other middos, meaning that one must occasionally forgo them in order to 'purchase' other middos.

The exception to this rule is emes. One can never sell this middah. If one is not truthful at all times, he cannot obtain any other good middah, as whatever he does will not be truthful."

Sefer Imrei Pinchos (Shaar 9) relates in the name of an elderly resident of Koritz named R' Yitzchok Glazer, who remembered when Rav Refoel visited Rav Pinchos Koretz, that Rav Pinchos praised Rav Refoel greatly and said, "Look how great the middah of emes is!

My Refoel was once traveling, and he had with him some tobacco that was not licensed by the government. Owning such contraband was considered a severe offense. When a policeman came over to him and asked where he got it from, he admitted right away that it was illicit tobacco.

The officer told him, 'Since you admitted on your own, I will not punish you.'"

● **Loving Even Wicked People**

Rav Pinchos once said, "My Refoel loves even the worst reshaim… (Chasidim Mesaprim, Chelek 3).

● **No Reason to be Haughty**

Rav Refoel would often say, "It is a miracle that Hashem forbade *gaivoh* and commanded us to be humble. If it would be a mitzvah to be haughty, how would we be able to fulfill it? What do we have to be haughty about?"

● ***A Cure for Anger***

Rav Refoel hired a melamed to teach his young sons. When they got older, he informed the melamed that he would be replacing him with a teacher who was more experienced with older children. The melamed got very angry about this and yelled, "I know all about your 'frumkeiten'! I know all about your phony humility!"

Rav Refoel replied, "Oy! You have lived by me for so many years and I never knew that you suffered from the malady of anger. I have some valuable remedies for that."

● ***Always Speaking with Pleasantness***

One erev Yom Kippur, as Rav Refoel was leaving the mikvah, he was approached by a man who started rambling on and on about nonsense. He said, "Nu, the Ramban writes in his Igeres that one should accustom himself to always speak pleasantly to every man and at every time. This even applies to someone who wastes your time with nonsense on erev Yom Kippur after you got out of the mikvah."

● **He Could Not Stand Honor**

Rav Refoel once came to the city of Berditchev, where he was greeted with much honor. Suddenly, he disappeared from sight. The people looked for him all over but could not find him. He had taken a bandana and wrapped it around his head and face so that no one would recognize him.

He went to the marketplace and entered a store that sold garments, where he asked the shopkeeper, "Do you have any tobacco to sell?"

The man thought that he was mentally imbalanced and told him that he was in the wrong place. He then went to a second and third store and put on the same act. Wherever he went, he was mocked and laughed at.

Finally, the people who were looking for him found him surrounded by laughing shopkeepers. He said, "I was unable to stand the honor. I needed to get some bizyonos."

● **Loving Embarrassment**

It is related that the chasidim of Savrin were in opposition to Rav Refoel. When he was in a certain city, he went to sit down on a chair, but a chasid of Savrin pulled it away as he was sitting down, and he fell to the ground. This made him very happy, and he said, "It was good to come to this place!"

May the memory of the tzadik be a blessing for all of Klal Yisroel.

"We should show honour and respect to every person we meet regardless of whether they are wealthy or poor. The only difference between a wealthy person and the poor person is the amount of money they have. Both are created in the image of the Almighty and when someone honours people he is ultimately honouring their Creator." ~ Rashis Chochma: Shaar Haanavah.

We cannot think of two thoughts at the same time. Consequently, when negative thoughts arise, you do not need to fight them. Make an effort to think positive thoughts, and the negative thoughts will disappear. ~ Likutai Aitzos





Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, the Ohr HaChaim

'Why did Yosef refrain from contacting his father when he was in Mitzrayim?'

The Ohr HaChaim asks an obvious question: All the time that Yosef was alive in Mitzrayim, his father Yaakov thought him dead, mourned for him and suffered (see Bereishis 45:26). What was the reason that Yosef refrained from contacting Yaakov? Why didn't his father's suffering and anguish move him to reveal that he was alive in Egypt?

This is how the Ohr HaChaim builds the question: While Yosef was enslaved we can rest assured that he was either unable to contact his father or that he tried but failed to do so. But once he was appointed as viceroy to Pharaoh we may question why he never wrote to Yaakov any letter to lessen his father's anguish and suffering.

Furthermore, during the years of famine, when there was constant traffic between Canaan and Mitzrayim, he could have contacted Yaakov. Once he met his brothers and recognized them, and discovered that his father was alive, he could have sent word to his father immediately!

Who allowed Yosef to prolong Yaakov's mourning and wait so long before revealing that he was alive?

The Ohr HaChaim gives several answers to this question:

Truly Hashem's ways are many and varied, and He decreed that these events must unfold in this way. Because Yaakov himself spent twenty-two years away from his own father Yitzchok and was unable

to honor him, he was repaid with twenty-two years of pain and suffering. Additionally, Hashem had decreed two hundred and ten years of exile, yet Yaakov had to descend with great wealth and honor. All these prophetic decrees would not have been fulfilled had Yaakov descended to Egypt sooner.- However, these explanations are divine reasons why the scenario had to play out the way it did; they do not actually explain or justify Yosef's own actions.

The Ohr HaChaim justifies Yosef's behavior as praiseworthy. First, he says that Yosef feared for his life from his brothers. The Ohr HaChaim explains that as soon as Yosef was exiled in Egypt, he could not contact Yaakov because he feared that his brothers would discover his whereabouts. They had already attempted to take his life and had sold him into slavery. The brothers' embarrassment at their actions against Yosef would be very great and Yosef feared their revenge. Yosef was worried that if he contacted Yaakov and his brothers discovered that he was alive they would track him down and attempt to finish him off!

He also feared that Yaakov might curse his brothers and they would die, and that perhaps they would try to kill him before any of that occurred. After he was released from prison and rose to a high-ranking position as viceroy, he was no longer concerned that he would be killed. He then held back from contacting his father for a different reason;

Chazal say (Bova Metzia 59a), "Better that someone should fling himself into a fiery furnace than embarrass his friend publicly." Yosef applied this dictum to himself and worried lest he embarrass his brothers before Yaakov, Yitzchok and any other members of his family.

Perhaps he also still feared that they would attempt to kill him even now when he was viceroy; the *Medrash Tanchuma* says that the Maloch Gavriel had to scatter them to forestall their plot to harm Yosef.

Yosef might have feared them even after the famine brought them to Egypt, until after he fed them and befriended them once more. But after showing them his mercy and love he was no longer afraid that they would harm him.

All this was revealed to be Hashem's way of running the world, arranging events through *hashgocha protis* so that they unfolded to fit the Master Plan.

Then they no longer bore him any malice or grudge. This also removed any feelings of shame or embarrassment before Yaakov because everyone could clearly see the hand of Hashem in the way that history unfolded.

Still, the *Tanchuma* tells us that Hashem needed to send a *Maloch* to save Yosef. We also could not expect Yosef to rely on this Maloch who saved him before to save him again now, because we may not rely on miracles to save us.

For these reasons, Yosef is blameless in not having contacted Yaakov.

● Praises for the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh

The Holiest Place

It is said in the name of **Rav Meir Abuchatzeira** of Ashdod that the holiest place where tefillos are answered is the tziun of the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh. Some even say that the main reason Rav Yaakov Abuchatzeira traveled to Eretz Yisrael was to daven at the tziun of the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh. (Toldos Ohr HaChaim introduction)

● Specializing in Peshat

I should point out that the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim is one of those specific commentaries that through *Hashgocha Protis* (Divine Providence) was printed together with the Chumash like the commentary of Rashi. It is therefore more connected to the simple, plain meaning *(peshat)* of the text more than other commentaries

that were printed on their own. (Toras Menachem by Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson of Lubavitch)

● Every Time a New Taste

Rav Moshe Weiss was a Chassid affectionately known as Reb Moshe Batlan (because he was always learning and *botel* from work). He was an expert in the Ohr HaChaim and was always studying it. He was so attached to the Ohr HaChaim that he knew it by heart and would often quote it verbatim. He would also teach from it, often adding his own comments and novel insights.

When asked why he did not gather his comments and print them as a commentary to the Ohr HaChaim, he answered, "What can I do? Every time I learn the sefer Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh I find a new flavor; the explanations are fresh and different each time as well!

The sefer Ohr HaChaim can be studied in the manner of *Pardes – Peshat, Remez, Derush* and Sod, simple straightforward meaning, hints and allusions, sermons and exegesis and the secrets of Kabbola. So why should I write a sefer when next time I study the sefer I will understand it in a whole new and different manner, and taste in it a brand new *ta'am?!*" (Ner HaMaaravi 429)

Rav Shlomo Eiger (Teves 11)

Rabbi Akiva Eiger's Beracha

Rav Shlomo Eiger was a genius in Torah even though he was involved in worldly business dealings. He frequently met with heads of state, politicians, merchants, and businessmen of the highest ranks who would come to conduct business deals at all times of the day.

As would be expected, as a talmid chochom and son of the renowned Gaon, Rav Akiva Eiger, Rav Shlomo also ran a Yeshiva and taught many talmidim with great iyun and pilpul (intense depth and impeccable logic).

Often, an important minister would come to discuss some matter which would interrupt their lesson. Fortunately, and almost miraculously, Rav Shlomo always seemed to be able to return and pick up the thread of his logic, argument, chiddush, or point of debate seamlessly, as if there had been no interruption whatsoever!

Once, after such an occasion when the shiur was interrupted, Rav Shlomo resumed as if nothing had changed, and his talmid, Rav Davidson, asked, "Rebbe, how is it that you can resume your shiur and pick up exactly where you left off without having to pause and review?! It's amazing!"

"It is all due to my father's beracha!" explained Rav Shlomo Eiger. "When I was a chosson under the chuppah, my father gave me a beracha. He said, 'You are now marrying into a prominent, wealthy family. Your father-in-law has many business dealings and you will be leaving my care and become involved in more worldly matters which will force you to interrupt your studies and teaching. - My beracha is that you should be able to immediately resume your learning, study, and teaching Torah even with these inevitable distractions. You should never lose your train of thought and pick up exactly where you left off without need for review or preparation – and this will give you peace in your Torah study!'

Boruch Hashem, as you can see," concluded Rav Shlomo, "my holy father's beracha was fulfilled!" (Chut HaMeshulash p.224)

"When one believes in nature and on Hishtadlus, he thinks that everything that he owns is because he bought it, or because he received it etc. But when one believes in Hashem, then he views everything that he owns as a gift, given to him directly by Hashem. – This awareness creates an entirely different outlook." ~ Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

Rav Yehoshua Horowitz Dzikover Rebbe, Ateres Yeshua of Dzhikov (Teves 11 5672 / 1912 - 112th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yehoshua of Dzikov was born on Shushan Purim **תר"ח**. His father, Rav Meir of Dzikov, was the author of the *Imrei Noam*. Already in his youth he was recognized as a genius. At eighteen, he published a halachic sefer called *Emek Halacha* on Shas.

At this young age he was already engaged, by his grandfather Rav Eliezer of Dzikov to the daughter of one of his chassidim, Rav Leibish Reich of Raisha.

In his father's lifetime, he acted as the rav of the kehilla and upon his father's passing, he took his place at the helm as the rebbe of the chassidim. Thousands of chassidim and gedolei Torah flocked to the new rebbe. He was a hidden tzaddik and guarded his ways from the world so that none could truly discern his greatness. He composed many *niggunim*.

He appointed Alter Yechezkel Eliyahu, the son-in-law of the Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz, as the rav of his kehilla. He passed away on 11 *Teves* **תרע"ב** he was interred in the Dzikover Ohel, and his son Rav Alter Yechezkel succeeded him.

● Fur Coats Lined with Arrogance

Rav Chaim Meir, the *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz, was very close with his uncle, the *Ateres Yeshua* of Dzikov, and would often recount stories and teachings from his uncle: One time, the *Imrei Chaim* noticed a

very arrogant person whose self-satisfied smirk attested to his vanity.

"You think too much of yourself and regard yourself too highly!" the *Imrei Chaim* berated him. "If you were in the *beis medrash* of my uncle, the *Ateres Yeshua*, he wouldn't even be able to look at you. He so hated *ba'alei gaava* (arrogant people) that he simply couldn't spare them a glance without shivering from repulsion.

My uncle used to say, "I am waiting and wishing that the winter would pass already, because during the winter all the *ba'alei batim* are bundled up in fancy coats with fur-lined and velvet collars turned up against the frost. But when they enter the *shul* and *beis medrash*, they leave them on so as to feel important – their arrogance knows no bounds!"

● Past Lives

Rav Chaim Meir, the *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz, was very close with his uncle, the *Ateres Yeshua* of Dzikov, and would often recount stories and teachings from his uncle: The *Ateres Yeshua* once observed two people having the following conversation. One said to the other, "Why do you allow your son to play with such unwholesome friends?"

"Ah, it's not so bad!" said the other. "Why are you making such a fuss and a big deal over nothing? He is just a little boy!"

The holy *Dzikover* turned to the astonished man and remarked, "How do you know that he is just a little boy? Maybe he is an eighty-year-old man who has come back to this world to rectify through *tikkun* whatever he ruined in a previous *gilgul*?"

● Please Don't Lick The Bones

Once, on Rosh Chodesh Nissan during the Rebbe's Rosh Chodesh seuda, the tzaddik entered, looked around and declared, "I see here many soldiers have gathered; now I wish to admonish you all. Although you may be forced to eat *treifos*, I beg you, do not lick the bones in delight!"

The chassidim were very confused by the Rebbe's declaration and admonishment, since only chassidim were present with not a single soldier among them.

After several years, however, the First World War broke out and the draft began. Many of them indeed were conscripted into the army. It was then that the tzaddik's pronouncement rang in their ears and his *ruach hakodesh* was revealed, as now they had become soldiers who were beset by the challenges the rebbe had referenced. (Zichron Yehuda, Dzhikov p. 52)

Rav Moshe Sofer Pshevorsker Rebbe, Ohr Pnei Moshe (Teves 12 5566 / 1806 - 218th Yahrzeit)



Rebbe Moshe of Peshevorsk was the predecessor of the Peshevorsk dynasty (which since 1956 has been based in Antwerp). He was the son of Rav Yitzchok. He was held in high esteem by the brothers R. Elimelech and R. Zusha, and many other chassidic giants. He was a talmid of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk.

It is said of him that Rabbi Moshe Alshich often appeared to him and taught him Torah. His was famous for the perfection and purity of the Torah, tefilin and mezuzah scrolls that he scribed, which were eagerly sought after and are extremely valuable. He is the author

of the acclaimed *Ohr Penei Moshe*, commentary on the Torah and the five Megillot, and a subsequent volume on the Talmud.)

● **Shirei Menochos**

The *Bnei Yissoschor* writes: "When I was a young lad, I used to sometimes attend to the renowned tzaddik, Rav Moshe Sofer of Pshevorsk. He was well known as a *ba'al madreiga* (of lofty spiritual stature) and ba'al ruach hakodesh.

He had the custom to keep leftover cakes and sweets that had been baked and prepared in honor of Shabbos. When an important guest visited during the week, he would honor him with these delicacies calling them *"shirei menochos"* (leftovers of the mincha offering)! (Bnei Yissoschor, Maamar Chodesh Tammuz-Av)

Rav Alter Elozor Menachem Biderman Lelover Rebbe (Teves 14 5761 / 2001 - 23rd Yahrzeit)



On 14 *Teves, gedolei haTorah, admorim, roshei* yeshiva and rabbonim joined thousands of chassidim and laymen in Bnei Brak to accompany the Admor of Lelov, *zt"l,* HaRav Alter Elozor Menachem Biderman, on his last earthly journey. The Admor of Lelov was niftar suddenly at the age of sixty-five. He is buried beside the *admorim* of the Lelover dynasty on Har Hazeisim.

His intense desire to grow in avodas Hashem and the study of Torah was evident since childhood. In his father's home he acquired love of Torah, pure *yiras Shomayim* and noble character traits. As a youth he studied with tremendous *deveikus.* In his early years, he studied

in the Tifferes Tzion yeshiva in Bnei Brak, where he was very close to the Chazon Ish. The Admor would often longingly relate accounts of the long walks he would take with the Chazon Ish while discussing Torah and halocho. He even merited to be tested by the Chazon Ish every week.

● **100 Percent Character**

The Rebbe used to tell over that people have a saying regarding shidduchim – that finding the right match means to seek three things: **קרן טוב** (a good person), **כסף רב** (wealth) and **יחוס** (good family pedigree).

He explained that actually the percentage of how much importance to attach to each of these three is hinted at by the first letter of each one:

keren tov begins with *kuf*, whose *gematria* is 100, implying that your search for a chosson with a good character is 100 percent important! *Kesef*, on the other hand, only requires 20 percent, since it is spelled with a *kaf*, which has a *gematria* of twenty. *Yichus*, which begins with a *yud*, is only 10 percent important! (Ne'imos HaChaim p. 77)

Rav Raphael Pe'er L'yeshorim (Teves 15 5587 / 1827 - 197th Yahrzeit)

Rav Raphael was born in the year **תקי"א**. Well-known as a holy tzadik even before he drew near to chassidus. He eventually made his way to become a disciple of Rav Pinchos of Koretz and became his most avid *talmid muvhak*.

Rav Pinchos also treasured him above all his other talmidim and said about Rav Raphael, "The Baal Shem Tov once remarked that Hashem would thank him 'for setting up such a Yossel', referring to the Toldos Yaakov Yosef of Polnoy; and I say that Hashem will one day

thank me for having set up such a Raphael!" He also said, "No one understands just how deep my Rahphel's mind is!"



They say that Rav Binyamin Zev of Balta, another disciple of Rav Pinchos Koretzer, said that when Rav Pinchos said, "No one understands," he meant: no one at all, not even *seraphs, ophanim* (angels) understand how deep Rav Raphael is!

In Koretz, Rav Raphael assimilated Rav Pinchos' ways, purifying his heart from all arrogance, anger, and falsehood. Rav Raphael often used to censure all those he knew about distancing themselves from any falsehood and urged them to be careful to speak only truth. He was exceedingly humble and subjugated himself before all others.

After Rav Pinchos' passing, many of his chassidim began to follow Rav Raphael. The Bershader Chassidim became known for their practice of minimal speech as they deemed silence a good protection from inadvertently uttering some falsehood.

Their manner of prayer was more visibly composed. Though enraptured in *dveykus,* they tended not to exhibit excitement but would rather maintain a calm exterior.

His pure soul left on 15th of Teves 1827 **תקפ"ז**. He was interred in Tarashe.

● Anger Control

Whenever an opportunity presented itself, the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz would retell this story about Rav Raphael of Bershad's amazing control over his middos:

For many years, Rav Raphael of Bershad had a burning desire to acquire pure white wool from the Holy Land to fashion a resplendent, *mehadrin tallis katan* and *tzitzis* that would be, befitting such a precious mitzvah.

After great effort, he finally obtained the exclusive wool from Eretz Yisroel! Elated, he passed the wool on to one of his chassidim urging him to take extra special care of the wool and to make with it a *tallis katan* and *tzitzis.*

The chassid, who realized the great lengths the Rebbe had gone to procure the wool and the importance of his mission, approached the task with great care.

All his good intentions and caution notwithstanding, he accidentally folded the *tallis katan* over twice, so that when he cut the hole in the middle to create the opening for the head, he ended up with two holes instead of one! - When he unfolded the garment and held open the *tallis katan,* instead of one opening for the head, there were now two!

With trepidation he brought the ruined garment before his Rebbe. Rav Raphael had been waiting with great anticipation to see the culmination of his efforts and to fulfill this *mitzvah b'hiddur.* When the chassid entered the room, the rebbe noticed how crestfallen he looked.

"What is it? What is wrong?" the rebbe asked, beckoning the chassid to come near. The chassid held out ruined garment ashamedly. He couldn't lift his eyes to meet the rebbe's as he waited for the rebbe's anger and disappointment to cascade over him.

What he heard instead was Rav Raphael's delighted voice:

"Why off course this garment needed two holes! Yes, yes, exactly - one hole just as any *tallis katan* has for the head; and another hole to teach Raphael to suppress and contain his emotions and not be angry!"

When he concluded the tale, the Imrei Chaim said with great emotion, "*Kodesh kadashim!* Holy of Holies! From where can we learn such lofty behavior?! This story shakes me up and excites me much, much more than any miraculous tales you could tell me about the tzadik!"

● The Truth and Nothing But The Truth

When the grandsons of Rav Pinchos Koretzer, who ran the Slovita Press, were libeled and falsely accussed, many tried to prove their innocence, that all the accussations against them were false, to no avail.

Finally the authorities agreed that if three prominent Jewish leaders and rabbis would testify as to the innocence of the Shapira brothers of Slovita then they would be exonerated and cleared.

One of the selected leaders was none other than Rav Pinchos Koretzer's prominent disciple, Rav Raphael of Bershad, who inherited his rebbe's penchant for truth and *emes* at all costs. So much so that they nicknamed Reb Raphael der Emesser!

They used to say that he was so truthful and so careful not to utter even a doubtful truth or a possible falsehood that if for example it was raining outside, and you asked him once he came in doors if it's raining out there? He would reply: "When I was outside it was raining." Since perhaps in the interim when he came in doors it had maybe ceased to rain, therefore he could not answer in the present tense to something he could not directly see right now!

This was the very same elder chassid who had been bentshed by none other than the holy Baal Shem Tov's blessing for *arichas yomim* - a long life. (Kovetz HaTamim VIII Letter 284).

When he was asked to come testify on behalf of Rav Pinchos Shapira he did not know what to do. On the one hand it was a matter of life and death and therefore fell under the *heter* for *pikuach nefesh*. On the other hand, although he was sure that Rav Pinchos was innocent and that the libel was a fabricated falsehood, he could not bring himself to say with certainty an outright lie, that he had personally witnessed this innocence when the truth was that he was sure of it but had never seen so himself.

Initially he agreed to testify, yet as the date approached, he began to *daven* to Hashem: Master of the World! I have never let a false word cross my lips, and I have never uttered a lie my entire life! I have never testified to a certainty that I cannot verify, nor have I ever resolved a doubt that I myself did not know its veracity! - *Ribono Shel Olam*! I ask of You please, with every expression of pleasing I plead, please take away the blessing for long life so that I not be forced to say something that I myself did not witness!"

His prayers were answered, the very next day he passed away, and when they needed his testimony he was no longer among the living, and since Rav Raphael's testimony was one of the three, the entire matter was null and void and the judgment of the Shapira brothers of Slovita was a sentence of torture and exile. (Shmuos VeSippurim Volume I pg 243)

● **His Segulos - The Segula of Shabbos Observance**

In the name of Rav Raphael of Bershad ("Raphael HaMalach"), the main disciple of Rav Pinchos of Koretz, author of Pe'er LeYasharim:

All the troubles that befall a person are due to chillul Shabbos; therefore, one who safeguards Shabbos will be saved from troubles. We know that each mitzvah is associated with its own particular *segulos* and rewards: for example, Chazal teach that tithing *maaser* is a *segula* for wealth (Taanis 8) and that lighting Shabbos and Chanuka candles is a *segula* for having descendants who are Torah

scholars (Shabbos 23). Based on this principle, it follows that every transgression must also have its own specific punishment.

How, then, can Shabbos desecration be the source of all troubles? Since one who keeps Shabbos has all of his misdeeds forgiven *(machul lo),* logically the converse must also be true – one who desecrates Shabbos must have all his other misdeeds counted and remembered! Therefore, keeping Shabbos is truly a *segula* to be rid of all troubles! (Ohalei Tzaddikim)

Rav Chaim Kreiswirth (Teves 16 Teves 5761 1918–2001)



● Originally from Wojniczin, Poland, Rav Kreiswirth came from a home plagued by poverty yet permeated by chesed. As a bochur, he gave up his bed for an old man and slept on the floor for a few months, a *zechus* which he felt saved him from the Holocaust.

● He would repeat the memory of his bar mitzvah, spent in yeshivah. "My father didn't come. Ask me why? Because it was in a different town, and he had no money. He could have borrowed money, you're thinking. But *you don't borrow money which you have no way of returning*. Today people think that borrowing is a source of income."

● After the invasion of Poland, the young bochur ran to the safety of Vilna, where hundreds of yeshivah bochurim had gathered. As he crossed the Polish-Lithuanian border, a soldier caught sight of the fugitive and raised his rifle. Chaim Kreiswirth begged for his life. The soldier seemed to be relenting, but then said "I have to shoot,

I can't let you through." "So you shoot into the air, and I will run into the forest," Chaim suggested quickly. Remarkably, the soldier listened.

● Last year, a clip circulated of Rav Ovadia Yosef *ztz"l* reminiscing with Rav Bentzion Kook about Rav Kreiswirth, who was Rav Kook's uncle by marriage. "I know people who know Shas, but to know it word for word, that is only Rav Chaim. I heard him speak at the Laniado Hospital opening. He repeated entire *sugyos*, with Rashi, word for word. There is no one like him," Rav Ovadia reiterates admiringly.

● Rav Kreiswirth was an unforgettable influence. He's described as a "*cheftza fun chesed* — an object of kindness," who knew no limits in caring for individuals and the downtrodden. His brilliance in learning was paired with a focus on bringing Torah to the front and center of communal consciousness, and his oratory brought mussar to life.

● There was a story he liked to tell about the Netziv of Volozhin. The Netziv once called his grandson, Rav Chaim Brisker, in the middle of the night. Rav Chaim brought his rebbetzin along, sure that it was an emergency, and when he arrived at the Netziv's house, the Netziv explained why he had called him. "*Z'is mir eingefallen a teirutz of di Tosafos!* — I just thought of an answer to the Tosafos!"

Rav Chaim said he wasn't yet quite ready to hear it, because he hadn't said Bircas HaTorah, and his grandfather started to cry. "It's four in the morning, and you haven't said Bircas HaTorah?!"

Rav Kreiswirth told this story with an emphasis on the *yeridas hadoros*. "*Pas shel Shacharis* everybody knows about today, but *Torah shel Shacharis* — that's not well-known at all," he'd lament, pushing his audience to take learning more seriously.

● Described by the Dvar Avrohom of Kovno in a letter with the words "you never saw such a *baki* in Shas Bavli and Yerushalmi as this bochur who has come here from Poland," Rav Kreiswirth's

attainments in learning and his quick recall were the stuff of legends.

When someone started to speak about a *sugya* or a halachic topic, the Rav could easily take over the conversation, whatever the topic was. It was as if all was open in front of him. He was close to roshei yeshivah, *talmidei chachamim,* and *gedolim* across the spectrum of the Torah world, and used to bemoan the fact that he couldn't devote endless hours to sit and learn, due to his responsibilities as a communal rav.

● "The Ruv once came to a big philanthropist in the diamond district," Rabbi Wasyng retells, "and began to persuade him to contribute to a cause. Of course, he had approached this man many times before, but he still made an impact as if it were the very first time, speaking about the mitzvah involved with such warmth and *chizuk*. The response was 'My safe is open. I am going to the other room, and you help yourself.' And the Ruv took what was needed."

● This wasn't the only time the Rav's fundraising methods achieved spectacular results: "Rav Kreiswirth was 82 at the time one family lost a breadwinner, but he took the [fundraising] burden on himself. Of course, he went to secular Jews too. The Ruv asked someone to accompany him to solicit funds from Mr. S., a very wealthy fellow.

When they came to S.'s office, the elevator was broken. The other man, who was friendly with S., suggested that they return another time. The Ruv said 'No, I want to go up now,' and, with great difficulty, he made his way up to the seventh floor and explained his mission.

Mr. S. had a question for the Rav. "Do you give your charity funds to secular Jews too, or only religious ones?"

"I will give funds to anyone who learns Torah," was the Rav's quick comeback.

"I don't see why I should give you. I give money to the poor in Israel and to the Keren Kayemet fund," the man said. Then he turned to his friend. "The elevator is broken. How did the rabbi get up here?"

"He walked. He said he just has to come up."

The donor couldn't believe it, and respecting the Rav's efforts, ended up giving a donation of $20,000.

When they came down the steps, the Rav said with satisfaction, "This is what I meant [to happen]."

● He didn't hesitate to use his sharp tongue to those who didn't want to give. He once commented to someone who declined to donate money to a certain cause, "It's a *mazel* that you are not a Kohein. And if you are a Kohein, you can't *duchan*, because you have a *mum*."

"*A mum*?! I don't have a *mum*."

"Yes, you do. Your hands are too short. They don't reach your pockets!"

● Rav Wasyng recalls the time the Rav was spotted in Brussels carrying bags of clothing for Russian Jews. "A balabos asked him what the Ruv was shlepping. When Rav Chaim answered, he said, 'Why not take a taxi?'

"If I would have money for a taxi, I would have another bag of clothes,' Rav Chaim said."

● On one trip to America just two years before he was *niftar*, Rav Kreiswirth made several calls to *askanim* to arrange treatment on behalf of a young man who was unwell. When his host asked how he knew this person, the Rav replied "He is my *shuchen* [neighbor]." The man was confused. "From where?" "I sat next to him on the train here in New York."

● **Bending And Stretching Ourselves for Torah**

Rav Chaim Kreiswirth was well known to dance on Simchas Torah with great hislahavus, aflame with excitement and joy! He was careful not to lose time from learning and often danced with an open Gemora, a sight that left its impressions on many.

He once observed a father holding the Sefer Torah and lowering it to allow his little boy to kiss the holy scroll. Rav Kreiswirth was not in favor of this practice, and lovingly admonished the father, explaining his reasons for opposing the father's well-intentioned, but in his opinion, misguided actions.

"When you bend down and lower the Torah to your son, you're teaching him that the Torah can be lowered or bent down to suit his needs, Heaven forbid. Instead, he needs to stretch himself or be lifted to kiss the holy scroll, so that he learns to accommodate and adjust himself to the Torah and not the other way around," a profound lesson that became forever inscribed on the father's heart. (Mayim Chaim p. 148)

Rav Efraim Fishel Shapira Strikover Rebbe (Teves 17 5582 / 1822 - 202nd Yahrzeit)

Rav Ephraim Fischel was born to Rav Yosef Yehuda Leib. He was a talmid of the Mezritcher Maggid and a *talmid muvhak* of Rav Azriel Meislish and the rebbe, Reb Melech of Lizensk. Among his disciples are: Reb Bunim of Peshischa, and Rav Avrohom of Tshechonuv. He was renowned as an *ish mofes poel yeshuos* (miracle worker). Rav Ephraim Fischel passed away in **תקפ"ב** and was buried in Strikov.

● The Rebbe Who Didn't Believe

The Tiferes Shlomo relates that the G-dly tzaddik, Rav Fischel of Strikov adamantly refused to believe that any Jew ever sinned. In fact, even if someone would report to him that a Jew had, Heaven forbid, transgressed a prohibition, he would deny their report. He countered: "No Jew could do an aveira (sin)!"

This belief was due to his immense sanctity; he was so attached to Hashem and his ahavas Yisroel was so strong that he never saw anything negative in any Jew, as it says in parshas Balak, " **לְאׇ־הִבִּ֤יט אָ֙וֶן֙ בְּיַעֲקֹ֔ב וְלׇא־רָ֥אָה עָמָ֖ל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל**." (Tiferes Shlomo Avos)

● L'chaim Hashem, Good Night

Once Rav Yosef of Neustadt came to visit the *Tiferes Shlomo* in Radomsk. As the two *tzaddikim* sat side by side enjoying each other's company, Rav Yosef asked if the *Tiferes Shlomo* could share an anecdote from his *rebbe,* Rav Fishel of Strikov since the *Tiferes Shlomo* was one of his disciples.



Before retiring to bed each night, Rav Fishel would take a *glezzeleh bronfen* (a glass of brandy or liquor) in hand and wish Hashem, *"L'Chaim! L'Chaim Ribono Shel Olam sheAta MeKor HaChaim veChai HaChaim - a gitte Nacht! L'Chaim, L'Chaim* Master of the World; You are the source of all life; I wish you a good night!" - He wished Hashem *L'Chaim* and a good night in Yiddish.

Rav Fishel even once explained the reason behind this unusual *minhag* of his: "You must know that there are sick Jews everywhere in the world, and oftentimes it is at night that suffering intensifies. I attempt to bring some relief to them with my *L'Chaim* to Hashem based on the principle that He suffers in our suffering.

I wish Hashem a good night, if He wants a peaceful night free of pain and distress, He must heal all the Jews' suffering first! - And so, I drink to Hashem and wish Him a good night – *Gitte Nacht*!"

Another story the *Tiferes Shlomo* shared was how strong was Rav Fishel's *emuna* (faith) in *hashgacha pratis* (Divine Providence). "He

always believed that anything and everything that happened was directly related to him and specifically for his sake.

For example, when the weather turned cold, the frost would make immersion in the *mikvah* a formidable ordeal. He would say: "I believe with full faith – *b'emuna sheleima* that this a test from Hashem whether I will immerse despite the cold and discomfort; but know, you Evil one, *yetzer hara* that you will not dissuade me nor block me from serving Hashem!" *(Siach Sarfei Kodesh)*

● The Day That The Rebbe Quit His Job

A chassid once came before Rav Fishel of Strikov and complained that he needed to marry off one of his daughters but he had no money to do so. "Rebbe, what shall I do? he said. "I need advice because I can think of no way to marry off my daughter by natural means!"

Rav Fishel who was known to affect miracles did not hesitate to suggest to the chassid a solution: "Listen to me; please go and purchase a lottery ticket and G-d willing you should have *hatzlacha* and *siyata Dishmaya* (success and Heavenly help)."

With this blessing from the Strikover Rebbe, he dutifully went to purchase a lottery ticket.

Weeks passed and as the the lottery approached the chassid's financial state of affairs took a sharp downturn. He could not even provide for his family's needs nor purchase provisions for Shabbos.

Feeling out of options, the chassid succeeded in finding someone to buy his lottery ticket for the amount he needed to buy something for the coming Shabbos. He reasoned thus, "I have no Shabbos candles, no *challos,* and no wine for *kiddush;* no one will lend me any more money and my creditors are hounding me. At least let me have basic Shabbos provisions!" - He sold the ticket and with the proceeds he made Shabbos.



A few days later the lottery numbers were announced and the chassid's ticket was, in fact, the winning ticket! But it was the *Yid* who had purchased the ticket from the chassid who became the recipient of the seventy thousand rubles in prize money.

The terribly anguished chassid returned to Rav Fishel and poured out his heart to the *tzaddik*: "Rebbe rebbe, why did this happen to me?! What was I to do!? Should my family and I have fasted and sat in the dark all Shabbos?!" he cried.

Rav Fishel was heartbroken over the chassid's misery. He stood up and announced to the astonished chassidim gathered round and then to his *gabbai* and family, "That's it! I am closing shop. Lock the doors; turn away all petitioners and send the chassidim home. I am no longer a rebbe!" - He closed the doors to his room and barred any entry. - "But why? What has happened?" they all wanted to know.

Rav Fishel explained his reasoning to them, "Why is it that Hashem did not grant my *beracha* to this chassid and instead challenged him so? It must be that I am no tzaddik and so, I am no rebbe!"

Everyone was distressed over this announcement. Rebbe Fishel was loved and respected. His *berachos* brought wondrous salvations.

Hearing about the disappointing news, Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshischa made his way to Strikov to see what could be done to convince his rebbe, Rav Fishel to change his mind.

When he arrived, he was allowed in and found his rebbe distraught. "What is the meaning of this rumor that I heard that you shall no longer be a rebbe?"

"It's true!" cried the *tzaddik*, "If I cannot help, Hashem must not heed me, I must not be a *tzaddik* and I am no rebbe!"

"You are a rebbe; let me prove it," answered Rav Simcha Bunim. He proceeded to cite *Chazal* who say on the one hand a tzaddik can decree and even cancel Hashem's decrees (*Moed Katan* 16); however, we recite another statement from *Chazal* (from *Tana Dvei Eliyahu*) every day before *Pesukei D'Zimra* in *Shacharis*: "Who among Your handiwork, whether among those up in the heavens above or those below, can say to You what to do or how to do it?"

Now you might suppose that these two statements of our sages are contradictory, but I shall resolve them for you now. And then the rebbe will see why he is a *tzaddik* and rebbe.

Rav Simcha Bunim resolved the two statements as follows: "It is true that *tzaddik gozer;*" the righteous make decrees that Hashem fulfills and likewise, cancels Heavenly decrees? But what do we make then of the other statement?

The answer is that it clearly says that no one above or below can dictate what to do and how to do it! The rebbe can decree and overturn decrees; he can give *berachos* and achieve *yeshuos;* but it is left solely up to Hashem. - **צדיק גוזר והקב"ה מקיים**- to see to it that these are carried out according to His terms and stipulations.

You cannot dictate that the yeshua for the chassid will be through this very lottery ticket; that is left up to Hashem. You blessed him and surely your *beracha* will be fulfilled; but it's not for you to control the detailed terms of how it will come to pass."

These words found favor in Rav Fishel's eyes and soon after, he announced he was coming out of retirement. The residents of Strikov and the surrounding townships rejoiced, they had gotten their rebbe back! (*Siach Sarfei Kodesh*)

'I have never fasted properly. How so? On Yom Kippur, who wants to eat, and on Tisha B'Av, who can eat?' ~ The Kotzker Rebbe.

Segulos For Hatzlacha

Since Parshas Vayigash deals with Yosef HaTzaddik who was known as *Ish Matzliach*, meaning that Hashem gave him much *hatzlocha* (success), here are some *segulos* for *hatzlocha*:

● There is a *segula* from the *sefer Mincha Belula* to recite the angelic name Uriel seven times in one breath in the morning when you awake in bed after ritually cleansing your hands that you should succeed on that day.

● The Birkei Yosef and Sha'arei Teshuva (O.C. Siman 293), in the name of the Behag and Rav Chaim Vital, say that on Motzo'ei Shabbos, when answering *Borchu*, if you stretch out the *Borchu*, this is a *segula* to be saved from any damages.

● The *sefer Yimalet Nafsho* cites that meticulous mitzva observance is a segula for success and wealth because the word *hamitzvos* equals *behatzlochos* in gematria (numerical value).

● There is a famous *segula* for *hatzlocha* from the Kedushas Levi of Berditchev to recite *Gott Fin Avrohom* three times as printed in all the *siddurim* and *zemiros*.

● The *sefer Abiya Chidos* cites *Sefer HaMiddos* (Mamon) that Rav Nachman of Breslov said a *segula* for *hatzlocha* is always to be happy!

● The *sefer Yisrael LeSeguloso* cites the Gemora in Avoda Zara 19b that Rav Yehoshua ben Levi said that whoever is *Osek BaTorah*, his wealth and property – *nechosov* – are successful.

"Hashem is alive and real…. all the money is His, all the healing is His, He can literally do everything, just talk to Him, cry to Him, plead with Him, and He will give you!" ~ Nefesh Shimshon.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי... וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו גְּשׁוּ־נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגָּשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה *'And Yosef said to his brothers, "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" … The Yosef said to his brothers, "Come close to me, if you please," and he said, "I am Yosef, your brother… me, whom you sold to Egypt.'"* (45:3,4)

In this week's parsha, Yosef revealed himself to his brothers. A very dramatic story. Rashi says the brothers were shocked and embarrassed. They couldn't believe the situation in which they now found themselves. Yosef says **וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ וְאַל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם** – 'don't be nervous, don't be afraid, I'm happy to live alongside you in peace'.

But then Yosef says something strange - **וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־ מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה** - ***"I am Yosef, your brother… me, whom you sold to Egypt.'"*** – If Yosef is attempting to appease, and show his closeness to his brothers, why on earth would he bring up the one statement that brought them to this situation in the first place? It's like sticking a dagger in their heart?

The S'fas Emes answers that Yosef Hatzadik wanted to appease his brothers. He told them that selling him to Mitzrayim was not what he wanted, it was a big test and it was very difficult, but ultimately, the **מַדְרֵגָה** that he achieved in that he became such a great Tzadik and an elevated person only due to the fact that he was faced by this challenge. – Without a challenge, a person doesn't grow. When Hashem puts a person through a challenge, He is giving him the opportunity for greatness.

So, the S'fas Emes says **אֲנִי יוֹסֵף** – **I became** the great Yosef - **אֲשֶׁר־ מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה** – **because** you sold me to Mitzrayim!

This is an important message. The challenges that a person has, can elevate him to greatness!

I would like to read out to you the astonishing words of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh which defies human belief, and if he wouldn't have written them, one could believe that it couldn't be true. The level of Yosef's **בין אדם לחברו** is astonishing and unbelievable. – **אני כי אני יוסף אחיכם פירוש מתנהג - "I am your brother Joseph." יוסף אחיכם עמכם במדת האחוה וכאלו לא היה הדבר ההוא , גם סמך לומר אחיכם אשר מכרתם לומר שאפילו בזמן המכר לא כהתה עין האחוה ממני**

Because I, Yoseph, your brother, means I behave with you in the manner of brotherhood, and as such nothing ever happened. - In the next sentence, after he had formed the impression that they did not believe him, he stressed the words **your brother whom you have sold,** indicating that even at the time they had sold him he had not ceased feeling like a brother towards them.

What a **מַדְרֵגָה**. To forgive the brothers for putting him through horrific experiences is special, but to have the feeling that nothing even occurred, as though it never happened, is on a whole new level!

It's like saying that a person fasted for a week, and he's not even hungry! How is it possible for a person to feel this way? That was Yosef Hatzadik!

The Chinuch asks - **לֹא תָקֹם וְלֹא תִטֹר** – how can a person have such strength to overcome this? Because a person must realize that anything that befalls him is from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. It's not personal.

Yosef lived with Emuna in Hashem. He didn't have complaints against anybody. – We can all learn a lesson of self-restraint from Yosef hatzadik. And not holding grudges against people.

"In recalling the Exodus, a Jew should remind himself never to despair from spiritual striving, no matter how dismal his situation." – R. Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin

Chabad.ORG

From our Sages

וַיְהִי כִּי עָלִינוּ אֶל־עַבְדְּךָ אָבִי – *'Your servant our father.' (44:24)*

Ten times Joseph heard his brothers refer to his father as "your servant" and he did not protest. Because of this, his life was shortened by ten years. (Joseph lived 110 years.) ~ (**Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 39**)

וַיָּפָג לִבּוֹ כִּי לֹא־הֶאֱמִין לָהֶם – *'[Jacob's] heart fainted, for he did not believe them.' (45:26)*

Such is the liar's fate: even when he speaks the truth, he is not believed. At first the sons of Jacob lied to their father when they dipped Joseph's coat in the blood of a goat, and he believed them; but then when they told him the truth, he did not believe them. ~ (**Avot d'Rabbi Nathan, ch. 30**)

וַיִּסַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וַיָּבֹא בְּאֵרָה שָׁבַע - *'Israel journeyed with all that he had, and came to Be'er-Sheva.' (46:1)*

Why did he go there?

Said Rabbi Nachman: He went to cut down the cedars which his grandfather Abraham had planted in Be'er-Sheva. These cedars were then taken along when the children of Israel left Egypt and were used for the construction of the Sanctuary in the desert. ~ (**Midrash Rabbah**)

וְשֶׂרַח אֲחֹתָם - '***And Serach their sister.***' *(46:17)*

When Jacob's sons returned from Egypt with the news that Joseph is alive, they said: If we tell him straightaway, his soul will fly from his body. So they told Serach to play on her harp and sing, "Joseph lives, Joseph lives, and he is the ruler of Egypt," so that he should absorb the message slowly.

Said Jacob to her: "The mouth that informed me that Joseph lives shall not taste death." Serach was among those who came out of Egypt, and among those who entered the Land. She was the "wise woman" who handed over Sheva ben Bichri to Joab (II Samuel 20). In the end, she entered paradise alive. ~ (**Sefer HaYashar; Tzeror HaMor**)

וַיֶּאְסֹר יוֹסֵף מֶרְכַּבְתּוֹ וַיַּעַל לִקְרַאת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו גֹּשְׁנָה וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוָּארָיו וַיֵּבְךְּ עַל־צַוָּארָיו עֹוד – '***Joseph harnessed his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father . . . and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck.***' *(46:29)*

But Jacob did not embrace Joseph and did not kiss him; our sages tell us that he was reading the Shema. ~ (**Rashi**)

Why did Jacob choose that particular moment to read the Shema?

Because Jacob knew that never in his life would his love be aroused as it was at that moment, the moment of reunion with his most beloved son after twenty-two years of anguish and loss. So he chose to utilize this tremendous welling of emotion to serve His Creator, channeling it to fuel his love for G-d. ~ (**The Chassidic Masters**)

"When you achieve success, whether it's something major or minor, praise Hashem Who gave you the ability to accomplish it." ~ Shelah Hakadosh.

כָּל־הַנֶּפֶשׁ לְבֵית־יַעֲקֹב הַבָּאָה מִצְרַיְמָה שִׁבְעִים – '***All the souls of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy.***' *(46:27)*

But if you count them, you find only sixty-nine; the seventieth is Yocheved the daughter of Levi, who was born between the boundary walls as they entered Egypt. ~ (**Talmud, Bava Batra 123a**)

When they reached the border of Egypt, they added up to sixty-six; together with Joseph and his two sons, they were one less than seventy. What did G-d do? He entered into the count with them, in fulfillment of what is written, "I will go down with you into Egypt." ~ (**Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 39**)



◣ It Will All Make Sense - Chofetz Chaim

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם - "***And he said, 'I am Yosef, your brother...'***" (45:4)

The entire sequence of incomprehensible events that led to the brothers standing before Yosef in Egypt, became instantly rationalized the moment he said, **יוסף אני** -" I am Yosef." - Similarly, in the future, when the nations of the world will hear the immortal words **אני ה' אלוקיכם**-" I am Hashem, your G-d," all the seemingly inexplicable occurrences that shape the world on a day-to-day basis, will become clear.

◣ How To Approach Prayer - Reb Aharon Of Chernobyl

וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְאַל־יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדֶּךָ - "***And then Yehudah approached him [Yosef] and said, 'If you please, my lord, may your servant speak a word in my Lord's ears and may your anger not flare up at your servant…'***" (44:18)

The word Vayigash shares the same root as hagashah (approach), which refers to prayer. When one is about to pray, he should have these words in mind: "If you please, my L-rd - in me there is a bit of the Divine. May your servant speak a word in my L-rd's ears - I beg of you, listen to my prayer. May your anger not flare up at your servant - do not be disappointed in me and have pity."

◣ Joyful Return - Mishmeres Itmer

וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ וְאַל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה - "***And now, do not be distressed, and do not admonish yourselves for having sold me…***" (45:5)

In other words, "And now that you are repenting your actions on selling me as a slave, do not repent in distress." The highest form of repentance is with happiness, joy, and love.

"The journey of life is not always clear, but hashem is the lighthouse that guides us through the storm. With faith in him, we can navigate any challenge." ~ Rabbi Noach Weinberg (1930-2009)

"The true test of a person's spirituality is how they treat other people." ~ Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz (1873-1936)

◣ Crowning Hashem - Reb Yisrael of Ruzhin

מַהֲרוּ וַעֲלוּ אֶל־אָבִי וַאֲמַרְתֶּם אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר בִּנְךָ יוֹסֵף שָׂמַנִי אֱלֹקִים לְאָדוֹן לְכָל־ מִצְרָיִם- "***Hurry and go up to my father and tell him: 'Thus says your son Yosef: G-d has made me lord of all Egypt***..'" (45:9)

Why should that have been such good news for Yaakov?

The Hebrew word "**שָׂמַנִי**" (has made me) may be rendered as "**שם אני**" (I have put). Thus, the message that Yosef actually sought to convey to his aged father was not that he, Yosef, had come to astonishing power, but that "I put Hashem over all of Egypt," that Yosef had become the instrument to spread G-d's ways so that G-d would become master of Egypt and over all the world.

◣ Glorious Resilience - Reb Baruch of Mezhibuz

וְהִגַּדְתֶּם לְאָבִי אֶת־כָּל־כְּבוֹדִי- "***Tell my father of all my glory***..." (45:13)

The word כְּבוֹדִי (my glory) can also mean "difficult," from the word kaved. - Yosef asked that his father be told that amidst all the difficulties of being with impure people, he still clung to the Almighty.

◣ Tangible Reminder - Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky

כָּל־הַנֶּפֶשׁ לְבֵית־יַעֲקֹב הַבָּאָה מִצְרַיְמָה שִׁבְעִים - "***All the souls of the house of Yaakov who came to Egypt were seventy***." (46:27)

Avraham planted acacia trees in Be'er Sheva. When Yaakov went down to Egypt, he transplanted the trees there. He told his sons that Hashem would one day command them to build a Mishkan, and they should use these trees. - Surely there were suitable trees in Egypt! Why did the Patriarchs go to all this trouble?

They did so to raise the spirits of their descendants who would be enslaved in Egypt. It was not enough to promise the Jews that they

would be redeemed; the groves of acacia trees that Yaakov planted in Egypt were a tangible reminder that their eventual salvation was a reality.

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

The Wealthy 'Custodian'

One of the two most dramatic words ever recited were, "Ani Yosef – I am Yosef!" These words were recited when Yosef revealed his sole identity to his brothers. These two words shocked and shook Yosef's brothers to the core of their beings. Their entire worldview was suddenly turned inside out. The brothers' accusation, fear, vendetta, and punitive action against Yosef were all wrong.

While for years they perceived Yosef as a vain dreamer seeking to sabotage Hashem's plans, they now realized that Yosef was a Tzaddik (righteous) and Navi (prophet), chosen by Hashem to safeguard their family during the famine.

He said "Ani Yosef" – "I am not the ruthless, merciless tyrant. Everything that you thought was wrong." "Ani Yosef" – "You totally misjudged me. I am not who you thought I am." "Ani Yosef" – "I am not a stranger. I am your brother."

I heard from Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that Rav Avrohom Pam zt"l taught that there would come a time in our lives when we will all experience a riveting "Ani Yosef" moment. The people that we belittled or treated with disdain; those whom we treated with scorn or disrespect; those whom we alienated and didn't accord proper value.

They will say, "Ani Yosef" – "You were wrong!" We will have the shock of our lives when we see how much we misjudged, misconstrued, and

mistook right from wrong. As the Gemara says, "It's a topsy-turvy world. The high people are low, while the low people are high."

The Chafetz Chaim famously said, "With the coming of Moshiach, Hashem will utter just two words, '*Ani Hashem* – I am Hashem.' These two powerful and compelling words will unravel and untangle all the mysteries and enigmas that plague the world. All the complexities and confounding questions will be answered. Everything will become crystal clear."

Hundreds of thousands of Jews live amongst us with little or no connection to Yiddishkeit (Judaism). These are our brothers whom we often ignore or who we may pretend don't exist. On our day of reckoning, we will be shocked to hear souls yelling at us "Ani Yosef – I am your brother! Why did you ignore me? Why did you not take an interest in mine and my children's eternity?" It may have been your doctor or even your neighbor. These people who you constantly encounter will come to you in heaven!



Many years ago, my grandfather, Rav Daniel Fingerer shlita was teaching for an institution, and he would always see an older man sweeping the floors. My grandfather assumed that that man must be the custodian. The man was very meticulous about his job. One day, my grandfather came in and the man wasn't there. The second day comes by and then the third day. Now my grandfather starts getting concerned. The custodian was not the type of guy that takes a vacation. He is devoted to his job. My grandfather went to the

doorman and asked where the custodian was. The doorman replied that he was in hospital. He had a heart attack.

My grandfather got the custodian's room number, and he went to visit him. After all, how many people care about a custodian? Right before my grandfather goes into the room, he sees something strange. Somebody was visiting the custodian right beforehand and who was it? It was none other than the president of the entire institution! My grandfather was like that's incredible! The president is visiting the simple custodian! That's pretty impressive!

When the president left the room, my grandfather went in and he said to the custodian, "It's amazing that the president came to visit you!" The custodian turns to my grandfather and says, "Don't you think a son should visit his father?" So, my grandfather says, "You mean to tell me you're the president's father?" and he says, "Yes, that's right. I bought my son the building and I want to take care of it and make sure that it shines and sparkles. I'm not the custodian, I'm the president's father."

This was a real "Ani Yosef" moment. Everything was upside down for my grandfather. The man who he thought was the custodian, who probably everybody just walked by, was the father of the president! The man who bought the entire institution – the man who paid all the bills! You may look at somebody and think he's just a custodian or a bus driver. Little do you know that that person is not who you think they are! Reach out to them!

"From children you can learn three things: They are happy for no particular reason. Never for a moment are they idle. When they need something, they demand it vigorously." ~ Rabbi Zusya of Anipoli.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

It was 40 years ago or more when a "bombshell" exploded in the *tephilin* market. It was discovered that a number of *sofrim* had been using glue (*devek*) to fill in little holes or to bind pieces of leather together to form the boxes (*batim*) which hold the parchments of the *tephilin.* This wasn't a hushed up trick that some *sofrim* were using; it was an honest mistake. They were unaware that anything was wrong with what they did.

Once the fact was discovered, panic broke out both in Eretz Yisroel and in the rest of the world. Is this glue a problem? Does it make the *tephilin 'possul'* (unfit for use)? Can it be removed? Must everyone check their *tephilin* for this glue, or only if they have some reason to suspect that it had been used on their *tephilin*?

In Israel, the *halachic* authorities had reached their decision, but they were waiting to see what **Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l** would say.

At that time, a *chareidi* newspaper in Israel, the *Yated,* printed a full description of what was being done by the *sofrim;* the entire questionable procedure was clearly explained in that article. Someone bought the *Yated* article to Rav Moshe and told him that it explained clearly what the facts were (the *metziyus*).

Rav Moshe did not look down, and did not take the paper, Instead, he asked the man, "Nu, so what does it say?"

Surprised, the man again offered Rav Moshe to have a look at what the *Yated* article said. Again, Rav Moshe declined to take the article, and replied in return, "Tell me what it says."

Dumbfounded, the man asked Rav Moshe, "Why does the Rosh Hayeshiva not want to look for himself? It is described clearer and fuller in the *Yated* than I could possibly say over."

And then, Rav Moshe Feinstein, the man to whom the whole world had turned at this crucial moment in time, whose decision would

affect all Jewish men for then and into the future, responded with these amazing words. Remember, please, that Rav Moshe had a photographic mind.

"I am called upon to *pasken* for the Jewish people. I realize that, and so I read only Torah, Gemorah, the commentaries, the Shulchan Aruch, and *halachic* works. I *pasken* from my memory. I can't let anything else in; or else, when I need to decide the *halacha,* I will not know if my thoughts are emanating from the Torah sources or from somewhere else. I must keep my mind unburdened from non-Torah thoughts and ideas".

They say that Rav Moshe decided to NOT learn English. True, he spoke in Yiddish, and if someone talked to him in Hebrew, he responded fluently in Loshon Kodesh, with no modern Israeli words thrown in. - Good Shabbos

There is a perplexing episode recorded at the end of this week's Parsha in a meeting of the national leaders.

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־פַּרְעֹה יְמֵי שְׁנֵי מְגוּרַי שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמְאַת שָׁנָה מְעַט וְרָעִים הָיוּ יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיַּי וְלֹא הִשִּׂיגוּ אֶת־יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי אֲבֹתַי בִּימֵי מְגוּרֵיהֶם - ***'Yaakov said to Pharaoh, 'The days of the years of my sojourns have been 130 years. Few and bad have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not reached the days of the years of the lives of my fathers in the days of their sojourns***.(47:9)

Although Yaakov understandably had a life filled with challenging personal tests involving his murderous brother, deceptive father-in-law, and family losses, why did he seemingly vent his frustrations to the ruler of the modern world?

In order to fully appreciate the answer. we must first comprehend an incredible story shared in Yehudis Samet's The Other Side of the Story (p.156):

My husband and I went to a neighbor's wedding together, and we made an effort to arrive early so that we could get good seats. I can't enjoy a wedding unless I can see what's going on. I usually pick the aisle seat, about four rows back, so as not to take the seats of family and relatives.

When I got there, the hall was still quite empty, so I carefully picked my seat and after a few minutes people started coming. Ten minutes later, when the seats were filling up, a woman came to where I was sitting and asked if I could move down. I thought that was unfair of her since I had come early just to get that seat, but I wasn't going to tell her that - so I just pointed out that the seats next to me were filled. "Could everybody move down?" she asked, pointing out that there was an empty seat about six chairs down. I didn't want to make a scene, so I passed along the message to the people in the row. No one else seemed to mind, so we all moved over one, and she sat in the aisle seat.

As she sat down, she turned to me and said quietly, "I have to keep an eye on my son," and she pointed to the boy right across the aisle from her. I looked up and saw a 15-year-old boy. thought to myself, "Who's she trying to kid? That boy looks old enough to take care of himself just fine."

It was one thing to ask for my seat, but to make up such a flimsy excuse - that she needed to keep an eye on her son, who was no baby - took double chutzpah.

She struck up a conversation and asked where I was from, which side of the family I was on, etc. and she mentioned she had been invited as a guest of the bride, who was her son's teacher. Every so often she would bend over towards her son and explain to him what was going on... And then it hit me.

I remembered that this past year the bride had been a teacher for children with cognitive disabilities. As I watched more carefully, I

could see that this boy was a special child - and my indignation for her "chutzpah" had completely evaporated.

Rav Moshe Sternbuch beautifully explains that Yaakov Avinu did not want Pharaoh to be envious of our forefathers' longevity. In order to dispel any ayin hara from the ruler's potentially jealous eye, Yaakov feigned frustration and complained that living for a long time comes with aches and pains.

Although it may be difficult to consider the perspectives of others especially when they appear negative, we must strive to see their point of view to expand our limited understanding - just ask Yehudis Samet.



It says in this week's Parasha... **וְנַפְשֹׁו קְשׁוּרָה בְּנַפְשֹׁו** -"***His soul is bound up with his soul***." (44:30)

Question: How did their souls become connected?

Answer: The word "keshurah" - **קשורה**" – 'bound' — has the numerical value of 611, which is the same numerical value as the word "Torah" **תורה**. Yaakov taught Binyomin Torah and through their Torah study, their souls became connected.

Torah is the language that unifies Jews of past, present and future generations.



"Each of us possesses unique talents and gifts, and on account of these unique gifts, we all have something to offer everyone. The fact that Divine providence has presented us with the opportunity to help another person is the surest proof that we possess the means to do so effectively." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)



102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar

Sold Out!

I grew up in the city of Petach Tikva, on 9 Solomon Street. Across the street and one building down, on 6 Solomon Street, lived Rav Aharon Beifus, the rav of our shul, a tzaddik and outstanding talmid chacham who possessed a gentle spirit and love of every Jew. Sadly, he and his wife were never blessed with children, yet I remember as a child once standing on the porch off our dining room, peering into the Beifus's window across the street, and reflecting that their home was a piece of Olam Haba.

Rav Beifus and his rebbetzin were so sincere about their avodas Hashem that their mere presence affected the people around them and inspired them to strive for closeness to Hashem.

In the building next door to the rav lived a family that prided themselves on their liberal, secular ways and were far from Torah and mitzvah observance.

One Shabbos morning, the father was on his porch with a power drill, shattering the peace and tranquility of the neighborhood with ear-splitting noise.

Unable to bear the scene of blatant chillul Shabbos, Rav Beifus climbed the stairs to the neighbor's fourth-floor apartment, knocked the door, and when the man answered, said in his sweet, sincere manner, "Please, it is Shabbos. People in the neighborhood are going to shul or returning from shul. Could you please wait until after Shabbos to use your drill?"

His words were so genuine, his appeal so innocuous, that the neighbor, a proud secularist, actually acquiesced. Yet the true effects were only manifest in the coming weeks.

The man was so impressed by the rav that he decided to go to shul the following Shabbos, and the Shabbos after, as well. One mitzvah led to another, and ultimately, the entire family returned wholeheartedly to Torah and mitzvos.

Rebbetzin Beifus passed away several years before her husband. In his final years, Rav Beifus began to deteriorate physically and suffered from mild dementia. In his last weeks, when he was already very weak and ill, his nephews took turns sitting with him at his bedside.

One evening, when it was only a matter of time until his soul's departure from This World, the rav spontaneously sat up in bed and announced in a clear, coherent voice, "*Ich hub gekoift kartelach far di pruste concert.- I purchased tickets to the immodest concert.*" With that, he lay back down, closed his eyes, and returned his neshamah to Shamayim.

Aghast by their righteous uncle's final words on earth, the two nephews decided not to repeat them to anyone, yet somehow the story leaked and spread rapidly. - Upon hearing the story, one of the rabbanim of Petach Tikva explained:

Several years earlier, a massive concert featuring a famous celebrity was to take place in Petach Tikva. Rav Beifus, horrified at the thought of the blatant pritzus in his city and the thousands of residents- religious and secular, who, unable to resist the temptation of attending the concert, would stream en masse to the concert hall and stumble in numerous prohibitions, headed immediately to the box office and purchased all the tickets to the show!

Shortly afterward, Rav Beifus visited the Steipler Gaon, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, and confessed to his "crime" of purchasing tickets to an event that breached every boundary of tznius.- Replied the Steipler, "These tickets are your entrance tickets into Gan Eden!" -

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



An Eternal Act - The Great Reunion

In this week's *sedrah* we read about how Yosef revealed himself to his brothers and then sent them back to Eretz Canaan with a message to his father asking him to come down to Egypt in order to be safe during the famine that was then plaguing the land.

"Take your father and your households and come down to Mitzrayim and I will support you with food and all good things" (Vayigash 45:18). And that's what happened: "Yaakov said, 'I will go down to see my son before I die'," and then finally, after weeks of traveling, "Yaakov and his family were approaching the land of Egypt" (ibid. 45:28, 46:28).

Now, the Torah states that when Yosef was informed that his father's caravan had arrived in Mitzrayim so **וַיֶּאְסֹר יוֹסֵף מֶרְכַּבְתּוֹ וַיַּעַל לִקְרַאת יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו** – *Yosef harnessed his chariot and he rode out to greet his father* (Bereishis 46:29). It means that he left the palace, took horses from the stable, harnessed them to his coach and he headed out to fulfill the *mitzvah* of honoring his father.

The King Forgets His Role

Now, the sages point out that what happened on that day was quite unusual. Yosef, after all, was the *mishneh l'melech*, the second in command of Egypt, and he had servants aplenty at his beck and call

who did every chore for him. He could have called his right-hand servant and given the order, "Prepare my chariot," and the word would have quickly come down to the servant in charge of the stable who would have harnessed the *mishneh l'melech's* chariot. It would have been done immediately! That's how it was done always and this day should have been no different.

And so you understand how strange it must have been in the eyes of Yosef's servants when they saw him running into the stable in his royal garments and his crown. There's no question that they looked askance at the lord of the house opening the stable door with his own hands and harnessing the horses to the chariot. The servants were looking on – they wanted to do their job – but Yosef brushed them off. "Never mind," he said, "I'll do it by myself." They must have shrugged their shoulders or raised their eyebrows but what could they do already? Their boss didn't let.

So why *did* he harness his carriage with his own hands? That's the question our sages ask. And they explain (Bereishis Rabbah 55:8) that at that time Yosef forgot himself; he forgot propriety. Yosef's great love for the *mitzvah* of greeting his father, caused him to forget the correct procedure. He was so happy at the opportunity to honor his father – especially after so many years when he had been deprived of this *mitzvah* – that now, when it finally presented itself to him, he couldn't contain his enthusiasm. And so, he hurried out of the palace, unlocked the stable door himself, took out the horses, harnessed them to his coach and rode out to greet his long-lost father.

Seller's Regret

Now we'll fast forward 210 years. We are now more than two centuries after this incident and the *Bnei Yisroel* are finally leaving Mitzrayim. After suffering so many *makkos,* Pharaoh finally yielded and set them free and now they were marching away from Egypt towards Eretz Canaan.

And yet as soon as he did that, he regretted it. **מַה זֹּאת עָשִׂינוּ כִּי שִׁלַּחְנוּ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעָבְדֵנוּ** – "What is this we have done?" said Pharaoh, "We just sent out such a multitude from serving us!" (Shemos 14:5). When he came to his senses and realized that he had just lost a tremendous workforce that was laboring on his behalf day and night for nothing he immediately had second thoughts. He was foaming with rage: "It's preposterous what I just did! To let that scum go free and also take our money with them?! So many slaves! So much wealth! What did I do that I sent them out?! Did I go mad?!"

Pharaoh's Plan

At that moment Pharaoh was overcome by such anger that he decided to bring them back. He was so eager to recoup his loss that he ran out of the palace. **אָמַר אוֹיֵב אֶרְדֹּף אַשִּׂיג אֲחַלֵּק שָׁלָל אָרִיק חַרְבִּי** – *The enemy said, "I'm going to pursue, I'll overtake them and I'll draw my sword.* He was picturing himself speeding in his chariot chasing his escaped slaves. He was already imagining that he'll draw some blood from them and then whichever ones remain, he'll drive them back into slavery. And so, he took his army and began to chase the *Am Yisroel.*

Now, we all know the outcome; we know how Pharaoh suffered an ignominious defeat: **טֻבְּעוּ בְיַם סוּף** – *They were drowned in the sea.* **וּמִבְחַר שָׁלְשָׁיו** – *The best of his officers were drowned and all of their equipment went under.* The mighty force was laid low and after that Egypt didn't raise its head for many years. The *Am Yisroel* was saved in such a spectacular way that we don't hear anything about Egypt for hundreds of years after that.

The Sages Search

Now, our sages understood the principle that everything Hashem does has some reason and therefore they wanted to find what *zchus*, what merit it was that the *Bnei Yisroel* had to be saved like that. They were in grave danger after all! They were caught between a large Egyptian army and the sea and a great miracle was necessary

to save them. What was it that helped the *Am Yisroel* at this perilous moment?

And so the *chachomim* studied the words of the Torah to find the answer. After all, Hakodosh Boruch Hu always gives clues. He writes things in the Torah in particular ways so that capable people can study certain events and see why they happened.It's not for amateurs, but the *chachomim*, the *Tanaim* and *Amoraim*, were specialists and they were capable of studying the events of *Tanach* and looking for hints to understand why things happened in a certain way.

And so these sages began to look for something in our past that would give a hint to what gave our people the merit that Pharaoh should have such a downfall. Maybe there's some place we can find a *remez* and tie one thing to another. And *yagata matzasa* – If you search, then you'll find. And so, when our sages searched, they found.

Plausible Parallels

When Pharaoh's heart smote him and he decided to lead his army in the chase after the *Bnei Yisroel* something remarkable happened. The king of Egypt ran to the stables, opened up the door, pulled out his horses and he harnessed them to the chariot himself!

His servants surely ran to do it for him but Pharaoh waved them aside! And his servants looked on in amazement. This was the first time in their lives they saw such a thing! A monarch should go out and pull the horses out of his stable and harness them? I don't know if a Pharaoh ever harnessed a chariot in the history of all the Pharaohs! It's remarkable. But that's what the *possuk* says: **וַיֶּאְסֹר אֶת רִכְבּוֹ** – *And he harnessed his own chario*t (Shmos 14:6).

Ooh! Those are familiar words! By Yosef we also saw words like that: **וַיֶּאְסֹר יוֹסֵף מֶרְכַּבְתּוֹ** – *Yosef harnessed his chariot.* And because the

language of the Torah is always measured with precision, our sages understood that there's something here.

That's the principle behind *gezeirah shaveh* – when you find an expression in one place and a similar expression in another place it's a hint that there's a connection there. And so, because the *chachomim* learned Torah with a magnifying glass, because they inspected every *ois*, so when they came across these two parallel expressions "and Yosef harnessed his chariot," "and Pharaoh harnessed his chariot," they understood that it wasn't in vain that the Torah inscribed these two parallel sentences with the same terminology.

Effect of a Mitzvah

And so, here's what the *chachomim* said about this subject: *Tavo asarah she'asar Yosef Hatzaddik* – Let come the harnessing that Yosef HaTzaddik did on his own because of his eagerness to greet his father, *v'ye'akeiv al yad asarah she'asar Pharaoh* – and it should overcome the efforts of Pharaoh who harnessed his chariot in order to overtake the *Bnei Yisroel* and avenge himself on them. Our sages are telling us that the parallel expressions teach us that Yosef's *mitzvah* had something to do with preventing Pharaoh from carrying out his wishes; the *mitzvah* had such an effect that it saved the *Am Yisroel*.

Now, we have to know that the story with Pharaoh occurred 210 years after Yosef's act of harnessing his chariot. Yosef was already long dead and probably nobody remembered anything of this episode. They knew that Yaakov Avinu had come to Egypt and Yosef had come out to greet him, but it's probable that nobody remembered that detail of how Yosef had harnessed the horses himself. It could be they never even knew about it – we only know because we have the Torah. And even if they did once know, it was probably long forgotten. Two hundred and ten years is a long time after all! Who

remembers a little and seemingly unimportant detail of a story that happened to his great great grandfather two hundred years ago?

I'll tell you who remembers such a detail. Hakodosh Boruch Hu remembers; He remembers everything.

Alive Forever

That's what it means, "Let the harnessing that Yosef did himself come forward, and it should overcome the efforts of Pharaoh who harnessed his chariot himself." When Yosef went out to the royal stable to harness his horses, it wasn't an act that stopped when he climbed onto the chariot. The act never died out. It was hovering, so to speak, in the air; it was hovering and waiting.

Years passed. Yosef passed away and then *va'yakam melech chodosh*, a new king came to power. And then there was the *shibud,* the years of slavery, and then finally the *makkos* came and the *Am Yisroel* left Mitzrayim. All those 210 years the *mitzvah* was hovering in the air. And then finally the day came when Pharaoh was harnessing his chariot to chase the *Am Yisroel.* What happened then? Yosef's deed came and pounced upon Pharaoh's deed and wiped it out. Yosef's harnessing overpowered Pharaoh's harnessing; it destroyed its effect and it frustrated the plan of Pharaoh.

What we have here is an example from the Torah of a *mitzvah* accomplishing forever and ever; of a *mitzvah* that continues to work for the people who achieved them. *Mitzvos* continue to afford us the greatest happiness because once something is done, it's forever. It might help you one day; it might even help the entire nation two hundred years from now. You never know what it might do because it's there. It doesn't go away; every *mitzvah* you do is alive forever.



This week's Parsha contains the uplifting conclusion of the saga of Yosef's life. After the many trials and tribulations and being knocked down many times Yosef becomes the uncontested ruler of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. However, the Torah takes notice of Yosef for a slightly different reason. The verses praise Yosef for the incredible righteousness that he managed to retain despite all the hardships he went through- despite the fact that he had become the ruler of the entire land making himself susceptible to all sorts of spiritual dangers such as arrogance and overindulgence, he remained "Yosef", never wavering in his righteousness even for an instant.

Similarly, we do not need to describe the level of morality it took for Yosef to withstand the temptation he was placed in by Potiphar's wife. In addition, Yosef didn't even falter in his Torah study. We find that Yosef sent his father a gift of young oxen which was what he and his father were studying right before he was taken away in order to demonstrate that he had continued studying the Torah that he learned from his father with great diligence despite the many taxing situations he was forced to be in. - And of course, as we mentioned in last week's Parsha, Yosef taught the world to trust in Hashem by constantly mentioning Hashem's name in everything that he did and attributing all of his talents and successes to Hashem. From all this it is clear that Yosef had reached and maintained a tremendous level or righteousness throughout his sojourn in the land of Egypt.

However there is another aspect of Yosef's righteousness which is perhaps overlooked by many and is also mentioned in this week's

Parsha, and that is Yosef's incredibly developed trait of being considerate of other's feelings, even in the face of tremendous difficulty.

In the beginning of this whole episode, Yosef's brothers decided to kill him. They threw him into a waterless pit which was filled with snakes and scorpions with the intent to kill him. Then afterward, they sell him to band of Arabs who in turn bring Yosef down to Egypt and sell him to Potiphar.

Had Yosef wanted, he could have found a lot of ground, perhaps even justifiably so, to be furious with his brothers and seek revenge in any way he could get it. Yet Yosef does not do this. He goes out of his way in this week's Parsha to not only not be angry with his brothers, but to discover any way he could help them to overcome the difficulties they were going through while trying to readjust to the idea that their brother was still alive.

For example, the **Ohr Hachayim** asks a powerful Kushya. He asks, "How could Yosef have not let Yaakov know all those years that he was still alive? How could he let his father suffer like that"?

He answers that although it was very difficult, Yosef was sensitive to how embarrassed his brothers would feel after their father found out that indeed Yosef was still alive and had not perished as his brothers had reported.

So although Yosef caused his father grief by not informing him that he was still alive, he made a value judgment that it would be better to allow that grief then to embarrass his brothers, keeping in line with the Gemorah which says that one should throw himself into a fiery furnace before embarrassing his fellow.

From Yosef's sensitivity, we find how not only was he not angry with his brothers for the misery they had caused him, but he reached the point of genuine caring and empathy for each one of them.

We are responsible to learn from Yosef's shining example and show concern and reverence for every one of our peers by preserving their honor in every way, even when they have genuinely hurt our feelings and caused us great pain and suffering, and through this, we will certainly merit to see the end the long exile which we have be placed in due to our neglect of this important task.

May Hashem guide us to develop a true sense of admiration and respect for our fellow and follow in the footsteps of our holy ancestors!



"No Man" Signifies That It Was All Part of a Divine Plan

Parshas Vayigash must be one of the most dramatic *parshiyos* in the Torah. Yehudah pleads one final time "How can I go back up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest I see the evil that will befall my father!" (44:34). The *pasuk* then says "And Yosef could not endure in the presence of all who stood before him, so he called out, 'Remove everyone from before me!'…" (45:1)

Even though throughout all these *parshiyos*, Yosef has been giving the impression that he is not Yosef and he had been making his brothers really sweat, he can no longer do that. The viceroy of Mitzrayim certainly always had attendants, staff and servants in his presence. He had not been alone with his brothers. He ordered everyone other than his brothers to leave the room. Then the *pasuk* concludes: "…Thus no man stood with him when Yosef made himself known to his brothers." (ibid.)

But this conclusion of *pasuk* 45:1 is redundant! The beginning of that *pasuk* already says that Yosef ordered everyone out of the room. Why do we need the end of the *pasuk* to restate the fact that no man stood with Yosef when he made himself known to his brothers?

I saw a beautiful answer given to this question, written in the name of **Rabbi Shmuel Brazil**.

Rav Shmuel Brazil says beautifully: "Yosef ordered all the people out of the room "*v'lo amad ish ito*" (and no man remained with him)." Who was this "*v'lo amad* ***ish*** *ito*"? Who was this **man**?

Before answering this question, consider another *pasuk* all the way back in Parshas Vayeshev. Yaakov tells Yosef to go and check out where his brothers are. Yosef starts wandering and he can't find his brothers. The *pasuk* says, "And a **man** found him, and behold he was blundering in the field; the **man** asked him 'What do you seek?'" (Bereshis 37:15) Rashi there says this **man** was the Angel Gavriel. The *Ribono shel Olam* put Gavriel over there in order that he should meet Yosef and direct Yosef to Dosan, where he would meet up with his brothers.

That, says Rav Brazil, is the **man** the *pasuk* is referring to here in Parshas Vayigash where it says "And there was no **man** that stood with him." Yosef did not say "You know what? If I would not have met that **man** all the way back then, I would have come home to my father and said to him, 'Guess what? I can't find my brothers.'" Yosef did not let the thought enter his head that had he not met that **man**, he would not have met his brothers, and the brothers would not have sold him as a slave, and he would not have gone down to Mitzrayim, and he would not have been in the dungeon, etc., etc., etc.

The pasuk says "the **man** was not standing with him" to emphasize that Yosef realized that what happened to him was not at all attributable to the chance appearance of "that **man**," but rather, it

was all part of a Divine plan. The *Ribono shel Olam* wanted this entire long and difficult story to occur.

I knew a very elderly gentleman who was living with one of his daughters in New York. He decided to come down to live with his daughter in Baltimore, and not long afterwards, he died. Everyone's reaction is "If he would have stayed in New York, this would not have happened. The schlepping and the effort of the relocation were too much for him. That is why he died." No. That is not true. He died then because when he was born, it was decreed upon him exactly when he would die and where he would die.

That is the way a person needs to look at life. We should never engage in "What if?" scenarios. We believe in *Hashgocha Pratis* (Personal Divine Providence). We wind up in a certain place at a certain time because the *Ribono shel Olam* wants us there at that time.

A Simple Pshat in the Wagons Rejuvenating Yaakov



I was recently sitting at the same table as Rabbi Yaakov Hopfer at a wedding. Rabbi Hopfer told me the following vort:

After Yosef revealed his true identity to his brothers, Yosef instructs them to bring their father, Yaakov, down to Mitzrayim. The brothers returned to Canaan and told Yaakov the whole story: "Yosef is still alive and he is the ruler over the entire land of Egypt; but he had a turn of heart, for he did not believe them. And they related to him

all the words of Yosef that he had spoken to them, and he saw the wagons that Yoseph had sent to transport him, then the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived." (Bereshis 45:26-27)

The sight of those wagons rejuvenated Yaakov, causing him to realize that Yosef was still alive.

We spoke in the past of the Medrash quoted by Rashi that the wagons (agalos) were a special sign that Yosef sent to his father, reminding Yaakov that the last Torah section they had studied together before they were separated for so many years was *Eglah Arufah* (the decapitated calf). The hint was based on the similarity between the word *eglah* and the word *agala*.

However, there can also be a *p'shuto shel mikra* (simple reading of the text): When Yaakov saw the wagons that Yosef sent to transport him and his family to Mitzrayim, his spirit returned to him. Why?

This can be understood with an analogy:

There is a fine pious Jew who lives in Brooklyn. He has a son who is "more modern," who does not exactly follow in his father's footsteps. The son goes off to college, which does not do much for his *ruchniyus*. He is still an Orthodox Jew, but not exactly on the same spiritual level as his father. He meets a girl. The father is not so happy with whom his son married. Then the son and his wife decide to move to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The father in Brooklyn misses his son. He calls him up and says "Son, it has been so long since I have seen you. I want to come visit you in New Mexico." The son says, "You will schlep all the way to Santa Fe?" "Yes. I want to see you." The last thing in the world this son wants is for his father from Brooklyn to come and see how he lives in Santa Fe. The father will see so many things which will displease him: How the house is run, how the wife dresses, how she acts. He will look in the refrigerator and see who knows what.

Seeking any way to avoid his father coming to Santa Fe, the son says to the father, "Dad, it is too big a deal for you to come from Brooklyn to Santa Fe. I will come to see you!" Why does he suggest that? It is because the last thing he wants is for the father to see how he lives in his new location. (I actually was in Santa Fe and saw the Chabad of Santa Fe, but it is far from an established Jewish community.)

Yosef was in Mitzrayim. He was away for so many years. He was cut off from any type of support system. There wasn't even a Chabad of Mitzrayim! Yaakov could have thought "Who knows what could have happened to Yosef? What does he look like? What does his house look like?"

But what does Yosef do? He sends wagons to Yaakov to bring him to Mitzrayim so he can see how Yosef is living there! Yaakov felt, if Yosef is ready for me to see him and how he lives in his home territory, then I know one thing – he is still Yosef, my son. He is still Yosef *haTzadik*. Once Yaakov perceives that, his spirit is rejuvenated.

Tears of Joy? The Gates Of Tears Have Not Been Closed

The *pasuk* says that when Yosef and Yaakov finally meet "…and he appeared to him, he fell on his neck, and he wept on his neck excessively." [Bereishis 46:29] The father and son embrace and cry. Rashi clarifies the meaning of the *pasuk*: Yosef fell on Yaakov's neck and cried, but Yaakov did not fall on Yosef's neck and cry, nor did he kiss him. Rashi quotes "*Raboseinu*" (the Rabbis) who teach that Yaakov did not do so because he was reciting *Shema*.

All the commentaries discuss this teaching. They ask – why was only Yaakov reading Shema at that moment and not Yosef? The premise of this question is that if it was the normal time for *Krias*

Shma, they would both read it as soon as possible. There are different approaches to answer this question.

The Maharal in his *Gur Aryeh* writes that this has nothing to do with the twice daily mitzvah to read *Krias Shma*. We presume that Yaakov and Yosef each already fulfilled their daily obligation to recite *Shma*. However, the Maharal writes that Yaakov felt such overwhelming gratitude – that he now sees his beloved son – who he had given up for dead – alive and well as a righteous person. Yaakov had such pain and anxiety for so many years thinking that Yosef was dead. The joy that a person experiences when he transitions quickly from darkness to great light, from the depths of depression to the heights of ecstasy magnified his love for the Almighty who did him this great kindness. Yaakov thus seized the opportunity to reaccept the Kingship and Reverence for the Almighty with even greater depth and intensity than he had been able to every do in the past.

Yaakov channeled his great emotion of love and reverence for the Holy One, Blessed Be He, by instinctively reciting with great emotion the proclamation of "Hear of Israel *Hashem Elokeinu* is *Hashem* in Unity". So explains the Maharal.

Rabbi Yehoshua Hartman, on the bottom of the printed Maharal, notes that Yaakov's joy was greater than that of Yosef. The Simcha [joy] that comes after a great pain (*tza'ar*) is superior to a Simcha that does not come because of pain but comes "out of the blue".

Therefore, Yaakov, who had suffered mightily and was now reunited with his son, experienced a greater happiness than Yosef experienced and it was therefore he who recited *Shma* and not his son.

Rav Hartman further quotes an observation of **Rav Hutner** in his introduction to the *Pachad Yitzchak* on Shavuos. This observation answers a question I have had for years and years. My question was "How do we explain the phenomenon 'tears of joy'"? We cry when we are sad and we cry when we are happy. This ostensibly does not make

any sense. Yet, we see that people do cry when they are happy. What is the meaning of this?

Rav Hutner offers an interesting idea that I believe is accurate. If I find out tomorrow that I won the lottery and now I am $340,000,000 richer, I will be very happy but I do not think I will start crying out of joy. Why?

Why do we cry at our children's weddings? Why do we cry at the birth of a child? Why do we cry at our son's *Bar Mitzvah*? The answer is that we put so much effort into raising a child to bring him to *Bar Mitzvah* or to bring a daughter down to the *Chuppah*. Similarly, when someone has a baby, it is preceded by months of difficulty.

Rav Hutner says that tears of joy are always the product or the offspring of the difficulties that preceded them. The "Gates of Tears" that were shed during the period of difficulty leading to this happy stage "have not been closed". They have not yet been turned off. Therefore, when in fact the *simcha* occurs, the tears continue. The *Shaarei Dema'os* of the pain and the travail are still active. However, *Simcha* that comes out of the blue is not the type of occasion that triggers tears.

The Identity of a Jew

The Torah tells us that Yosef sent wagons (Agalos) laden with food to Yaakov, in order to provide proof that he was still alive [Bereishis 45:21]. There is a famous Medrash which explains that the reason Yaakov was convinced that Yosef was still alive was that this gift was really a play on words. The word Agalah [wagon] was symbolic of the word Eglah [calf]. Eglah was reminiscent of the halachic subject of Eglah Arufah [the decapitated Calf]. [Devorim 21:1-9; Sotah Chapter 9] Yaakov and Yosef were in the middle of studying this subject, Eglah Arufah, when they were separated.

As soon as Yaakov saw the wagons, he realized that Yosef was alive, and had not even a shadow of a doubt [45:27]. Yaakov immediately associated the Agalos with the Eglah Arufah, the last halachic section they had studied.

I would like to relate a very interesting incident that happened in the time of the **Gaon of Vilna**. Apparently, a couple had gotten married, and immediately after the wedding the husband vanished. He was never heard from again. The wife was an Agunah [a 'chained' wife]; she was unable to remarry because she was still married to her vacant husband, and the Beis Din had no way to know whether her husband was not, in fact, still alive.

Thirty years later, a fellow walked into town, went to this woman and announced, "I'm home". The halachic question was — do we believe this fellow who claims to be the husband, or not? People change a tremendous amount in thirty years, but still, no one recognized the man. This was a very serious matter, involving an Eishes Ish [a married woman].

On the other hand, the fellow did not come unprepared. The man told the woman things that only the husband could conceivably have known. He told her all about the wedding. He even knew intimate information about her. The man provided seemingly undeniable proof that he must be the husband. The details that he presented were all things which ostensibly only the husband could have known.

The Vilna Gaon was consulted regarding whether or not the man could be believed. The Vilna Gaon told them to take the man into the shul [synagogue] and ask him to identify his makom kavuah [regular seat] where he used to pray. They took the man into the shul and asked him to identify his regular seat. The man was unable to identify his makom kavuah. The Gaon then identified the person as a fraud and a liar. Why?

This person wanted to trick the poor woman… He obviously had spoken to the real husband and bothered to find out many

"important" details, but since he was not an honest, God-fearing, Jew, he did not bother to find out about matters of spirituality (Devorim she'b'Kedusha). The man could identify the color of his suit on the wedding day, the color of the flowers, the name of the band, all the 'foolish' matters. But there is one thing that a person who does not take his Judaism seriously will not think about finding out: the Devorim she'b'Kedusha, the holy matters in the life of a Jew.

The important thing in our lives is not what color our car is. The important thing in our lives is where we pray in synagogue, what tractate of Talmud we are studying, etc. Therefore the Gaon knew that this person was a con artist and was not the real husband.

We learn this lesson from Yosef and Yaakov. When Yosef wanted to give undeniable proof to his father Yaakov that he was indeed Yosef, the incontrovertible piece of evidence he presented was the halachic portion that they were studying. On the day that Yosef left, what was the 'Daf' [folio of Talmud] that they studied? What was the 'sugyah' [Talmudic subject] that they were studying? That is the way serious Jews identify themselves. Not by where they went fishing together, nor by where they played ball together, nor by all the other foolish aspects of life. Yosef identified himself to Yaakov by the essence of Jewish identity — the Torah topic that they last discussed.

The Vilna Gaon was not engaged in miraculous revelation. This was just common sense. A Jew knows where he prays and where he learns — because those are the key aspects of his life.

Be Impeccable with your word. Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

How Far Have We Drifted From The Way of Truth



Pharoah instructed Yosef to bring his father and family down to Egypt. "Do this: Take for yourselves from the land of Egypt, wagons for your small children and for your wives; transport your father and come." [45:19]. **The Daas Zekeinim m'Baale HaTosfos** infers that the wagons were only provided for the purpose of transporting the women and children. However the brothers were supposed to carry their father on their shoulders. Why? This is part of honoring one's father (Kibud Av).

But who was talking here and who was showing concern for the laws of Kibud Av? It is Pharoah. Pharoah was instructing Yosef in proper manners (derech eretz) towards one's father!

Rav Gifter comments "how far have we gone from that which seemed obvious". In those days, it was even self-evident to Pharoah that this is how one should treat a father. To us, this is not merely a novelty — it is something that we would not even dream of doing! And yet, Pharoah held it to be self-evident that one treats his father with far greater reverence than one gives to one's wife and children. Pharoah did not consider it proper for Yosef's brothers to merely provide a wagon ride for their father.

Our values and way of living have drifted so far from the self-evident truths of Biblical times that this seems foreign to us.

How far have we drifted from the ideas of truth! Concepts that were self- evident in previous generations are novel ideas today. We must learn from a Pharoah the proper way to treat a father. Today, it is something that we barely aspire to fulfill. But that nevertheless is the way of truth.

What Did Yosef Mean by "Al Tirgazu B'Derech"?

We find in this week's Parsha, that before sending his brothers back to Yaakov, Yosef told them "Al Tirgazu B'Derech". The Gemara in Taanis expounds from this verse a number of laws regarding proper behavior while travelling on the road.

Rav Elazar said that Yosef told them not to discuss matters of Halacha amongst themselves on the road, the conversation should be restricted to lighter matters. Another opinion quoted is that Yosef told them not to take large steps. [Taanis 10b]

After the emotional reunion between Yosef and his brothers, what are Yosef's parting words? "Al Tirgazu B'Derech" – either don't get involved in complicated learning or don't take large steps.

Both interpretations are very strange. First of all, these are common laws in Derech Eretz. The brothers knew that one should not get involved in complex intellectual matters while 'driving down the turnpike'. Obviously a person can get into an accident from concentrating on learning instead of concentrating on the road!

Likewise, it was common knowledge that large steps were inappropriate on the road. (The Talmud there continues and says that it can cause a diminishing of one's eyesight.)

The Be'er Yosef suggests that Yosef's parting message to his brothers was much deeper and more significant. Yosef was telling them something far more meaningful and symbolic than that which a simple reading of the Talmud indicates. Yosef was actually chastising his brothers.

How did the whole event of the sale of Yosef come about? The brothers sentenced Yosef to death for being a slanderer. They believed that Yosef brought bad tidings of their actions back to Yaakov. They judged him as a rodef — one who was trying to endanger their own lives. Chazal quote that they convened a Beis

Din [Rabbinic Court] and had a proceeding and sincerely sentenced him to what they deemed to be a just sentence.

But the question remains — we are talking here about a Capital issue. Yaakov, their father was the Gadol Hador [Supreme (Halachic) Authority of the Generation]. Why didn't they consult with him? They dealt with an earth-shaking matter out in some temporary camp in Shechem, on the road. What about the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever? What about consulting with the Gadol HaDor?

"Why are you paskening [deciding] Capital Offenses on the 'New Jersey Turnpike' without going to ask a shaylah?"

This is the meaning of "Al Tirgazu Be'Derech" — Don't occupy yourselves with Halachic matters on the road. Such decisions have to be arrived at with patience, with peace of mind, with seriousness of purpose — all of which is impossible to achieve haphazardly on the road.

That was your crime. In your zealousness to accuse me, you missed a basic principle of Halacha which is to be patient in executing justice [Avot 1:1]. A judge has a responsibility to be deliberate and patient. That is what "Al Tirgazu Be'Derech" implies.

And "Al Tafsiyu Pesiah Gassah" does not mean simply "don't take large steps". Chazal tell us [Sanherdrin 7b] that we learn out the principle that a Judge must be deliberate from the juxtaposition of the verse "Do not ascend by steps upon my altar" [Shemos 20:22] with that of "And these are the laws which you shall place before them" [Shemos 21:1].

When the Kohen ascended the altar, he went up a ramp, rather than steps. The purpose of this was to minimize the size of his steps. Just like the Kohanim are not supposed to take large steps, so too Judges have to be slow and methodical in their deliberations. In other words, the expression "Pesiyah Gassa" is a terminology used by our Sages to indicate "Don't be rushed when you pasken a din."

This is the symbolism that a big step diminishes a person's eyesight. It does not mean that a person's eyesight will be worse after taking large steps. The meaning is that if one is too hasty and impatient, his perspective will become diminished — one's clarity of vision will be lessened.

This is what Yosef was telling his brothers: Don't let this happen again. Your crime was one of being in too much of a hurry, not patient in administering justice. That is why we find ourselves in this situation now.



Yaakov's Disbelief Gives Way to Rejuvenation—How and Why Did That Happen?

Sefer Nachal Eliyahu by **Rabbi Eliyahu Diskin** says:

The brothers come back with good news, and they tell Yaakov that Yosef is alive. The *pasuk* records: "**וַיָּפָג לִבּוֹ, כִּי לֹא-הֶאֱמִין לָהֶם**." (Bereshis 45:26). Simply put, Yaakov did not believe them. Is this not strange? Yaakov has been mourning for over twenty years for his lost son Yosef. He has been a depressed, broken, totally changed person. Finally, the brothers come in and tell him this wonderful news that Yosef is still alive. Why would he not believe them? This is the news he has been waiting to hear for twenty-plus years! Did he think they were trying to play a fast one on him – that five minutes later they would yell 'April Fools!'? No son would do that to a grieving father. This is not a subject to joke about! What does "He did not believe them" indicate?

The *pshat* in this *pasuk* is revealed through a Medrash Tanchuma: A wicked person is considered dead during his lifetime because a *rasha* is dead emotionally and religiously if he does not recognize the Almighty and acknowledge all that He provides for this world. For all intents and purposes, he is in a "vegetative state" – totally oblivious spiritually to the world around him. He may have a pulse and a

heartbeat, but if he can't react spiritually to what the Holy One Blessed be He has provided for him, he is merely in a vegetative state. It is "life", but it is not really "*chaim*".

When the brothers came in and said to Yaakov, "Yosef is still alive" and Yaakov did not believe them, Yaakov did not think they were lying to him or playing a joke on him. Yaakov was concerned – what could be with a seventeen-year-old who was cut off from his family in his formative years and thrown into the fleshpots of Egypt? Yaakov reasoned – What kind of Jew could Yosef be at this point? Therefore, if he is alive but he doesn't recognize a *Ribono shel Olam* in this world – he is not the Yosef that I once knew and then for all intents and purposes, he is **not** alive. Yaakov heard "*Od Yosef **CHAI***" but he thought to himself "that is not what I call **LIFE**."

What happened? Yaakov saw the wagons that Yosef sent…and the spirit of Yaakov their father rejuvenated (Bereshis 45:27). The famous *Chazal* says that Yosef was sending a signal to his father: The last thing that we learned before I was separated from you all those years ago was the parsha of *eglah arufah*. In other words, Yosef signaled that he still remembered the "*sugyah* that we were holding in." Then, the spirit of Yaakov came back to life. "If Yosef remembers the Torah we learned together, then he really is alive."

In 1940, **Rav Elazar Shach** (1899-2001) was in Vilna. Rav Shach was part of the Mir Yeshiva. The Mir Yeshiva went to Vilna at that time, as did most of the Eastern European yeshivos. Rav Shach met someone there, a Rav Kluf, and spoke to him in learning. They parted ways and did not see each other again until seven years later, after the war. They met again in Tel Aviv in 1947. When Rav Shach saw Rav Kluf for the first time after seven years of separation, the first thing he said to him was "I have an answer to that contradiction you raised in the Rambam." After having gone through everything that occurred to him in those intervening years, still remembering

"the *kasheh* that we left off with" and having "a *teretz* for that *kasheh* on the Rambam" exemplifies the meaning of preserving *Chiyus* (life) by a true Jew.

Medically speaking, a vegetative state is called life, but it is not much of a life in the eyes of people. In the eyes of upright Jews, life does not only mean eating, drinking and sleeping, but also recognizing that there is a *Ribono shel Olam* in the world.

That is what Yaakov did not believe at first, but when he saw the wagons – Ahh, Yosef is still thinking about learning; he is still thinking about that *Sugya* we studied together. If so, Yosef is in fact still alive and so, the spirit of Yaakov was then rejuvenated.

Reaching for Treife and Swallowing Kosher Requires Atonement and Forgiveness

I just saw a new interpretation of a very famous Medrash. The *pasuk* says "And Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef, is my father still alive?' and the brothers could not respond to him for they trembled before him." (Bereshis 45:3)

The Medrash writes that this *pasuk*, indicating the speechlessness of the brothers in the face of Yosef's inquiry, foreshadows for us the great shame and silence we will face at the time of the Day of Judgement. On that great day, when we will be standing before the Throne of Glory after having left this world, the emotions the *Shevatim* (Tribes) felt in the face of Yosef's *tochacha* (chastisement) to them will be akin to what we will feel on the Day of Judgement, except what we will feel will be geometrically worse.

Yosef was the youngest of the *Shevatim* and yet they were not able to withstand his (implied) *tochacha*. How much more so will that be the case when *Hashem* confronts each of us with our shortcomings!

We will certainly be speechless and won't have what to answer. So says the Medrash.

However, the Medrash uses a peculiar expression. The Medrash says that at the time of the future Judgement, the Almighty will give *tochacha* to each and every individual "*l'fi mah she'hu*" (according to who he is). Many of the commentaries on the Medrash explore these three enigmatic words. In previous years, we discussed some of those explanations.

I recently heard a recording from **Rav Isaac Bernstein**, who cites an idea from the sefer Binyan Shlomo (by Rav Shlomo haKohen from Vilna, author of the commentary Cheshek Shlomo in the back of the Gemara). The Binyan Shlomo cites an interpretation of this Medrash that he heard from his brother (Rav Bezalel haKohen of Vilna):

In the end, Yosef's sale to Egypt turned out good for him. Because of this sale, Yosef was able to save not only his family but the entire world. **The Ohr Hachaim** points this out in Parshas VaYeshev that we have a principle that those engaged on a mission that is a Mitzvah are not harmed. How then could Yosef, who was sent on a mission by his father to check on his brothers (thereby fulfilling the mitzvah of *Kibud Av*), be harmed as a result of this mission?

The Ohr Hachaim answers that Yosef was not ultimately harmed by what happened. The Ohr Hachaim explains that a situation which involves initial harm, but, in the end, turns out for the best, is not considered harm. Yosef became the second most powerful person in the world, and saved his family and the whole world from famine and starvation. That is not harm!

The Sefas Emes says on the *pasuk* "that you sold me to here" (*asher mechartem osi heina*) as follows: Just as Chazal (Shabbos 87) say about the expression by the Luchos "*asher shibarta*" *(that you broke) – Yasher Koach she'shibarta* (congratulations for breaking them), so too the Sefas Emes says here by the brothers having sold

Yosef, *Yasher Koach she'machartem osi* (congratulations for selling me). Thank you for selling me!

If that is the case, the Binyan Shlomo says, what did the brothers do wrong? Maybe they even did a *mitzvah* by selling Yosef? The Binyan Shlomo compares this to a case cited in the Talmud, where a person intended to eat a piece of pork and accidentally ate a piece of kosher lamb instead. Even though he technically did not do anything wrong, he still requires forgiveness and atonement.

This, the Binyan Shlomo says, is the interpretation of the Medrash: If Yosef's brothers, who intended to do bad—but it turned out good—were nevertheless so embarrassed that they could not answer Yosef's implied *tochacha*, how much more so in the future, when we approach the Throne of Honor and stand before the *Ribono shel Olam*, will we be embarrassed. By us, it will actually be a case of "intending to eat pork and indeed eating pork." We intended to do bad, and we did do bad. Woe to us from the Day of *Tochacha*. Woe to us from the Day of Judgement.

Sensitive News Must Be Delivered with Sensitivity

"They told him that Yosef was still alive and that he ruled the entire land of Egypt…" [Bereshis 45:26]

Sefer HaYashar says that the brothers were afraid that if they would suddenly break the news to Yaakov that his beloved and presumed-dead son was still alive, he would die on the spot. The news would be too shocking. An older person can die from sudden shock.

So, what did they do? Serach, daughter of Asher played her violin and kept on singing "*Od Yosef Chai; Od Yosef Chai*." Yaakov Avinu thus already had put into his consciousness these words stating that Yosef was still alive.

Consequently, when the brothers came in and they said "*Od Yosef Chai!*" it was not the same shock as it would have otherwise been. Yaakov had been inoculated, so to speak, to the concept that Yosef was still alive.

This is all well and good. But what is the lesson we learn from this Medrash?

Rav Pam writes in his *sefer* that the lesson we learn is how sensitive we need to be about how we say certain things. We need to anticipate how our words will be taken by the intended recipient. Sometimes news needs to be broken softly. In all cases, we must speak sensitive words with sensitivity!

Rav Pam writes that Rav Yaakov Bender has two rules whenever he calls a parent on the phone. The first thing he says is, "Hello. This is Rabbi Yaakov Bender. Your child is fine." Why? Because whenever a parent gets a call from the principal the parent braces himself: "Okay. What did my kid do now? What did he break? What happened to him?" Therefore, the first thing out of the principal's mouth is "Your child is fine" thus relieving the parent.

The second policy Rabbi Bender has is that whatever a child has done, he never suspends a child on Erev Shabbos. That is all that is needed to ruin a Shabbos. The kid gets thrown out of school; the kid is suspended; the kid flunked…. The kid will sit there at the Shabbos table with this just having happened to him. It will put a pall over the entire Shabbos for the whole family.

Maybe the child **will** be suspended… but that can always wait until Sunday morning. On Friday afternoon, he does not suspend students. That is a lesson learned from the Medrash about Serach bas Asher. "*Od Yosef Chai*." We must always break news gently, softly, — even good news. This is the sensitivity we must have when dealing with people.

What's Your Hurry?

Before sending them back to Canaan, Yosef gave his brothers the following instructions: "Do not become agitated on the way" (אַל-תִּרְגְּזוּ בַּדָּרֶךְ) [45:24]. The Gemara [Ta'anis 10b] interprets these words to mean "Do not take big steps". What does this mean?

The Kotzker Rebbe explains that Yosef knew exactly what was going through his brothers' minds. They just found out that Yosef was still alive. They knew what this would mean to their father. These were the days before means of instant communication that we have today. It took several days to travel from Egypt back to Eretz Canaan. They were thinking, "We can't wait to tell our father the news. This is a three-day trip. We are going to make it in a day and a half!" Yosef therefore told them to travel at a normal pace.

Why? The Kotzker explains that when G-d brings suffering upon a person, He decrees that the suffering will end at a specific moment. It will not depart a moment earlier or later. Therefore, it does not help for them to think that they can make it happen quicker. The exact amount of time that Yaakov had to suffer was preordained. If the brothers would have tried to speed up or take short cuts, they would not have gotten there any sooner.

The Imrei Shammai cites a similar explanation from the **Baal HaTurim**. Yosef's message when he told his brothers "אַל-תִּרְגְּזוּ בַּדָּרֶךְ" was: don't go through fields that have already been sown. In other words, don't think you are on such a holy and urgent mission that it justifies stepping on someone's corn crop thinking "this is important! So what if this guy has a little less corn this year?" Yosef instructed them, "don't do that. Don't use your connections with the viceroy in Egypt to justify physical or moral shortcuts. Stay on the main highway. Don't take special privileges. Shortcuts are not going to help. It will happen whenever it is going to happen."

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt- Stop Playing Small

The Pasuk states **כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב**; we are from dust and we will return to dust. **The Chidushei Harim** explains that we may be "dust", yet we have potential to conquer worlds. What a shame it would be if **ואל עפר תשוב**, we return to the grave not having accomplished with our lives. When describing Yaakov's dream, it says **סלם מצב ארצה ... עולים ויורדים בו**.

We may look like physical beings living a physical life. The reality is that although we are on the ground, we affect the heavens. But that doesn't happen on its own. Can a bird stop flapping its wings in mid-air? Sure it can but down it goes. Can man stop climbing a down escalator? Sure he can but…ouch! Either we grow or fall.

This is just as the **Gra** tells us- we are either ascending or descending in this world, as we can't remain on one level. This is alluded to in **מעלין בקדש ואין מורידין** - If we don't want to fall, if we want to live the reality of **ואין מורידין**, then we must be **מעלין בקדש**. With this we can explain why we are referred to as a **הולך** whereas a Malach is called a **עומד**. This is because a Malach stays on one level as he doesn't grow, contrary to a human.

A Rabbi visiting prisoners told them that you are limited only because you can't get whatever you want. But the truth is everyone is like that as everyone has boundaries. We can't walk across the ocean and the like. These are just horizontal borders. Vertically though, we are the only ones who stop ourselves.

Adam was created **בצלם אלקים**; in the image of Hashem. If we spell out the name of Hashem **י- ה- ו- ה** we get **יוד, הא ואו, הא**.

This comes to a total of 45, the Gematria of **אדם**. The greatness we can attain is because we have an infinite soul within us- a piece of Hashem- **חלק אלו-ה ממעל**. Nothing can diminish our worth.



Just as if someone crumpled a 20-pound note and threw it in the dirt, you would still want it since it didn't lose its value, likewise even if we stumble and fall, we still have our value.

Let us now read the first Pasuk in Vayigash in a different way: **ויגש אליו יהודה**- when a Yehudi- a Jew- approaches life. **ויאמר בי אדני** - he says to himself, within me, I have **א- ד- נ- י**, as we are a **חלק אלו-ה ממעל**.

עובדיה - An Active Fight

The Gemara tells us that **עובדיה** merited prophesy on the falling of Edom (Esav's nation) since he lived with **איזבל ואחאב-רשעים** yet didn't learn from their bad deeds. What is the connection between the two?

The Rambam cautions us in who we surround ourselves with, since they affect us. If so, Esav should have been a Tzadik since he was around Yitzchak and Rivka? **עובדיה** on the other hand, should have been a **רשע** because of **איזבל ואחאב**.

There are two types of those who don't learn from another's bad ways. It can be passive as in keeping a distance from them. However, a higher level is from actively fighting the wave. The saying goes, "Are you going to ride the wave or let the wave ride you." This is why the Pasuk highlights that Rivka was the daughter of **בתואל** and sister of **לבן** although we already know this, as it is to tell her praise that she was the daughter and sister of wicked people yet she didn't follow in their path.

This gives us a deeper appreciation in **עם לבן הרשע גרתי... ולא למדתי ממעשיו הרעים** as Yaakov was proactive in not learning from **לבן** 's evil ways. In a similar way, Yosef who was surrounded by the lowest of people in Mitzrayim, was steadfast in his righteousness. This is the meaning in **ויוסף הוא השליט על הארץ** - he ruled over the physicality. Esav on the other hand fought the tide of those who were good around him. **עובדיה** fought the tide of wickedness and was therefore a Tzadik. Consequently, we now see the connection of the prophesy **עובדיה** merited since he didn't learn from the wicked.



The story is told of **R' Reuven Grozovsky** who kept an eye on two boys- Ahron and Yaakov- from being torn away from their Gemara by friends and relatives. He convinced them to leave Minsk for the Yeshiva in Slabodka. These two eventually became the famous Gedolim **R' Ahron Kotler and R' Yaakov Kaminetzky**. For the rest of their lives, they credited R' Reuven with having saved them spiritually.

The Gates of Heaven Are Open

Someone once asked the **Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah of Slonim zy"a**: Chazal say (Bava Metziah 59A) that the gates of tears are never closed. What about the gates of joy?

He answered, ***"The chamber of joy has no doors at all. It is always completely open!"***

A Dual World

Rashi quotes the Gemara that Yocheved- the mother of Moshe- was born **בין החומות**; between the walls (Mitzrayim and Eretz Yisrael). On a deeper level this is telling us that we have a Yetzer Hara to act like those in Mitzrayim but we can also be holy (Eretz Yisrael). This also put the ability in us to be part of society but not to be negatively affected by it. We can work in a secular environment yet still be firm in our religious beliefs.



This is an explanation in the Bracha of **וידגו לרב** as fish live in this world but are also separate and live in their own world. Similarly, we should live in this world but in our own society.

We have seen this throughout our history. The following are just a few of the many examples:



The Rambam (1135-1204) became a doctor at age 31 and at 39 became the personal doctor of the sultan and the royal court. Yet we know he authored many well-known Seforim- **מורה , משנה תורה , פירוש המשניות איגרת הרמבם , נבוכים , ספר המצות** and so on.

The Arizal (1534-1572) was also a pepper merchant. The great commentator **Abarbanel** (1437-1508) was a treasurer to King Alfonso V of Portugal and later to King Fernidand and Queen Isabella. The author of the commentary on Chumash known as the **Sforno** (1470-1550) was also a physician and educated in secular subjects. He supported himself by practicing medicine while he also officiated as a **דיין** in the local Beis Din in Bologna.



Malach of Parnassa

The **מלאך** named **חתך** is the one appointed over **פרנסה**. This is indicated in **פותח את ידיך** as the end letters are **חתך**. Additionally, the second letters of **נתן לחם לכל** spell **חתך**.

When Yosef sent food to his father, it says **שלח כזאת** to which Rashi says **כחשבון הזה**; like this amount- as **כזאת** has a Gematria of 428, the same as **חתך**.

ConNECKtions



Rashi tells us that that Yosef cried on Binyomin's neck over the two **בתי מקדשות** that would be in the portion of Binyomin which would be destroyed. Binyomin cried on Yosef's neck over **משכן שילה** which would be in the portion of Yosef that would be destroyed. Why now? And what's with the neck?

In the name of the **Megale Amukos** the following explanation is given. The Beis Hamikdash is the place of connection as it is a place where we come close to Hashem- through Davening, bringing **קרבנות**, being **עולה לרגל**; festival pilgrimage and so on. This world is called the **עולם המעשה**; world of action whereas the upper world is known as the **עולם המחשבה**; world of thought. Where do these two worlds connect? At the Beis Hamikdash. The neck is where the **עולם המחשבה** - the head- meets the **עולם המעשה** - the body. Is it any coincidence that the Beis Hamikdash is referred to by the neck-

כמגדל דויד צוארך - your neck is the tower of Dovid and **צוארך כמגדל השן** - your neck is like a tower of ivory.

Within the neck are the oesophagus- **ושט** - and trachea- **קנה**. The trachea represents **רוחניות**; spirituality since that is what we breathe through. Indeed, **נשמה** ; soul and **נשימה**; breath have the same root. We daven and learn Torah with our breath- **הקל קול יעקב**; the voice of Torah and Tefila. This is the **עולם המחשבה**. The oesophagus on the other hand signifies **גשמיות**; physicality since that is what we eat and drink through. This is the **עולם המעשה** Where are the oesophagus and trachea placed on the body? In the neck!

After Yosef reveals himself to his brothers, he and Binyomin cry on each other's neck. They were crying about the existence of **שנאת חנם** as this is what caused the troubles of Yosef- being sold by his brothers. They knew that because of **שנאת חנם** the Beis Hamikdash would be destroyed. So what did they do? They cried on each other's necks in a loving embrace because they knew the rectification of **שנאת חנם** is **אהבת חנם**.

From Guests to Children



The Midrash tells us that the reward for the Mitzva of **הכנסת אורחים** is having children. We see this by Avraham and Sarah who hosted guests. She was 89 (and Avraham 99), yet still barren. After performing **הכנסת אורחים** with the Malachim, she was told she would bear a child. We also see this by the Shunamis woman who hosted Elisha, as in this merit she bore a child. This is alluded to in Parshas Vayigash 47:23 in **הא**

לכם זרע as **הא** are the first letters of **הַכנסת אֲורחים** So, to have children- **זרע** - perform **הכנסת אורחים**.

For the first 14 years of the marriage of the **Baal HaTanya**, he didn't have children. After approaching his Rebbe- **the Magid of Mezeritch**- for a Bracha to have a child, the Magid related a unique interpretation of **במה יזכה נער את ארחו**; how can a youngster purify his path. He explained **במה יזכה נער**; how can one merit having a child. **את ארחו** - by hosting guests. The Magid then told him that the father of the Baal Shem Tov merited to give birth to the Baal Shem Tov because of the Mitzva of **הכנסת אורחים**.

Emotions Were Kept in Check To Be Faithful To Halacha



At the beginning of Perek 45, the pasuk says: **וְלֹא־יָכֹל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק לְכֹל הַנִּצָּבִים עָלָיו וַיִּקְרָא הוֹצִיאוּ כָל־אִישׁ מֵעָלָי וְלֹא־עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ בְּהִתְוַדַּע יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־קֹלוֹ בִּבְכִי** *"Now Joseph could not bear all those standing beside him, and he called out, "Take everyone away from me!" So no one stood with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud…"*

Ironically, before Yosef "lost it" and started to cry he ordered that all (Egyptians) be removed from the room. Why? Rashi says because he did not want the brothers to be humiliated in front of the Egyptians. Yosef knew that his brothers would be tremendously embarrassed when he revealed himself to them as the ruling power of the most powerful nation in the world — knowing that years earlier they had sold him into slavery. He did not want anyone in the room to see the embarrassment his brothers would be suffering.

Anyone who has been in a situation where they were so overcome with emotion that they broke down crying will realize the difficulty

in this narrative. All of us have such moments in life. When we break down crying it is not possible to say "wait a minute, before I break down, I have to check my e-mail." Emotions overcome a person. "Yosef could not hold himself back."

Somehow Yosef was able to hold it in long enough to give the order for the others to leave and long enough for all of them to file out in an orderly fashion. He knew that the halacha prohibits one from publicly embarrassing his fellow man. This is a classic example of human emotions clashing with a halacha. A person has to develop such control that he will not disregard the halacha despite his emotions.

Many times, we say to ourselves "I couldn't help myself. I couldn't stop." Therefore, we take liberties. Yosef did not take liberty. The halacha says you cannot embarrass your brothers. Despite the overwhelming emotions at play, Yosef controlled his emotions and acted according to halacha.



There was a student of the Mir Yeshiva who lived in America who had a child who was very sick. The student sent a friend of his to go ask **Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz** to pray for the child. Rav Chaim took the name and said he would pray for him.

The next day the child took a turn for the worse, and this friend had to go back into Rav Chaim and tell him that the child passed away. Rav Chaim asked the friend to please extend blessings of condolences to the father of the child in America.

The friend left the room and then Rav Chaim burst out crying. He cried uncontrollably for several minutes. The chavrusa asked him why he did not start crying immediately. He explained, "I saw the friend of my student who delivered the news was already an

emotional wreck. I did not want to add to his trauma by crying in front of him. I withheld myself until he left the room and then I let myself go."

This is a similar story to what occurred by Yosef. We need to have enough control over our emotions so that our outbreak does not negatively impact others in ways that the halacha would not want us to impact them.

Avoiding Machlokes





We must avoid Machlokes at all costs. How do we say hello? With the word **שלום**. This same word is also how we say goodbye. This is because even if we disagree it is all within the context of peace, that we love each other.

The Satmar Rebbe (1887-1979) vehemently disagreed with others, yet he gave them Tzedaka because in essence he loved them. The argument was within the context of peace.

There were two Chassidish Rebbes that were involved in a Machlokes. When one of the Rebbe died, his son made peace with the other Rebbe. When his Chassidim asked how he could make peace with the other Rebbe if his father didn't, he answered that I don't have the Torah or Tefila of my father. So should I also hold on to the Machlokes of his?!

We should all merit to fulfil the Pasuk of **בקש שלום ורדפהו**, to seek and pursue peace.

Life of The Future



In our Parsha Yosef cried on Binyamin's neck because of the two Batei Mikdash in his portion that would be destroyed. This Parsha comes around the fast of the 10th of Teves- the date when the armies of Nevuchadnetzar laid siege on Yerushalayim which ultimately culminated in the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash.

The Sefas Emes was once asked if one doesn't feel anguish over the Churban Beis Hamikdash what should he do? He responded that he should feel pain and anguish over his personal Churban- the soul that can't mourn over the Churban- as one who doesn't feel pain over the Churban shows that he is in a low state.

We must realize what we are missing due to the lack of the Beis Hamikdash so that we can mourn over it. After all, the Shulchan Aruch states it is fitting for a **ירא שמים** to be pained and worried over the Churban Beis Hamikdash. We can't despair.

To get a glimpse of what we are missing, let us take a look at what we are told about the ultimate future- **לעתיד לבא**.There will be no Avoda Zara. The blind will see and the deaf will hear. Death will be eliminated- **בלע המות לנצח**; He will eliminate death forever. The glory of Hashem will be revealed- **ונגלה כבוד ה'**. In the times of Moshiach, there will be abundant peace- the wolf will live with the sheep and the leopard will lie down with the kid; a calf, a lion whelp and a fatling will walk together, and a young child will lead them. A cow and bear will graze and their young will lie together; and a lion like cattle will eat hay. Trees will bear fruit each and every day. In that time, Eretz

Yisrael will bring forth ready-made bread rolls and fine woollen clothes. The pig in the future will be kosher. And so will the lion!

The Rambam tells us that in the days of Moshiach there will be no hunger, war or jealousy and competition. Good will be flowing out immensely and delicacies will be found like dust.

The Chassam Sofer informs us that in the future the boys that are born will be born circumcised and there will still be the Mitzva of Bris as there will be **הטפת דם ברית**.

When Moshiach comes a woman will be able to conceive one child even as she is carrying another. Also, the period of gestation will become much shorter. Thus, a woman will be able to deliver one baby even as she carries or conceives another.

A Brachaless Beverage?



In preparation for a fast, it has been advised to drink more than usual on the days preceding it. The question arises if one needs to recite a Bracha on the water since he is not thirsty?

The Eishel Avraham says that it is possible he still needs to recite a Bracha since this is included in the category of thirst. This is because he is drinking now so that he shouldn't be thirsty afterwards. However, he concludes that no Bracha is necessary since one recites a Bracha only when he is already thirsty.

R' Elyashiv as well as **R' Nissim Karelitz** concur that one who drinks prior to a fast in order to have lots of liquid in his system but at the time of drinking he doesn't derive benefit at all, no Bracha is

required. However, if he derives minimal pleasure such as in Eretz Yisrael where it can be very warm before Tisha Bav as well as other fast days, he would be required to recite a Bracha, says R' Nissim Karelitz. **R' Shmuel Wosner** ruled in an actual case that one who drinks before a fast says a Bracha.

Our Generation of Greatness



We are taught that Yosef and Binyomin cried on each other's neck over the destruction of the sanctuaries that would be built in their respective territories.

The Chassam Sofer is bothered how could Yosef and Binyomin cry if it was Shabbos, as it is forbidden to cry on Shabbos?

Although we recognize how impure and immoral the world is today, we must realize that this also shows our greatness, as we still serve Hashem in such a situation. **The אור לשמים** (1767-1831) brings from the Sefer Bris Menucha that the expression **אם ראשונים בני מלאכים אנו בני אנשים**, if the scholars of previous generations were sons of angels, we are sons of men; if they were sons of men, we are like donkeys… applied in their day. However, *today where there is so much darkness and yet we strengthen ourselves to serve Hashem according to our ability, we are considered greater than Tzadikim from earlier generations!*

The Arizal (1534-1572) once told **R' Chaim Vitaal** that nowadays, in the darkness of Galus, even just one crying out or a groan that comes from the depth of one's heart is like many fasts of earlier generations! **The Yismach Yisrael** points out that this was in the

time of the Arizal. Imagine what a sigh or groan from us today is considered, as the Galus and troubles of today are much worse.

The Beis Aharon (1736-1772) writes an idea he says that are found in many Sefarim. That is, that which Tzadikim from earlier generations worked to attain for days and months, nowadays it's possible to accomplish this in one hour since the world today is lowlier (This was in the 1700s.).

Binyomin and Yosef saw all that would happen to us in Galus—which was caused by the destruction of the sanctuaries—and that we would withstand the tests until **לעתיד לבא** when the Beis Hamikdash will be rebuilt. From this **דביקות** and Simcha they cried as such crying is permitted on Shabbos!



Sparing Embarrassment of His Brothers Was Worth The Risk, by Rav Yissochor Frand

After hearing Yehudah's emotional plea, when Yosef finally broke down and told his brothers, "I am Yosef, is my father still alive?" he made a point of first sending everyone else out from the room so that he was alone with his brothers.

Rashi explains that he did not want the Egyptians to see his brothers embarrassed when he revealed his identity to them.

This was obviously a terribly embarrassing moment for the brothers. In the words of our Rabbis, that very moment, which is one of the most dramatic moments in the entire narrative portion of the Torah, is a prototype for the type of great embarrassment we may all suffer on the future Day of Judgment.

The Medrash [Bereshis Rabbah 93] quotes an opinion that Yosef did not act wisely at that moment. His action in sending out everyone from the room, according to this line of reasoning, was considered reckless. After all, the brothers and he had a history. They tried to kill him in the past. He sent out all his bodyguards. They could try to kill him again now and he would have no protection.

A second opinion quoted by the Medrash is that Yosef did act appropriately by clearing the room before revealing himself to his brothers. He was confident his brothers would not kill him. He knew that they were not murderers, and they were not terrorists.

The question is – according to the first opinion that Yosef took a tremendous risk in sending his officers out of the room – why did he do that? The answer is that Yosef was acting based on the principle "It is preferable for a person to throw himself into a fiery furnace rather than to embarrass his fellow man publicly" [Sotah 10b]. Yosef knew it was a risk, but he felt it was a risk he had to take.

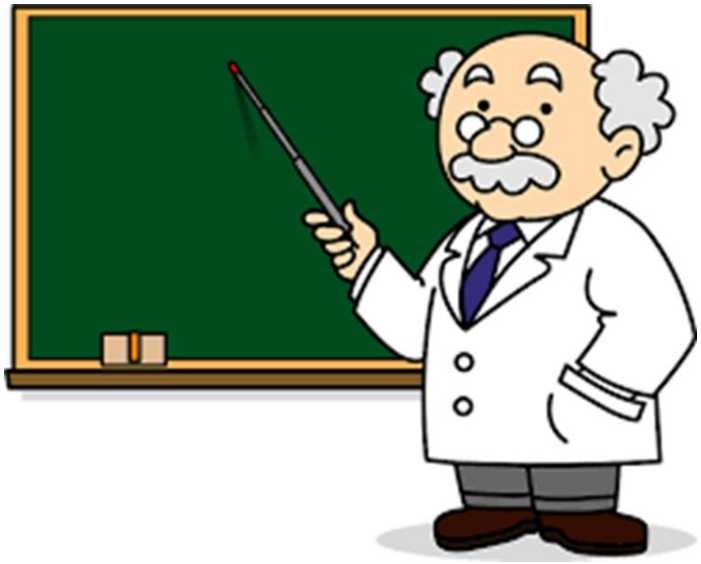
Mr. Avi Shulman from Torah U'Messorah recently told me the following story: There is a well-known educator who was asked which



of his own teachers had the greatest influence on him as a student. Without hesitating, he identified his fifth grade teacher. He related the following incident. They were in class and there were a number of children who the Rebbe could not quiet down. The Rebbe went to the blackboard and wrote down the name of each child who was misbehaving.

He told them, "After class you are going to get it!" Lo and behold, a few minutes later, the principal of the school happened to walk into

the classroom on an unscheduled visit and decided to give the students a little test.



The principal stood in front of the blackboard asking the questions and the Rebbe – behind the principal's back walked back and forth brushing up against the blackboard until the names were erased. When the principal finished and the teacher walked him out of the classroom, the entire class saw that the Rebbe's suit was all white from chalk. He did it so that the children would not be embarrassed in front of the principal. He would rather have to pay for the dry cleaning of the jacket than be responsible for the embarrassment of his students. This demonstration of a Rebbi caring for his students, being sensitive to their feelings, and sparing them embarrassment made a profound impression on this future world-class educator.



Rabbi Ari Bensoussan - I Love to Learn

Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt"l, the late and esteemed Rosh Yeshiva of Mir Yerushalyim, was a man of extraordinary strength and perseverance. For the last 28 years of his life, he lived with the degenerative disease of Parkinson's. But for Rav Nosson Tzvi, it may have been a debilitating illness, but it was not demoralizing. It robbed him of his

ability to control his muscles, but he was in full control of his life. And his life's accomplishments speak right to that.

After Rav Nosson Tzvi passed away, a man from Jerusalem came to visit the family and lend them his comfort. This Jew, though, had something in common with Rav Nosson Tzvi that many others did not. He also suffered from Parkinson's disease. "Your father," the man began, "will force me to endure a very strong judgment before the Heavenly Court after I pass away.

Before I developed Parkinson's," he explained," I was known as the '*Masmid of Beis Yisroel*,' a neighbourhood in Jerusalem. I would learn day and night, as much as I could. However, ever since I have gotten sick, it has become extremely difficult for me to concentrate, even slightly, on my learning. I am bedridden and on medication, and my mind is often numbed.

"But I want you to know, that your father, Rav Nosson Tzvi, had Parkinson's much worse than I do, and he still never stopped learning. Every day, he walked to the Yeshiva and davened, despite the enormous effort and energy he needed to exert. People would beg him to take medication to alleviate the pain, but he would always tell people, 'My body is my problem; my brain belongs to the Jewish people. I need to be clear-headed to offer guidance and encouragement to my fellow Jews.

I cannot take that away from them.' And so, your father would sit on the couch and throb in discomfort, as throngs of people would line up to see him.

On one occasion, a student of your father, said, "Rebbe, I cannot bare to see you like this. Why is Hashem doing this to you?" Rav Nosson Tzvi replied, "You know, I love learning Torah so much that before I got sick, I couldn't ever think of how Hashem will give me reward for learning. I personally enjoyed it too much. But now that it is so difficult for me to concentrate and learn, and I do it nonetheless, I know that I will receive reward…"

For all of us, the privilege to learn Torah, for even a few minutes, is an opportunity not worth giving up for anything else. And if it comes with any among of difficulty and struggle, then how much greater our reward will be…

The Fast Days



There are four fast days that are connected to the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash—Tzom Gedalya on the third of Tishrei, the tenth of Teves, seventeenth of Tamuz, and the ninth of Av. The Beis Hamikdash is the revelation of Hashem in this world. When we get the Beis Hamikdash back, the revelation of **ה' אחד** will manifest, and as it says, **והיה...ה' אחד ושמו אחד**. To rectify these fasts we need to believe in **ה' אחד** and serve Him properly. When we add the days of the four fasts—3, 10, 17, and 9—we come to a total of 39, the Gematria of **ה' אחד** !

Rabbi Yigal Haimoff - Half a Cup

יש לנו אב זקן We have an elderly father… (Bereishit 44:20)

Years ago, one elderly gentleman served as the *shamash* of his local *shul*. Given the responsibility to overlook the general upkeep and maintenance of the entire building, he devotedly carried out his job. He cleaned the floors, cleared the tables and made the *shul* look as respectable as it deserved. Yet that was not the entire scope of his work. Day after day, he took care of one other job. And that was preparing hot coffee and tea for those who would attend the early morning Torah class given by the rabbi. Rising soon after dawn, he

would make his way over to the *shul* to ensure that hot water and tea would be ready for the attendees.



Yet, strangely enough, the *shamash* without fail always gave each man attending the class only half a cup of tea. He never, without exception, gave anyone a full cup. Although the men would say that they could use a full cup, he politely replied that he could not do so. While no one ever understood why that was so, they respected his decision and appreciated what he nevertheless did for them.

One morning, the *shamash* was feeling under the weather. Knowing that he would be unable to carry out his daily duty, he asked his son if he could wake up at 4am the next morning and cover for him. After his son agreed to take over for the day, the *shamash* thanked him and bid him good night.

The following morning, the son arrived at the *shul* and was met by an anxious group of men. Smiling, as they saw that today they had a substitute, they made their requests for their tea of preference. Yet, knowing that here stood a rookie, they requested that he please fill the cups to the top. "Finally," they figured, "we will be given a full cup." And with that, the boy headed back to the kitchen to begin preparing the tea.

Boiling some hot water and locating the necessary tea bags, he soon began to pour. And pour. And then pour some more. Each cup was now filled to the brim. Placing them on a large tray, he straightened himself out and began heading for the door. But then he heard his name being called.

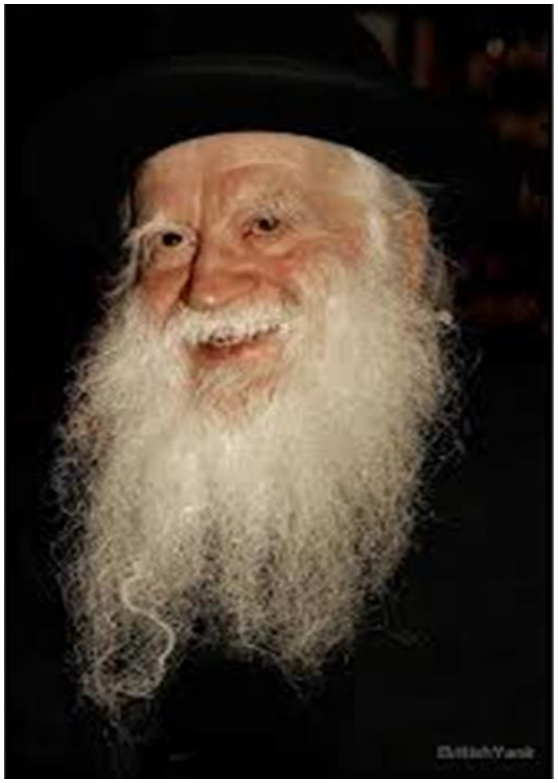
Turning around, he saw his father. "Abba! What are you doing here? I thought you were sick?" "I am," replied the father; "I have a fever. But I came here because I remembered that I forgot to tell you something very important." Gently taking hold of the tray, the father placed it back down on the counter.

"The cups are too full," said the father. "Abba, what do you mean? They are perfect!" "Let me tell you something," explained the father. "Every day I give each man only half a cup of either coffee or tea. For years, I have been asked why I do so, yet I never told them why. But, the truth is because there are two elderly men who attend the class. And I know, that considering that the tea and coffee are hot, if one of the men shakes, he will accidently spill the hot drink on his hands and burn himself. Besides that, he will become embarrassed. I therefore avoid filling their cups to the top." Listening to his father's secret, the boy just stood there surprised.

"But now you are probably wondering," continued the father, "why I don't simply give these two men half a cup, and everyone else a full cup. But, just imagine how they would feel if they find out that they are being treated differently because of their age. I cannot be sure, but I don't want to run the risk of hurting their feelings. And so, every day, I make sure to give each person only half a cup so as to avoid possibly embarrassing any one of these older gentleman."

That is what it means to think something through. While we may many times look for ways to help others, we can never forget to consider the repercussions of our actions as they affect all parties involved. It only behoves us to examine the entire picture and only then wisely make a decision. It will ensure that everyone remains happy and honoured as they deserve. And surely if they would know the reason, they would be quite content with half a cup of tea. It would warm their heart and the hearts of all those around them.

וְלֹא־עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ בְּהִתְוַדַּע יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו 45:1 ***So no one stood with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.***



Growing up in Manchester, England, in the 1950's, a young boy suffered the loss of his father, who left behind his young mother and sister. The funeral took place on Erev Yom Kippur during a driving rainstorm. How comforting it was for the young boy, to see the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, **R' Yehudah Zev Segal zt"l**, standing outside soaking wet, offering solace and support. Strangely, though, when the assembled entered the funeral home to hear the eulogies, the Rosh Yeshivah remained standing outside in the rain. The young boy still recalls looking out the window of the chapel and seeing him standing in the rain.

Many years later, in 1971, this now grown man became a major supporter of the Manchester Yeshivah, donating generously in his parents' memory. It was his feeling of gratitude towards the Rosh Yeshivah for the great kindness which he showed the family on the sad day of their father's funeral, which prompted him to respond and to donate.

Years later, after relating this anecdote to the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, the man asked him why he had stood outside in such inclement weather throughout the funeral. R' Segal replied, "I did not know your father, but when I heard that a young man had passed away leaving behind a young widow and two children, I felt it was correct to attend the funeral. However, since I did not know the family personally, I was reluctant to enter the chapel, lest my presence be seen as an intrusion and cause them discomfort."

Yosef sent everyone out of the room before he revealed himself to his brothers. Although he was left vulnerable, he did this not to embarrass his brothers. He refused to allow them to feel any discomfort at the hands of the Egyptians. He knew they would be uncomfortable if people would realize who they were and what they had done, and he ordered everyone out of the room. We must always take other people's feeling into consideration before we make any decisions.

Parsha Points to Ponder



Rashi (45:12) writes that Yosef proved his true identity to his brothers by virtue of the facts that he spoke their language and was circumcised as they were. Why weren't they able to verify his identity by virtue of recognizing his voice? (K'Motzei Shalal Rav, M'rafsin Igri)

The **M'rafsin Igri** suggests that because 22 years had passed since Yosef's brothers had last spoken with him, perhaps they had forgotten the sound of his voice. Alternatively, during such a long period of time, his voice may have changed, especially in light of the fact that he was only 17 when they sold him and he was now 39.

Rav Yonason Eibeshutz maintains that a person can only recognize somebody else's voice if the other person is talking in the language in which he is accustomed to hearing him speak. However, if the other person is talking in another language with different sounds, it may not be possible to recognize his voice. In this case, Yosef's brothers were accustomed to hearing him speak to them in Hebrew, and now he was addressing them in Egyptian, so they didn't recognize

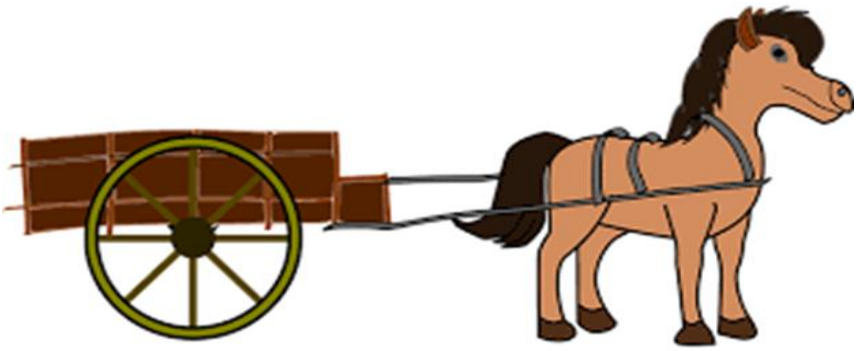
his voice. He suggests that when Yosef began speaking to them in Hebrew to prove his identity, the proof wasn't from the fact that he knew their language, but that now that he spoke to them in Hebrew, they recognized his voice.

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport



When Yosef's brothers returned home and informed Yaakov that he was still alive and was the viceroy in Egypt, Yaakov's first response was one of disbelief. However, when he saw the wagons that Yosef sent, Yaakov became convinced that they were telling the truth, which is difficult to understand. His sons surely knew that the subject of Yosef's whereabouts and well-being was not a joking matter. Why would Yaakov suspect them of lying to him about such a solemn topic, and if he did not trust them, how did seeing the wagons change his opinion in a way that the clear testimony of his 11 sons could not?

Rav Chaim Zvi Senter suggests that Yaakov never doubted their assertion that Yosef was still physically alive, but he was initially skeptical about Yosef's spiritual condition. When Yaakov heard his children report that Yosef was serving as the viceroy of Egypt, a cesspool of immorality, the Yosef that he cherished and longed for was dead in his eyes. He hadn't invested so much effort to transmit his Torah knowledge to Yosef (Rashi 37:3) for him to become the leader of a country that was estranged from Torah and mitzvos.



Subsequently, when Yaakov saw the wagons that Yosef sent, he understood the hidden message that Yosef was giving him. Rashi explains that the **עגלות** (wagons) symbolized that Yosef still remembered the last subject they studied together – **עגלה ערופה** (Devorim 21:1-9). When Yaakov realized that Yosef was still a fully religious Torah scholar, living his life in consonance with the values and priorities his father imparted to him, Yaakov's spirit was revived.

Yaakov teaches us that as Yidden, we should not measure success by fame, fortune, or power. Although the society around us attempts to influence us to determine a person's worth by his acquisitions and professional achievements, we learn from the Avos that this is not the Torah viewpoint and should not be our aspiration in life, for true nachas comes from children who observe Hashem's mitzvos and establish homes in which spiritual pursuits remain paramount.



Parsha Points to Ponder

Yosef told his brothers (46:34) to tell Pharaoh that they are shepherds so he would allow them to live separately in Goshen. A large number of our greatest ancestors – Hevel, Avrohom, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Dovid, and Shaul – were shepherds. Why is this profession uniquely suited for spiritual greatness? (Rabbeinu Bechaye and Kli Yakar Shemos 3:1, Ayeles HaShachar)

Rabbeinu Bechaye and the **Kli Yakar** explain that working as a shepherd gives a person time alone to think. Focusing on the magnificent world of Hashem which surrounds him will lead him to focus his thoughts on Hashem, which is conducive for prophecy. Alternatively, Rabbeinu Bechaye suggests that being around people often leads to sin, while separating from them can keep a person pure and holy.

Concepts in Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן־אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו



People cry when they are sad. This week, as we read how the brothers were reunited after 22 years, they also cried - but these were tears of happiness. Why are they crying when they are together and happy? My machshava is that perhaps the reason we cry when we are happy is because we realize that this simcha will not last forever. During a family bris, we may think that perhaps we will not be zoche to enjoy the bar mitzvah or chupah of this newborn baby boy. And yet, the posuk in Tehillim [126] states - *only when Moshiach comes will we enjoy the simcha in full and there will be no need for tears, since only then will it last forever and be complete.*

Perhaps this will explain why Yosef cried when he saw the brothers, as well as why Yosef and Binyomin were crying, when they fell upon each other's shoulders. Of course, they were very happy at having finally been reunited, but Chazal are telling us that in this pre-Moshiach world, no simcha is truly complete, and many unforeseen obstacles may rise up to end a person's current bout of happiness.

Therefore, being true Tzaddikim, when Yosef and Binyamin looked into the future, the Medrash teaches us they foresaw the Churban Bayis; there would be great problems and destruction. They were crying now because they knew the simcha wouldn't last forever and they may not live to enjoy all their future simchos and good news. May our simcha and nachas remain with us always.

Torah Tavlin



R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler zt"l (Michtav M'Eliyahu) would say: "In pleading for mercy from Yosef, Yehuda stressed the fact that if Binyomin remained in Egypt as a slave, their father Yaakov would suffer greatly and may even die from the agony. Why did Yehuda not mention the intense pain which would be caused to Binyomin's 10 sons over the loss of their father? It is because feelings of love toward another person are generated not by receiving from that person but by giving to him. As any parent can attest, raising a child is an opportunity like no other to constantly give of oneself to help another person who is unable to help himself. The tremendous feelings of love generated by such extreme and continuous giving are unmatched and unparalleled, as Yehuda explained to Yosef."

"Do not withhold good where it is due, if it be in your power to bestow it!" ~~ (Mishle) 3:27



Drush V'Chiddush וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי

The name of the parsha - Vayigash - encompasses an idea which threads its way throughout the entire storyline. **R' Nison Alpert zt"l** (Limudei Nison) denotes that "Vayigash" is a form of the word **הגשה** which means to draw close, as we see in the posuk, **וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה** - "*Then Yehuda approached,*" and, **וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו גְּשׁוּ־נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגָּשׁוּ** - "*Then Yosef said to his brothers come close to me, if you please, and they came close. And he said, I am Yosef, your brother.*"

Yosef HaTzaddik reveals his identity only after his brothers have drawn close to him. Only after the once opposing sides have become close, could the extent of their mutual affection and brotherhood become manifest. Furthermore, when Yaakov Avinu sent Yehuda ahead of the rest to prepare a place to dwell, the posuk says he sent him **גשנה** (to Goshen).

The words **גשנה** and **משיח** have the same numerical value - 358. And, it is not incidental that the residence of the Jewish people in Egypt was called **גשן** from the same idea of drawing close. Similarly, when all the Jewish people see themselves as brothers, approaching one another amicably - not cautiously or warily, from a distance - then will we also bring closer the geulah, the period of redemption.

Jews need to be close to one another - that is when we shine and together we will bring the Geulah.

Embarrassment



When Menashe Rosenberg* was born, he was a fine and healthy baby. He grew up living an unremarkable life in Israel. However, he had a very visible and ugly red patch of skin on his cheek. This birthmark never went away and it was a source of torment for him in school. Many kids made fun of him and others bullied him on account of his conspicuous red mark.

Every night, he would come home from cheder and cry his eyes out. He would refuse to go back the next day, and it took his mother quite some time to calm him down. Invariably, he went back to school the next day and the pain started all over again. Each and every morning, when his mother saw him off, Menashe would cry. It broke his mother's heart to see her son like this and her eyes were red with tears all throughout the day, as the pain of her son was felt even more so by his mother.

Time went on and many doctor's visits later - all to no avail - Menashe learned to cope with his situation. Eventually he was able to handle the bullying and even made a few friends. His mother was relieved to see her son growing into himself.

By the time he reached high school (Yeshiva Ketana in Israel), things were better, and they continued to get better in Beis Medrash and, after finding a shidduch and getting married, in Kolel, as well. Menashe grew a beard which partially covered his scar. His wife was an orphan who had grown up in an orphanage and was able to look past his physical appearance.

After a number of years, Menashe and his wife moved to the United States, where he became the shamash of a prominent Beis Medrash in Brooklyn. The Rosenberg's settled down. Time passed. They were blessed with a number of adorable children, a wonderful growing and chassidishe family. None of Menashe's children had the patch of red.

One day, after more than twenty-four years, Menashe received a phone call. The man on the line introduced himself as a former classmate in Israel. "Menashe, do you remember me? I was in cheder with you." Menashe hesitated. "Yes, I remember you." Indeed, he did remember this boy. He was one of the ringleaders who had bullied him mercilessly in school. "Menashe, I need to talk to you. I am flying to America tomorrow. Where can I find you? It is urgent." Another pause. "Why must you come here?" asked Menashe. "Flying is expensive. We can talk over the phone." But the man was insistent and finally, Menashe told him that he can find him in the Bais Medrash all day. The man thanked him and hung up.

A few days later, his old acquaintance from Israel showed up. "Menashe, I owe you an apology. I had very low self-esteem in cheder and I thought that if I could lead the other boys to bully and make fun of you, I would be a big man. I was the main instigator of all your pain! For this I am truly sorry." The man looked at Menashe whose face was a mask, hiding his inner turmoil. The man from Israel continued. "After we went our separate ways, I forgot about all that I did. I got married and we had a child soon after, our first son. He was born with the same red patch of skin that you had. It was clear to me that Hashem was punishing me for what I did to you all those years ago. My son suffered in school and my wife and I suffered at home knowing that our child was in pain."

The man was weeping softly. "Menashe, my son is now 23 years old and we still have not been able to find him a shidduch! I have gone to kevarim, Mekubalim and Gedolim for berachos. The scar on his cheek literally scares people away. Finally, one of the Rabbanim said

to me, 'There must be someone you hurt very badly when you were younger. Find that person and beg his forgiveness!' That is why I am here. I am begging you to be moichel me for all the pain and hurt that I caused you all those years ago. Please take mercy on me - have rachmanus on my child! Please Menashe, I beg of you!"

Menashe could see the sincerity in his former tormentor. He shook his hand and answered, "I am moichel you ... but that is not enough. You must go back to Israel and go to my mother's grave. As much as I suffered, she suffered more than me!" The man travelled back to Israel and eventually found Menashe's mother's grave. He begged and pleaded and cried for a long time. Amazingly, within two weeks, a shidduch was presented to his son and he became a chosson.

Menashe is still the shamash in that shul and he sometimes goes around to various chadarim to tell his personal and moving story. He then gives the boys mussar on kindness, not hurting others and being welcoming to all.



The Rebbe of Rimanov, R' Tzvi Hirsch Hakohen zt"l, was not born into an illustrious lineage, nor was he a child prodigy. He was born into a simple family and was orphaned at a very young age. He was taken in by a local tailor, who tried to teach him a trade, but R' Tzvi Hirsch had a lofty soul, and was handpicked by **R' Menachem Mendel Rimanover zt"l**, to succeed him as the Rebbe of Rimanov. Many people flocked to R' Tzvi Hirsch for his wise and sage advice. R' Tzvi Hirsch used to say, "I never had much

success as a tailor. I did, however, learn two very important things from my teacher. When he used to give me a garment that was old and torn, he would say, 'Be careful to sew up the tear so that it is as good as the original.' On the other hand, when he would give me a new piece of cloth, he would say, 'Be careful not to ruin the good material that I have given you.' These two things I have never forgotten,"

R' Tzvi Hirsch would say. "I have always tried to repair the tears in my soul so that I may return it to my Maker in as close as possible to its original condition. On the other hand, I watch every good quality that I have acquired so as not to ruin it ...." A chasid from a neighbouring town once came to R' Tzvi Hirsch with quite an unusual dilemma. He implored the Rebbe to somehow intercede so that his father-in-law would die. "What? What do you mean?" exclaimed R' Tzvi Hirsch. "Well, my father-in-law is very old, already more than 100 years," explained the chasid. "He can't really do much for himself, and he is miserable most of the time. He doesn't learn and doesn't daven any more. He sits from dawn till dusk and does nothing. It would seem that he has had enough of life already, but he just keeps hanging on day after day, week after week, year after year. Please, ease his pain and ask Hashem to take his neshama back to its rightful place in heaven!"

R' Tzvi Hirsch didn't really know what to say, but he reasoned that a yid who lived to such a ripe old age must have some kind of merit. He told the chasid to bring the old man to Rimanov so he may talk to him. So they picked up the old man and brought him to Rimanov. They carried him in on a stretcher and placed him in front of R' Tzvi Hirsch. The Rebbe began to ask the old man questions about his life. He soon learned that the old man had been a simple baal agalah - wagon driver, all of his life. He davened every morning, but his real interest was to get to breakfast. He went to Shul on Shabbos, but the cholent was his ultimate goal.

R' Tzvi Hirsch peppered him with more questions to find out if the old Jew could remember any reason that might account for his many years. Maybe there was some special mitzvah that he did once, or possibly he had been to a Tzaddik on some special occasion and received a beracha.

The old Jew thought about this for a moment and then he recalled that he had once been in the town of Lizhensk, and when he came to the shul one day, he heard the loudest singing and witnessed the wildest dancing he had ever seen. He peeked inside and saw dozens of empty bottles on the table. Hoping to join in the revelry, he went inside and saw a circle of men dancing feverishly around one man in the middle. The man was tall, with a face red like fire and he was dancing with his eyes closed. The rest of the men were all singing loudly and dancing with great inspiration around him. At this point, R' Tzvi Hirsch stopped the old man exclaiming that now he understood everything.



The tall one in the middle was none other than the holy **Rebbe, R' Elimelech of Lizhensk zt"l**. He explained that it is a well-known kabbala, that whoever even just glimpsed the face of the great Noam Elimelecvh, would not be able to leave this world until he had done Teshuva. Apparently, this old Jew had seen R' Elimelech but never once thought about Teshuva. R' Tzvi Hirsch leaned over towards the old man and started to explain how Hashem created the world, and how everything in it was placed there just for our benefit. He began to describe how we welcome the Shabbos and how Hashem comes, so to speak, to sit at our table, sharing our food and company.

Suddenly, a spark glinted in the old man's eyes. He turned his head and let out a deep sigh. R' Tzvi Hirsch ordered all of the kohanim to immediately leave the room. The old Jew heaved one more sigh of remorseful repentance and left this world - fully repentant - for the World-to-Come.

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמַרְאֹת הַלָּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּנִי 46:2

The Bais Aharon asks: why is Yaakov Avinu called two different names in the same posuk? When the Torah addresses him, he is called "Yisroel" but when Hashem speaks to him, He calls him "Yaakov" twice! He answers that the name Yisroel is a name of greatness and power. In fact, the letters of "Rosh" (head), are found in the name Yisroel. On the other hand, the name Yaakov denotes humility.

The word "Eikev" (heel) is found in the name Yaakov. Hashem is telling Yisroel that he should never feel haughty and arrogant, even though he is the recognized "head" of the people, the father of Am Yisroel. He must remember that he still has so much more to do and so much more to climb in his Avodas Hashem. This is truly the way to greatness. This very same idea is seen when Yosef sends his father "Agalos" (wagons).



The Shem M'Shmuel points out that the word "Agalos" comes from the word **עיגול** - circle. The turning wheels of a wagon was a message that Yosef was sending his father. When one side of the wheel is up it is the

beginning of its downfall. And when a wheel is down it is only the beginning of its ultimate rise. When Yosef was thrown into the pit by his brothers, it was Yosef's "wheel of life" turning down, preparing for its ultimate rise. This led to him to becoming the ruler in Egypt, which was a preparation for his family to come down and become slaves. But the 210 years of persecution and suffering were the preparation for the emergence of a great nation, Am Yisroel, worthy of receiving the Torah!

The wheel of life continues to turn. If we are on top, it is the beginning of the fall. But if we are on the bottom, it is the beginning of the ascent! Yosef was telling his father not to be worried that he will be going DOWN to Egypt, because it is the beginning of the rise of Am Yisroel! The message for us is to remember that Hashem is turning the wheels and circumstances of our lives - our job is to remain humble and hold on tight!



R' Menachem Tzvi Taksin zt"l (Ohr Torah) would say: וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי - The words בִּי אֲדֹנִי may also be translated to mean, *'the L-rd is within me.'* A Yid must always remember when he prepares himself to daven that he has an actual part of the Lord, of G-dliness, inside him, his Jewish soul, on whose behalf he is communing with his Maker."

The sign of a great man is that the closer you get to him, the greater he seems.~~ The Chofetz Chaim



R' Moshe Sternbuch shlit'a (Taam V'Daas) would say: **מְעַט וְרָעִים הָיוּ יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיַּי** - Daas Zekainim says that because Yaakov referred to his years as bad, Hashem punished him and he died at 147, thirty-three years less than his father. Perhaps Yaakov was concerned that Pharaoh might be jealous of his long life and give him an ayin hara (evil eye). Therefore, he said that his 'years were troubled and few.'

We see that one should never boast about family, wealth, etc. and avoid an ayin hara, which is brought about through jealousy."

Concepts in Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

וּלְאָבִיו שָׁלַח כְּזֹאת עֲשָׂרָה חֲמֹרִים נֹשְׂאִים מִטּוּב מִצְרָיִם וְעֶשֶׂר אֲתֹנֹת נֹשְׂאֹת בָּר וָלֶחֶם וּמָזוֹן לְאָבִיו לַדָּרֶךְ *And to his father he sent the following: ten he donkeys carrying of the best of Egypt, and ten she donkeys carrying grain, bread, and [other] food, for his father for the way.45:23*



What did Yosef send his father as a gift from Egypt? Rashi quotes the Gemara **מגילה טז:** that Yosef sent, "Aged vintage wine since the minds of elders are calmed by it."

The Maharal M'Prague zt"l says that the words **יין ישן** (aged wine) has the gematria of 430. With this, Yosef was hinting to

his father that the golus of Mitzrayim would last for a total of 430 years. My machshava here adds to the words of the Maharal: The gematria of 430 is also the identical numerical value of **משמחי לב**.

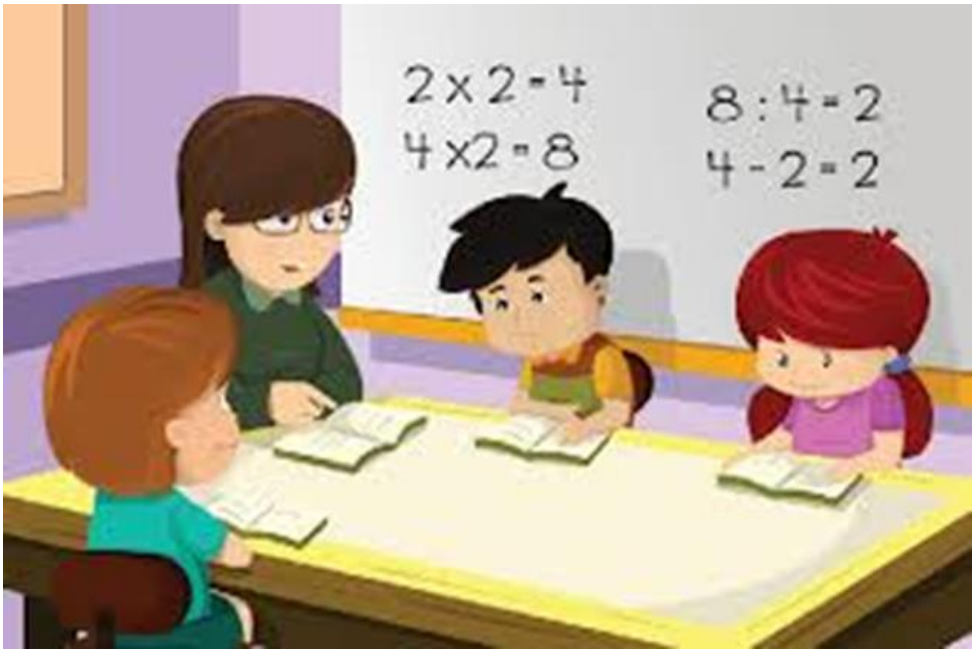
At a wedding and sheva berachos, we bless the chosson and kallah and increase their joy by singing the words **ענבי הגפן בענבי הגפן דבר נאה ומתקבל**. These words, which speak of "grapes of the vine" imply that just as wine gets better with age, the marriage and love of this chosson and kallah should grow stronger as their happy years begin to take off. (Another lesson to be learned from these words is that grapes are the only fruit grown on vines that are soft and bend. This is a beautiful lesson for marriage.

A husband and wife must always be willing to bend and respect their spouse's wishes.) Yosef went through a difficult time in Egypt. Knowing all the troublesome times that Yaakov Avinu lived through, Yosef understood his father's feeling that with his descent to Mitzrayim, his life was heading on a downward trajectory. Yosef wished to cheer up his father and sent him vintage wine to show him that there are things that get better with age and that upon his arrival - bringing the entire family together once again with achdus - Yaakov will realize that all his trials and tribulations were for the good – **לטוב עביד**. The "aged wine" was sent to be **משמחי לב** - to gladden Yaakov's heart, and hint to the glorious years of Hashraas HaShechina in the Bais HaMikdash.



May we all be zoche to **ענבי הגפן בענבי הגפן** - years that grow stronger with the Ribono shel Olam's berachos of GEFEN: Gezunt, Parnassa and Nachas.

וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו ***but his brothers could not answer him because they were startled by his presence*** 45:3



A few years ago, a young 10-year-old boy began taking lessons in his school's resource room, but the teacher could not figure out what had brought him there. He clearly had no difficulty with his lessons and did well on all his tests. Yet, time after time, he kept coming back. She was determined to find his area of weakness but, as hard as she tried, she could not find any type of learning disability or difficulty. Finally, out of frustration, she took him aside and told him that it was a waste of time and his parents hard-earned money, and he clearly did not need any sort of remedial help.

The sweet boy turned to the teacher and said, "I will tell you why I am here but please don't tell anyone else. I have a friend with a learning disability. Our teacher told him that he needed remedial classes in the resource room. He was so embarrassed to be singled out that I felt bad and told him that it was no big deal and I also take remedial classes. That is why I come - so that my friend will not be embarrassed."

The boy who came to the remedial class so as not to embarrass his friend was Gilad Shaar, הי"ד, one of the three boys that was kidnapped and murdered in 2014.

Avoiding causing pain or embarrassment to his brothers was uppermost in Yosef HaTzaddik's mind, when he revealed himself to them. Although he may have felt that they had every right to be

ashamed for what they did to him, and in fact they were ashamed, he took extreme measures to minimize their shame. He sent everyone out of the room at his own personal risk, and he spoke softly and kindly. A sign of pure righteousness is when one tries to alleviate his friends' shame.

וַיְנַשֵּׁק לְכָל־אֶחָיו וַיֵּבְךְּ עֲלֵהֶם וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן דִּבְּרוּ אֶחָיו אִתּוֹ ***And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and afterwards his brothers spoke with him.*** *45:15.*

It was time to elect a Chief Rabbi for Jerusalem. The people were urged to vote for **R' Chaim Yaakov Levine zt"l**, a very suitable candidate for the position. However, when R' Levine heard that **R' Betzalel Zolty zt"l** was also a candidate for the position, he immediately took himself out of the running. Many people tried to dissuade him, but he remained adamant - he would not compete with R' Zolty.



He explained: "My father (**R' Aryeh Levine zt"l**) was once walking through an alleyway in Jerusalem at night, when he came upon a woman mending socks by the light of a torch. "'Why are you doing this?' my father asked, "especially with so little light.' She answered, 'I am a poor widow. With the few coins I make, I pay the rebbe that learns Torah with my orphaned son.' The woman went on sewing, as her tears trickled down on the socks she was repairing."

"Do you know who that widow was?" R' Chaim Yaakov asked. "She was R' Betzalel Zolty's mother! Is it possible to estimate the effect of her tears? R' Zolty should become the Chief Rabbi. His spiritual growth was catalyzed by the tears of a widow!"

R' Moshe Wolfson says in the name of **R' Tzadok Hakohen zt"l** that the word **ויגש** contains a very dramatic acronym: **וו<u>נ</u>ט'ס יודען ש<u>ר</u>ייט'ס געוואלד** ("The cries of Jews scream gevald"). The meaning is based on the words of the Medrash: "Just as Yosef appeased his brothers with cries (**בבכי**), Hashem will only redeem Yisroel on (account of) their cries." Parshas Vayigash contains numerous references to crying and tears. It is a "secret weapon" that the Jewish people can rely on. Heartfelt tears have tremendous potency.

R' Yaakov Friedman of Husiatyn ZT"L (Oholei Yaakov, in the name of the Apter Rav) would say:



Contrary to popular belief, January 1, the non-Jewish New Year, is an important date for the Jewish people as well. It is when all those tefillos that might not have been prayed with the proper intent on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and were not accepted in Heaven, get a second chance. Unlike the Jewish new year, when we congregate in synagogues all over the world and pour out our hearts in serious contemplation, the gentiles of the world use their 'New Year' to conduct wild, often drunken, parties, to celebrate making it through another year.

The contrast is glaringly clear, and it often can eliminate any and all prosecution that withheld a good judgment on Rosh Hashana. We must daven extra hard on their 'New Year' that we merit a sweet 'New Year' even if it didn't actually start on our 'New Year!'"



The Ralbag, Rabbeinu Levi ben Gershon ZT"L writes:

"It is improper for a ruler to cry or laugh before his men, for he thereby diminishes his stature in their eyes and reduces their reverence for him. Thus, we find that Yosef did not want to cry in the presence of other people, and therefore ordered that everyone leave at the moment when he felt the need to cry."

Torah Gems

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו גְּשׁוּ־נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגָּשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה 45:4



The Zohar writes as follows: "*Anyone who becomes angered, it is as though he has worshiped Avodah Zara.*" **The Baal HaTanya, R' Schneur Zalman of Liadi ZT"L** explains that if a person has emunah in Hashem, and believes that all that occurs to him emanates from the Almighty, he will never be upset at his fate. On the other hand, at the moment when he becomes angered, he has neglected his belief in Hashgacha Pratis , and that is tantamount to idol-worship.

When Yosef HaTzaddik revealed himself to his brothers, he announced: "I am Yosef, your brother, whom you sold to Egypt." Most people, at this point, would have waited for an apology. Yosef,

however, had a different approach. Not only did he immediately continue speaking, but he also even comforted his shocked brothers: "*And now, do not be dismayed, and do not be angry with yourselves that you have sold me here.*" How was he able to achieve such a high level? The answer is seen in his subsequent words: "*For it was not you who sent me here, but Hashem.*"

R' Gamliel Rabinowitz Shlit'a elaborates: When a person lives with the emunah that there is an individual hashgachah pratis, it is not difficult for him to react as Yosef did, for he strongly acknowledges and completely recognizes that absolutely no one can harm him if it is not thus decreed from Heaven. And once decreed, it will surely happen, for Hashem has many emissaries to carry out His will.

Yosef's brothers were only agents of Hashem; therefore, there was no reason to be angry with them. There are people who say, "Yes, it is true. There is divine intervention from Hashem." But in reality, they only say this so as not to be considered lacking in faith. And yet, they always make excuses: "I am annoyed at this person - why did he have to be the messenger?" This is clearly a statement lacking in emunah, and a claim with absolutely no validity.

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן־אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו 45:14

Chazal teach us a very important lesson regarding the incident when Yosef and Binyamin cried on each other's shoulders: Each one felt the other's pain – **נושא בעול עם חבירו** - sharing the burden and pain of the other. Yosef cried over the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash situated in the portion of Binyamin, while Binyamin cried for the loss of Mishkan Shilo in Yosef's portion.

This was not just brotherly love; this is the way every Jew must feel toward his fellow Jew. Chessed can be done by many people on many different levels. Sometimes we help others because we feel sorry

for them, sometimes we feel sorry for ourselves - there are many ulterior motives. The middah of **נושא בעול עם חבירו**, however, can only be achieved with complete sincerity.



R' Yeruchem Levovitz ZT"L says that it is not enough to see or hear someone's pain; to truly help another person, we must feel and understand his or her pain! When someone understands another's pain, it automatically becomes relieved somewhat, just as when a person feels another's joy, the happiness is automatically heightened.



One cannot singlehandedly solve everyone's problems, but by simply taking the time to listen, to recognize the issues that another faces, a kind word, an act of sincere kindness - one cannot imagine how much he has helped! This middah is called **נושא בעול עם חבירו** as opposed to **נושא בעול בחבירו** to signify that a Jew is not expected to carry the full burden of another. Rather, we are supposed to SHARE the burden, by relating to others as true friends - with concern, love and sincerity. It is not enough to be just a **חבירו** - friend; we must be **עם חבירו** - compassionate **with** our friends at all times!

Chacham Shlomo Amsallem ZT"L (Bnei Shlomo) would say: "Chazal tell us that when Yosef kissed his brothers and wept after revealing his identity to them, he wept for the **עשרה הרוגי מלכות** - the ten martyrs who were killed at the hands of the Romans, whom his brothers were reincarnated as an atonement for when they had sold him. The term **ויבך עליהם** - 'He wept upon them,' alludes to this by compounding the letters **על** (on) and **יהם** - which is an acronym for **יו"ד הרוגי מלכות** (ten martyrs of the [Roman] government)."





R' Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg ZT"L writes: "'Abba Kohen Bardela said: *Woe unto us on the Day of Judgment, woe unto us on the Day of Rebuke ...* Yosef was the youngest of the tribes and his brothers could not withstand his criticism. How much more when the Holy One blessed be He will rebuke us ....' (Medrash) Yosef gave his brothers the greatest rebuke possible: **he said nothing**.

When the brothers recognized Yosef's power that, despite having the ability to do so, he had no plan to harm them, they were thoroughly humiliated. Similarly, the rebuke that we will sense on our Day of Judgment will not come from anything Hashem will say to

us. It will simply result from our recognition of His greatness. The shame we will feel will be the ultimate rebuke."

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ וְאַל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה 45:5



Why does this posuk open with the word **וְעַתָּה** ? **Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski** writes that psychologists today claim that many cases of depression are caused by people who make mistakes and turn their negative and angry feelings inward against themselves? This is hardly a new discovery. Yosef said to his brothers thousands of years ago, "Do not be depressed and don't be angry at yourselves." Yosef tells his brothers that the reason they should not be angry with themselves is because their actions are all part of Hashem's Master Plan. It was necessary for Yosef to be brought down to Egypt in order to save the world from a terrible famine.

In fact, what they actually did to him, in, was the best thing that could have happened! Does this mean that when we make mistakes, do foolish things, or hurt other people, we are meant to say, "I don't have to be upset at myself because this is bashert. It is all part of Hashem's plan. He made me do it!"?

The answer to this is the answer to our original question. The Talmud teaches that the word **וְעַתָּה** - ***"and now"*** - denotes repentance. Yosef was imparting to his brothers two very important messages. Firstly, you must know that the fact that I was sent down to Egypt was a Divine decree - that is Hashem's business. But as far as your role in how I got there, that is your business and your responsibility. **וְעַתָּה**

- and now that you have sincerely repented for your misdeed, you do not have to be depressed or angry with yourselves anymore. Hashem has surely accepted your Teshuvah and we can all - together - benefit from the Master Plan of Hashem.

Isn't it amazing that what psychologists are figuring out today, our great Avos understood so many years ago?!



Torah Gems

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־פַּרְעֹה יְמֵי שְׁנֵי מְגוּרַי שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמְאַת שָׁנָה מְעַט וְרָעִים הָיוּ יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיַּי וְלֹא הִשִּׂיגוּ אֶת־יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי אֲבֹתַי בִּימֵי מְגוּרֵיהֶם: 47:9

When the city of Metz in Southern France, appointed a new Rav in 5524 (1764), they were well aware of the prestigious honor their city was accorded by hiring **R' Aryeh Leib Ginsburg ZT"L**, world-renowned for his brilliance in Torah learning and for his magnum opus, Sefer Sha'agas Aryeh. What they were not aware of was that the great Sha'agas Aryeh, the tzaddik and leader of his generation, was already seventy years old at the time. Seventy was not exactly an age when a vibrant city would hire a leader to guide them for many years to come, and when some of the leaders of the community found out that the Rav they had just hired - sight unseen - was so old, they had reservations and more than a few second doubts about their decision.

The first Shabbos of the new Rav's tenure was Parshas Vayigash, and of course, the rumblings of discord in town had reached the ears of R' Aryeh Leib. Shabbos morning, the Rav got up to speak and he began by asking - "Why was it important for Pharaoh to inquire about

the age of Yaakov Avinu, or for Yaakov to describe to him all about his 'short and miserable' life of 130 years?"

"The answer is simple," said R' Aryeh Leib. "Pharaoh saw that when Yaakov came to Egypt, the famine ceased, and his land was blessed. But when he saw how old Yaakov looked, he was afraid that Yaakov would die soon, and the blessings would stop. Yaakov, though, understood Pharaoh's intent and told him that although he looked old, it was only due to his difficult life and he hadn't even reached the age of his fathers yet. He had many more years to live."

The Sha'agas Aryeh smiled down from the podium. "My friends, I may appear too old to be a rav, but I assure you, I have many more good years to come in this city!" The Sha'agas Aryeh remained in his position for another 20 years, guiding the city of Metz until he was 90 years old.



R' Yaakov Kaminetzky ZT"L (Emes L'Yaakov) would say: "Avraham planted acacia trees in Be'er Sheva. When Yaakov went down to Egypt, he transplanted these trees there. He told his sons that Hashem would one day command that they build a mishkan, and they should use these trees. Surely there were suitable trees in Egypt! Why did the Patriarchs go to all this trouble? They did so in order to raise the spirits of their descendants who would be enslaved in Egypt. It was not enough to promise the Jews that they would be redeemed; the groves of acacia trees that Yaakov planted in Egypt were a tangible reminder that their eventual salvation was a reality."

וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב עוֹד־יוֹסֵף בְּנִי חָי אֵלְכָה וְאֶרְאֶנּוּ בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת ***And Israel said, "Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."*** *45:28*

As countless Jews sought to rebuild their lives after the horrors of the Holocaust, many complex halachic issues surfaced. For example, the vexing question of the Agunah arose. An Agunah is a married woman who is not living with her husband, but has not been released from the bonds of matrimony. Though she wishes to put her nuptials behind her, she is chained to an unwanted marriage. For many women who wanted to ultimately start new lives the question was: What is their status? Are they to be considered widows or women whose husbands have disappeared? May they remarry? Any rabbi who dealt with this complex issue after the war had to first determine the facts. According to halachah, clear evidence was needed that a woman's husband was not alive. Historical information was desperately needed as the basis for discussion whether to permit a woman to remarry.



One of the rabbis who handled many an Agunah case, was **R' Yaakov Avigdor ZT"L**, the former chief rabbi of Drohobycz-Boryslaw, Ukraine (later to become chief rabbi of Mexico City). The Rav was himself a survivor of Buchenwald and other concentration camps, and underwent the seven levels of Gehinnom while under the Nazi yoke. He lost his entire family during the conflagration, and had despaired of finding anyone after the war, since all of his searches had been to no avail. But he never lost his faith and bitachon in the Almighty.

On one occasion, in a makeshift courtroom in the D.P. camp at Bergen-Belsen, R' Yaakov was hearing the case of an Agunah from his home town, Drohobycz. The woman in this case had married her husband in the Drohobycz ghetto. She did not recognize R' Avigdor, the former Rabbi of the town, as his appearance had been altered so dramatically.

It was complicated, and the rabbis were having difficulty in reaching a decision. The evidence was not compelling enough to issue a decision in her favour. R' Yaakov asked her if she can provide any further evidence other than her spoken testimony. She thought for a moment and then with a shudder of remembrance, she rummaged through her valise and produced a single sheet of paper. Here, she claimed, was written testimony from a Jew who had seen her husband lying dead in the main assembly square of the Drohobycz ghetto. She produced the letter and handed it to R' Avigor.

He looked at the writing and then at the signature. Suddenly, his face went white with shock, and he quickly looked up at her. "Who gave you this paper?" he asked her in a hoarsely excited voice.

She replied that after the war, she had found herself in an Italian port city, where she had met a man who claimed to have been a friend of her husband's from Drohobycz. He reported to her that he had seen the deceased body of her husband and offered to give her written testimony to attest to this fact so she could eventually get remarried in the future. At the time, she was not in the frame of mind to be thinking about matrimony and starting a new home, and really had very little interest or need for such a letter. However, the far-sighted individual was insistent and virtually forced her to accept his testimony in case she needed it in the future.

R' Yaakov sat motionless for a few long moments while everyone awaited his verdict. He was stunned to discover that the name of the witness who had signed the document was none other than his son Yitzchok! His son was alive!

R' Yaakov was able to contact his son and it took another three months, before the two were able to be reunited. The joyous reunion between father and son was marred only by the tale Yitzchok told of his deportation to the Mauthausen death camp, where he suffered tremendous pain and deprivation until his eventual liberation in Gunskirchen, on May 5, 1945, by the allied forces. He was brought to Italy by members of the Jewish brigade.

The letter he had written for this woman not only allowed her to remarry; it also directly led to his dramatic reunion with his father who had practically given up hope of ever finding his son alive again. They each looked so different from the way they remembered each other, and they could only recognize one another by the sound of their voices.

Avigdor was reminded of Yaakov Avinu's joyous reunion with his son Yosef, whom he had not seen for twenty-two years. "Only someone who experienced what I did could appreciate Yaakov's feelings upon learning that his son Yosef was still alive!"

Torah Gems

When Yosef HaTzaddik revealed himself to his brothers, they could not reply, "for they were speechless from shame." Confronted with the truth, the shock and embarrassment of the ten brothers of Yosef was so great that they were stunned speechless.

All at once, they realized that the situation was not at all as they had originally perceived it. Not only was the personal opinion of each brother faulty, but their collective understanding was also wrong. Yosef's dreams were indeed true prophecies, and they, the brothers, were mistaken in their assessment of their brother and his behaviour. They had misjudged Yosef.

Thus, explains **R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg ZT"L** (Nesivos Chaim) later as the brothers prepared to return to their father, Yosef

made a special point to caution them, **אל תרגזו בדרך** - ***"Do not become lost along the way."***

Rashi tells us what Yosef meant: "*Do not become occupied with halacha so you do not lose your way.*" It would be quite dangerous for the brothers to be distracted from their mission of returning home, by delving into their studies. The brothers had to return home immediately, without any delays, since their father was still mourning the supposed loss of his son.



News that Yosef had been discovered alive and well in Egypt had to be delivered as quickly as possible. The brother's trip back to their father Yaakov Avinu after learning of Yosef's rise to greatness and leadership in Egypt, was also a perfect time for them to reflect and argue about their error. Fingers may be pointed and blameful aspersions cast about. Argument and strife would likely ensue. Yosef could not allow the fraternal bonds to splinter at this critical juncture.

Therefore, he warned them: "*Do not become occupied with halacha, so you should not lose your way.*" Yosef foresaw the dangers involved in traveling with so much to discuss and debate. This was not a time to get lost on the way home by discussing past mistakes.

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

There is no room for sadness in the life of a Jew – Harav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk

לְכֻלָּם נָתַן לָאִישׁ חֲלִפוֹת שְׂמָלֹת וּלְבִנְיָמִן נָתַן שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת כֶּסֶף וְחָמֵשׁ חֲלִפֹת שְׂמָלֹת
45:22



Rabbi Berel Wein was once discussing the issue of ties and reminded himself of a traumatic event of his early yeshivah days in Chicago. He, like the rest of the students in his class, were poor by today's standards of affluence.

When they became of age and began searching for their future spouses, they decided to pool their meagre assets and purchase one really good, expensive, colourful, silk tie for common use on all dates. They held a lottery to decide who would get to wear "the tie" when, and then to schedule their respective social lives accordingly.

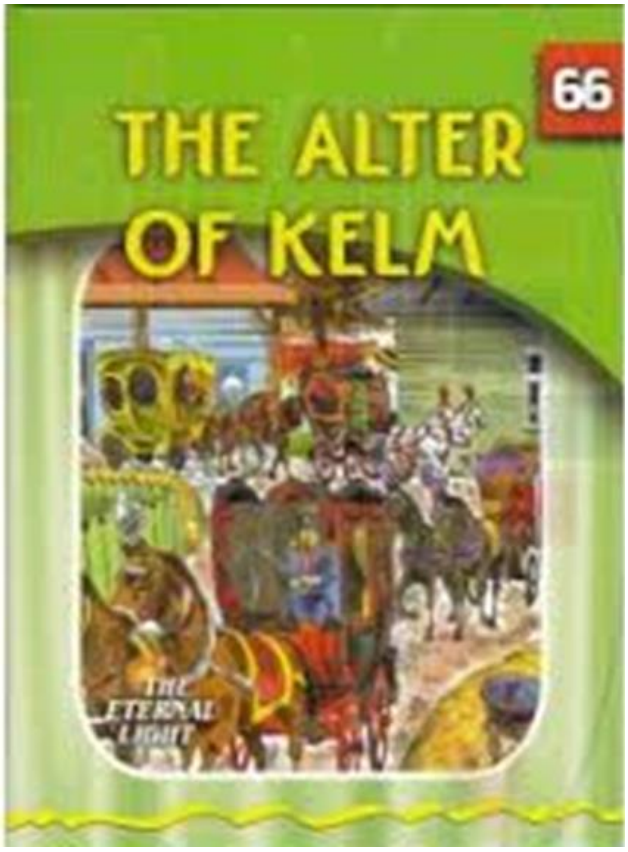
They were convinced that "the tie" would certainly make each boy more attractive, if not downright irresistible, on their dates. However, after three or four boys had worn "the tie" with varying success, an incident occurred that put an end to their ingenious experiment.

One boy came back from a date looking crestfallen and somewhat depressed. When he was asked what had gone wrong, he told the others mournfully that the young lady had said, "Hey, I went out once before with that tie!" So much for magic ties.

The gemara tells us that Yosef purposely gave Binyamin five articles of clothing, while to the other brothers he only gave one, in order to hint that in the future, Binyamin's descendant, Mordechai, would "go out in royal garments consisting of five different articles of clothing.

The Vilna Gaon ZT"L asks that even so, wouldn't this cause jealousy among the brothers who didn't know of this future prophecy? He

answers that for this reason, Yosef gave Binyamin five articles of inferior clothing, while to the others he gave one garment of good quality. This way, no one would be jealous, and he could reveal to him the prophecy.



R' Simcha Zissel Ziv ZT"L (Alter from Kelm) would say: "We cannot always eliminate problems, but we can learn to eliminate our anxiety over them. You add to the technical difficulties of your problems by telling yourself how awful your situation is.

When you accept a situation even though it is not what you would have liked, the severity of the problem will be decreased. Learn to clarify what is the worst that could happen and accept it. This will free you from worry."

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־פַּרְעֹה יְמֵי שְׁנֵי מְגוּרַי שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמְאַת שָׁנָה מְעַט וְרָעִים הָיוּ יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיַּי וְלֹא הִשִּׂיגוּ אֶת־יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי אֲבֹתַי בִּימֵי מְגוּרֵיהֶם 47:9

When Pharaoh asked Yaakov Avinu how old he was, Yaakov responded that his days were "bad and few .... and did not reach the number of days of my father." The Baalei Tosfos write that since there are thirty-three words in these two posukim, Yaakov was punished and lived 33 years less than his father Yitzchok. Thirty-three years were removed from his life because of one sentence! But it wasn't just this one negative comment that brought about such a drastic

result. It was an attitude. It was Yaakov Avinu's lack of appreciation of life that caused a large chunk of his own life to be taken from him.

When you see your own child appreciate a gift that you give him, doesn't that make you want to give him more? Certainly, we can all relate to the sinking feeling of showering a child with presents only to hear him or her complain. Hashem, our Father in Heaven, wishes to bestow only goodness upon us. The greatest gift imaginable is life itself! Every moment that we are upon this earth, we have opportunities for growth and closeness to Hashem. For this we were created!

Even an extremely difficult life, (not even but especially a difficult life!) is one that is to be cherished and appreciated for the opportunities it holds. The Navi writes: **יתאונן אדם חי מה** - איכה ג:לט "Why should a live person complain?" Just the fact that he is alive is reason enough to literally jump for joy and rejoice at the great privilege to be living and serving Hashem!

Chanukah is finally over. We just spent eight days thanking and praising Hashem for all of His kindness. Let us take the light of Chanukah with us, to illuminate the entire year with an ATTITUDE of GRATITUDE for everything we have.

Torah Gems

Yosef's revelation to his brothers and his self-effacing words to put their minds at ease, clearly displays the magnitude of his piety. His realization of the Divine plan for being sent to Egypt, caused him to remove any resentment toward his brothers. His words sent a clear message that he totally forgave them for all the suffering that they caused him. Yosef reassures and comforts them by appealing to their emotions and re-emphasizing that Hashem planned his sale for their benefit.

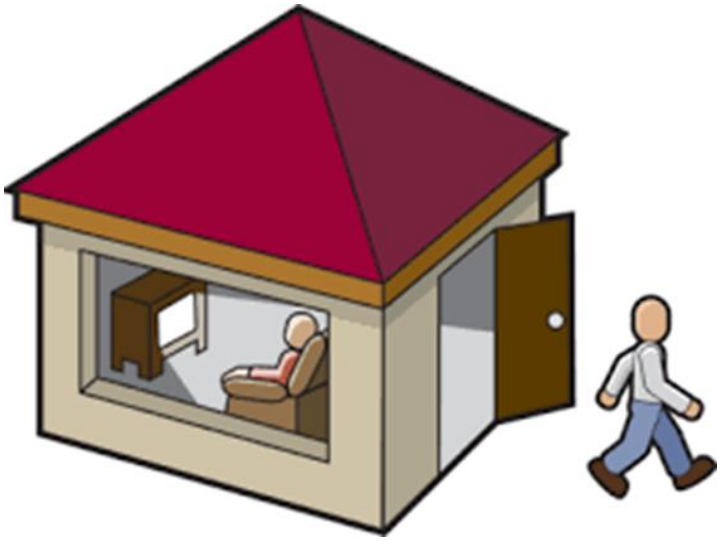


R' Avigdor Miller ZT"L remarks that one of Yosef's most noble middos was his clear understanding that every event in his life was managed solely by Hashem for his benefit, and there's no room for complaining. Instead of becoming depressed and embittered by the catastrophe that took him from the love and honour of his father's home to being sold and degraded to the level of a lowly slave, he sought to make the best of every step of his life. Even in Egypt, he lived as the son of Yaakov with all of the high aspirations that the Avos transmitted. Because of this trait, Yosef merited that Hashem made him successful in the home of Potifar and during his entire imprisonment.

The Chofetz Chaim ZT"L writes that when someone is embarrassed by a remark or jibe, he has no one to blame but himself, since it is a form of yisurim that atones for his sins. If one would realize that one embarrassing remark could erase his **פשעים** (the harshest sins), he would absorb the pain much more readily.

Often people complain about the tribulations they receive on this world, but after 120 years when they are given to understand Hashem's master plan, they regret that they didn't receive more. Yosef taught us to live with a positive attitude towards suffering, for it is all part of Hashem's master plan.

"A man should eat and drink less than he can afford to, dress as well and as much as he can afford to, and lavish more on his wife. " ~~ Talmud, Chullin



R' Y. M. Stern Shlit'a (Peninei Kedem) would say:

"Why did Yosef want everyone to leave the room while he was speaking with his brothers? Rashi explains that Yosef couldn't stand the thought of having the Egyptians overhear that his brothers had sold him into slavery, thus embarrassing them. Personal problems should not be aired in public, before the eyes of the whole world. For this reason Yosef asked that the Egyptians leave. In those days, it was understood to be a general rule for people to behave in this manner. But today, to our great distress, it is not so clear."



R' Chaim Shmuelevitz ZT"L would say:

"Binyomin had ten sons and he named each one after another aspect relating to his missing brother, Yosef. One of the sons was named Chuppim, which comes from the word 'Chupah' - a wedding canopy. The Medrash notes that this name refers to the fact that Binyomin hadn't attended Yosef's wedding, just as Yosef was not present at Binyomin's wedding. We see that being unable to participate in a brother's simcha is a tragedy worthy of naming a son after!"

Torah Gems

וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְאַל־יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדֶּךָ

The word **וַיִּגַּשׁ** - "And he drew near," implies a physical meeting, one person approaching another to the point where they become one. According to the Zohar, when Yehudah drew near to Yosef, it symbolized the approach of one world to the other; the uniting of one with the other, till one entity was attained.



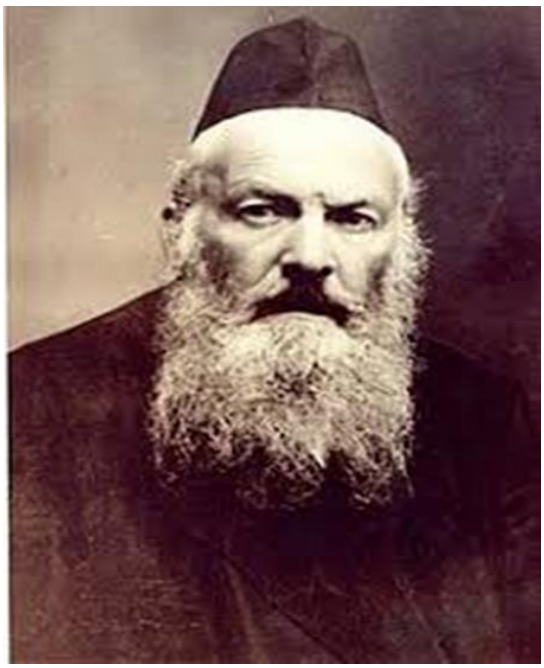
The Lubavitcher Rebbe, **R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson ZT"L** writes that the word **וַיִּגַּשׁ** stands for the creation of unity in a place of discord and disharmony. Yehudah's offer to sacrifice himself on behalf of Binyomin demonstrated the unity and brotherhood that finally reigned between the sons of Yaakov. Yosef's revelation of his true identity and his subsequent reconciliation with what his brothers had done to him, likewise symbolized the unification of all twelve shevatim - tribes, forever granting their descendants the power



to achieve true achdus and unity when the ultimate redemption is finally upon us. The rest of Parshas Vayigash also expresses this theme, as the whole purpose of Yaakov's descent into Egypt and his children's settlement there for hundreds of years was solely for the purpose of demonstrating Hashem's unity in one of the lowliest places on earth. It was in Egypt, "the most corrupt among the nations," according to our Sages, that the Jewish people became a holy and unified nation. Unity is the essential foundation upon which Jewish life is built. Just as the holy shevatim understood that they could not maintain a brotherly status without reconciliation and peace, so too, must we realize that we cannot maintain the Jewish Nation without achdus and unity. But not only is unity the goal we strive for, it is the objective of all our service - our Torah and mitzvos - as well, one that will be fully realized with the revelation of Moshiach.

Torah Gems

כָּל־הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַבָּאָה לְיַעֲקֹב מִצְרַיְמָה יֹצְאֵי יְרֵכוֹ מִלְּבַד נְשֵׁי בְנֵי־יַעֲקֹב כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ שִׁשִּׁים וְשֵׁשׁ 46:26



One year, on Simchas Torah, in the midst of the festive dancing in the Ohel Torah Yeshivah in Baranovitch, the noted askan, **R' Eliyahu Shmuel Zakheim Z"L** - who had earlier used his connections within the Polish government to secure citizenship papers for **R' Elchanan Wasserman ZT"L HY"D**, before the Rosh Yeshivah was to be expelled as an illegal Russian foreign national - jumped up onto a bench and gestured for silence. "Rabbosai," he said loudly, in high spirits, "you think that a 'Baal Habayis' like me does not know how to

learn? That I can't say over a 'Shtick'l Torah'? Well, let me tell you a vort that even the holy Chofetz Chaim enjoyed when I told it over to him.

"In the tefillah **בורא נפשות** after one eats a bit, there appears to be a contradiction. First, we say, **בורא נפשות רבות וחסרונן** - "(Hashem) creates many souls and their shortcomings." At the end, though, we say, **להחיות בהם נפש כל חי** - "To give life to every single soul." Why do we switch from the plural **נפשות** to the singular **נפש**?" R' Eliyahu Shmuel looked around expectantly. Then, he continued, "Rashi in Parshas Vayigash tells us that Esav's entire family consisted of 16 people, yet when the Torah mentions them, they are referred to as **נפשות ביתו** in the plural sense, since they served many gods.

Yaakov, on the other hand, went down to Egypt with his clan of seventy souls, yet they are termed **נפש** - singular, since they all served Hashem, the One and True G-d." "So this is the pshat," he said smiling. "Hashem was **בורא נפשות רבות וחסרונן** - He created many nations who worship many gods - but they are full of deficiencies. So, why were they created at all? **להחיות בהם נפש**- Because the whole world was only created to benefit Klal Yisroel - **נפש** - and everything that the nations accomplish is only for Yisroel!"

Rabbeinu Eliyahu, was the highly regarded Rov and Maggid of Baghdad. Unfortunately, he and his wife were childless for many years and this caused them no small amount of distress and consternation. Finally, ten long years after their marriage, his wife made the long journey from Baghdad to Morocco to request a blessing from the renowned

R' Yaakov Abu Chatzeira ZT"L, the Avir Yaakov. The tzaddik blessed her that she would give birth to a child who would one day illuminate the eyes of Jews everywhere. Less than a year later, she gave birth to a boy, whom they named Yosef Chaim.

As a young boy, Yosef Chaim was a good student and devoted son to his father, although he had not as yet distinguished himself as the future leader of Sefardic Jewry, and one of the greatest tzaddikim of the generation. One day, when Yosef Chaim returned home from his studies, he was playing with his sister in the nearby courtyard and accidentally slipped and fell into a deep well. His frightened sister ran upstairs screaming, "Yosef Chaim has drowned, Yosef Chaim has drowned."

All of the neighbours ran to the courtyard to see what had happened, while Yosef Chaim's mother stood off to the side weeping. One of the neighbours brought a thick rope and a volunteer descended into the well pulling out Yosef Chaim's listless body. Another neighbour administered first aid, and a doctor was summoned. When the doctor saw the unconscious Yosef Chaim, his expression turned grave. He told Rabbeinu Eliyohu and his wife that their son's chances for survival were slim. Yosef Chaim was brought upstairs, and his father tearfully recited Tehillim at his bedside.

Suddenly, Yosef Chaim's face changed colour and he let out a gurgled cry. The doctor stared at him in disbelief and declared that a miracle had taken place. **עוד יוסף חיים חי** - "Yosef Chaim is alive," everyone called out with joy. The little boy fell back asleep and his body began the task of rejuvenating itself.

When he awoke the following morning, he could not even remember the incident. After serving him a hot drink, his mother told him about the miracle that had occurred. Despite his great weakness, Yosef Chaim cried out, "I promise that from now on I will dedicate my entire life to Torah study and Avodas Hashem." True to his word, as soon as he had fully recovered, Yosef Chaim began to fulfil his vow, forgoing all childish games, sleeping less and spending most of his time engrossed in his studies with his uncle. At first, his parents feared for his health. But when they saw that this rigorous schedule and his conduct did not harm him, they permitted him to continue.

When Rabbeinu Eliyahu was niftar, **Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim ZT"L, the Ben Ish Chai** - just 25 year old - succeeded him as Rov of Baghdad. By virtue of his Torah genius and righteousness, he soon acquired the respect of all members of the community, who faithfully abided by his rulings. He led his community and all of Sefardic Jewry for more than fifty years.



ויאמר פרעה אל יעקב, כמה ימי שני חייך - באר משה Why didn't Yaakov just answer Paroah's question by saying that he is 130 years old? There is a concept of one having years without days, if one does not fulfil his purpose each day. Yaakov understood Paroah's question whether he took advantage of every day of his life - did he complete the days of his years? Yaakov answered with great humility that his days were very few for he did not fulfil his Tafkid. However, the Torah tells us that this was in fact not true. Yaakov was demonstrating his great humility, for Yaakov lived a full life of Torah and Mitzvos.



ויאמר פרעה אל יעקב, כמה ימי שני חייך - רמת שמואל

Why did Paroah ask, or care, how old Yaakov was? It says in the *Toras Shlaima*, in the name of a Medrash, that Yaakov blessed Paroah that Paroah should have as many years as he had. According to this Medrash, it is quite obvious why Paroah asked and cared how old Yaakov was.



ויאמר פרעה אל יעקב, כמה ימי שני חייך - ר' יהודה חלאווה

When Avrohom Avinu entered the palace of Paroah, there was a very low doorway to advance into the palace. For one to enter through that doorway, he would need to lean over his whole body – as if bowing down. On the inside wall facing this doorway was an Avodah Zarah. Paroah had this doorway low so that all who entered would

bow down to his Avodah Zarah. A miracle occurred for Avrohom, and the doorway rose to Avrohom's height so that he did not have to bow. After he walked through the doorway, it returned to its low height. The miracle of how this holy man Avrohom entered through the doorway at full height was recorded on the wall near this doorway. When Yaakov Avinu entered this doorway, the same miracle occurred. Paroah assumed that Yaakov was Avrohom, the man who this miracle had occurred for many years prior, and therefore asked Yaakov how old he was.



מעט ורעים היו ימי שני חיי ולא השיגו את ימי שני חיי אבתי - דעת זקנים
"Medrash – Yaakov complained that he had a hard life. Hakodosh Boruch Hu told Yaakov that He saved him from Eisav and Lavan, and He returned Dinah and Yosef to him. How could Yaakov say to Paroah that his days were "few and bad?" Therefore, Hakodosh Boruch Hu said to Yaakov that he will deduct the amount of words in these Pesukim from his life. (Yaakov was to live until 180. Being that there are 33 words in these Pesukim – 180-33=147 – Yaakov lived until 147)

Perhaps now we can understand the dialogue between Paroah and Yaakov. Paroah had himself in mind when asking the question. The longer Yaakov lived, the longer he believed he would benefit. When Yaakov came to the land of Mitzrayim, the famine ended, and the Nile River rose. Yaakov Avinu was a great Tzaddik, and was a great Anav. Life is a work in process. One must constantly strive to be better. The great Tzaddik Yaakov told Paroah that his previous years were bad, for he could have been better and was constantly working on it. The Medrash that says Yaakov was punished for this conversation is quite perplexing. Certainly Yaakov Avinu was not complaining about his lot in life. He rose to his challenges in the proper manner of Ruchniyos. If in fact Yaakov was punished for this conversation, perhaps it was because his words could have been construed as complaining, and someone on such a great level is punished for even the slightest infraction. May we be Zoche to

accept everything we receive from Hakodosh Boruch Hu with great love, and never complain.



The great Tzaddik, R' Pinchos of Koritz ZT"L, once visited the home of a disciple who had suddenly absented himself from his rebbi's weekly shiurim. He found the young man secluded in his bedchamber, dishevelled, melancholic, and unkempt. "Where are you?" R' Pinchos called to him. The disciple, shocked by the presence of the holy master, warned him to stay away. "Do not approach me, for I am in the darkest of all places, the lowest of abysses, and, in fact, at the very final gate of ultimate defilement! Stay away or you will be contaminated!" When the Rebbe heard these words, he broke into joyful excitement and seized the hand of the "fallen" man, exclaiming, "The darkest place, you say? The lowest of all abysses, you say? The very final gate of defilement, you say? Please let me join you! For I, too, want to see the Face of Hashem!"

As Yaakov is preparing to descend into what will ultimately be a long and tedious exile, Hashem sets his mind at ease: "Don't think you are ever alone," Hashem declares, "for no matter how low you go, I will descend with you. No matter how impure the Egyptian culture will be or how dark the stain of slavery will be on your children, I will never leave your side. And just as I descend with you, I will bring you up to a better place at the time of your redemption!"



R' Shlomo Nechemia ZT"L of Marrakesh would say: "Chazal tell us that Dovid Hamelech was originally to have been a stillborn, however, he received seventy years off the lives of the Avos - Patriarchs. They were each to have lived one hundred and eighty years. Avrohom died five years early; Yaakov died twenty-eight years early; Yosef died thirty-seven years early, which totals seventy. Thus, Yosef now tells the brothers, 'I am Yosef your brother' and if you do not believe me, and you think that Yosef died, then Yaakov would have to give sixty-five years of his life to Dovid Hamelech, as Yaakov said, 'For I will die mourning for my son.' And yet, he is still alive!"

In a hostile and impure environment, a yeshivah serves to not only educate its students, but also to protect them and cultivate their Torah sensibilities. How fortunate we are to have such an oasis, and how careful we must be with each and every student.



A well respected man, a leader and overseer of a large and thriving Jewish community, once came to visit the holy **Chofetz Chaim, R' Yisroel Meir Hakohen Kagan ZT"L**. Expecting to be welcomed with honour and respect befitting an important man such as himself, he was shocked when the tzaddik took one look at him, turned away and had him unceremoniously escorted from his presence.

Such a thing was rare, if not unheard of, especially for a community leader who was widely recognized throughout Poland and its environs. Even more than being insulted, though, the man was frightened at the reaction of the Gadol Hador to his presence. What had he done to bring on such a reaction? To incur the wrath and ire of the great man?

He racked his memory for any sort of incident, but he came up empty. Trembling, he decided that he could not leave Radin without finding out the source of the tzaddik's displeasure with him. With a faltering step, he tepidly knocked on the Chofetz Chaim's door and begged to be given one more chance to talk with the tzaddik. He finally managed to persuade his way inside and once again came face to face with the tzaddik. "Rebbi!" he cried, "What have I done? What was my sin, that you pushed me away and removed me from your home?"

The Chofetz Chaim's gaze turned steely. Then, he spoke in an icy tone: "You should just know - that it is all your fault, all your responsibility! The fact that more than three million of our Jewish brethren are suffocating under the harsh yoke of the Communists! All the affliction, all the oppression, all the pain and suffering - its all your fault!" All your fault! All your fault!

The Chofetz Chaim's words rang out with the force of an locomotive train! The fate of millions of suffering Jews was on his shoulders! How can that be? What had he done? "But Rebbi," he began, a stifled sob of protest erupted from his lips ---- but the Chofetz Chaim cut him off. "Now? Now you cry? Of course, now you lead a large Kehillah, you oversee the workings of your community and surely you wouldn't want any harm to come to it. But what about then? What about all those years ago?"

The man was unable to open his mouth. He truly had no idea what the tzaddik was talking about. "Surely you remember," continued the Chofetz Chaim, "many years ago when you worked as the

administrator of the local Talmud Torah. There was a young boy in your yeshivah, a small child who had lost his father and lived with his struggling mother. Under his unfortunate circumstances, it was no wonder that the boy tended to act out and make trouble. He was wild, sharp-tongued and difficult to control. In the end, you lost patience with him and had him thrown out!"

The man thought long and hard. Then he asked cautiously, "What was the boy's name?" "Laibel," said the tzaddik. "His name was Laibel. Since the yeshivah wouldn't keep him, his mother had no choice but to put him in a non-Jewish school. But the boy was smart, brilliant perhaps, he may have even become a Rosh Yeshivah given the proper guidance.

Instead, his sharp mind absorbed secular knowledge and he grew to become a leader among the goyim.



This young Jewish boy Laibel - Leon Trotzky - became one of the founders of Communism and the supreme commander of the Red Army during the Bolshevik Revolution, an ideology he spawned after being spurned from your Talmud Torah. How many countless neshamos have suffered due to this insidious ideology?" "Now I ask you," concluded the Chofetz Chaim, "who is to blame? At whose feet is the enormous weight of history's unforgiving irony placed - if not yours? Leave me! I can't bear to even look at your face!"

Faith and prayer are the vitamins of the soul; man cannot live in health without them.

Torah Gems וּבְנֵי־דָן חֻשִׁים



The posuk is unclear: If Dan only had one son, Chushim, why does the Torah use the term וּבְנֵי־דָן - "The sons of Dan" in plural? The gemara provides a veiled explanation: - "*For they were numerous like the stalks of reeds.*"

The Maharsha, R' Shmuel Halevi Eidels ZT"L elaborates on the words of the gemara and denotes that in fact the tribe of Dan was unique. Although Dan himself only had one son, Hashem blessed his shevet in that they multiplied exponentially far beyond what would have seemed natural. In praise of Shevet Dan, the Medrash writes: "*Dan approached his father with his only likeness (only son) and was blessed with seventy thousand. Binyomin approached his father with ten (sons) and was blessed with forty thousand.*" Binyomin bore ten sons and Dan bore only one. But in the long run, Shevet Dan was almost double as populous as that of Binyomin. For this reason, the Torah mentions בְּנֵי־דָן- "The sons of Dan" - to allude to this miraculous and unusual occurrence, whereby Shevet Dan grew from one single offspring, to the second most populous tribe.

Another mystical allusion is quoted by **R' Yosef Patzanovsky ZT"L** (Pardes Yosef), based on the gemara "If only (Bnei Yisroel) were to keep two **שבתות** they would immediately be redeemed." The numerical value of **שבת** is 27 times the Holy Name of Hashem (702). The numerical value of **שבת** twice, is 54 times the Holy Name of Hashem. This is the remez in the posuk: וּבְנֵי־דָן - When the Children of Israel will keep Shabbos - **דן** - 54 times the Holy Name, we will be rewarded with **חשים** - which spells out **משיח** - our ultimate redemption!

Many commentators question Yehudah's unusual choice of words when describing his younger brother, Binyomin: **וילד זקונים קטן** - "A young child of (Yaakov's) old age."

This depiction begs the question: Binyomin was a grown man, with ten children of his own. Why is he still considered a "young child"? Many explanations are given, but the following story involving the previous Bobover Rebbe, holds an invaluable understanding and lesson for us until this very day. **R' Shloime Halberstam ZT"L**, the first Rebbe of Bobov, was once sitting with a group of his chassidim, discussing Torah thoughts and chassidic discourses. This went on for quite some time and the Bobover Rebbe became totally engrossed in his words.

The Rebbe gave a sudden exclamation and announced, "Rabbosai, today is a special today and deserves to be celebrated with a L'chayim." The chassidim excitedly scrambled to find a bottle of schnapps with which to have a drink. But no bottle could be found. One of the group offered to pay for the refreshments, however, no one volunteered to go out and make the purchase. Finally, the Rebbe turned to the benefactor and said matter-of-factly, "Just hand me the money. I have with me a young boy who will be glad to go." R' Shloime took the money that was handed to him and excused himself for a moment. The chassidim waited impatiently but the Rebbe did not return right away.

After a rather extended lapse of time, R' Shloime returned to the group, schnapps and refreshments in hand. All at once, it became obvious to the very embarrassed chassidim that the Rebbe himself must have performed the menial errand. "Why did the Rebbe have to go out and buy it himself? We thought that a young child was being sent out." Everyone began fidgeting in nervous anticipation. Noticing their discomfort, the Bobover Rebbe calmed their fears. "Let me explain," he said in a soft voice. "Everyone wants to be young.

Nobody wants to accept that he is an old man. But how can one retain his youth, long after his biological age has advanced?

The answer lies in one's capacity for learning, retaining, innovating, and creating. If our capacity to grow has weakened, it is because we have allowed it to do so. It is more on account of our laziness than to the process of aging that causes us to deteriorate. We become complacent, self-satisfied, too tolerant of the goals we have achieved. To be forever striving for knowledge, for new insights, for fresh perspectives - that is the way we can take youth along with us far into our biological old age."

R' Shloime smiled. "I did not mislead you today at all. You see, many people outgrow their youth and become old men. I have never let the spirit of my youth depart. As I grew older, I always took along with me the 'young boy' that I had been. It was that 'young boy' in me that did the errand."

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter



"Paroah said to Yaakov, 'How many are the days of the years of your life'? Yaakov answered Paroah, 'The days of the years of my sojourns have been a hundred and thirty years. Few and bad have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not reached the life spans of my forefathers in the days of their sojourns."

Yaakov travelled to Mitzrayim and met the king of Mitzrayim, Paroah. Paroah asked Yaakov how old he was. Instead of just answering the question, Yaakov seems to give a long-winded answer along with his age. Why did Paroah ask Yaakov how old he was? Why did Yaakov feel the need to give a whole story with his answer? The

following Divrei Torah will expound on this topic, and perhaps support the P'shat offered in the closing paragraph.

– מעט ורעים היו ימי שני חיי ולא השיגו את ימי שני חיי אבתי בימי מגוריהם רמב"ן- 47:9 "Paroah asked Yaakov how old he was. Yaakov answers his question and then goes into a diatribe about the difficulties he endured during his lifetime. Why did Yaakov say this to Paroah when all he was asked was how old he was? Furthermore, why did Yaakov say that he did not reach the lifespan of his forefathers, when perhaps he would still live longer than them? Yaakov Avinu was overcome with old age, which caused him to appear very old. Paroah was astonished at his old age because most people of his era did not enjoy such longevity. Paroah, therefore, asked Yaakov how old he was in astonishment for he had never seen anyone as old as Yaakov in his entire kingdom.

Yaakov responded that he was 130 years old, but for his family that was not old – his father and grandfather lived considerably longer. However, because Yaakov had a difficult life, it caused him to appear much older than his actual age.



R' Simcha Bunim of Pshische ZT"L would say: "A person who lives his life without direction is similar to a man who paces to and fro. We can understand why he went from here to there - because perhaps things are better there than here. We can also understand why he returned - because on arriving there, he realized that things were really better over here. What we don't understand is why he decided to go back there again!"

מושב זקנים - ויאמר פרעה אל יעקב, כמה ימי שני חייך .



When Yaakov went to Mitzrayim he asked Paroah permission to leave Mitzrayim after the famine was over and return to the land where his forefathers were buried. Paroah saw a very old person in front of him and did not believe he would live very long. Paroah asked him his age – as if to say, "Why are you asking when you will not live very long - and will not be going anywhere after the famine was over?"

ויאמר פרעה אל יעקב, כמה ימי שני חייך - פענח רזא

When Paroah was young, he was raised in Avimelech's home. Typically, kings send their children to each other to teach them proper manners and wisdom. It was there that Paroah saw Yitzchok Avinu. Paroah thought that Yaakov was Yitzchok and was bewildered that he could still be alive. He therefore asked Yaakov his age.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



After Yosef revealed his identity to his brothers, the Torah tells us "[Yosef] fell on his brother Binyamin's neck and cried, and Binyamin cried on his neck" (45:14). They were crying for the future churban. As Rashi writes, "[Yosef] was crying for the two batei HaMikdosh which would be built in Binyamin's lot, and would be destroyed, and Binyamin cried for Mishkan Shilo, which would be built on Yosef's portion, and would be destroyed."

Why did they cry for the churban now? After twenty-two years of separation, we would assume that they will rejoice with each other's presence, instead of focusing on upcoming destructions.



The Sfas Emes answers that they cried for the churban because what had just occurred made the future churban imminent. The Torah tells us, " velo yachol Yosef lihisapeik — Yosef couldn't hold back" (45:1), he wasn't able to control his powerful emotions, and he revealed himself to his brothers. The Zohar teaches that if Yosef would have held back just a drop longer, then the sin of mechiras Yosef (selling Yosef) would have been entirely atoned for, and the final redemption would come. But Yosef couldn't contain himself any longer, he revealed his identity to his brothers, and this sealed the exile and the upcoming destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

This is the reason why Yosef and Binyamin cried over the destruction at this time. The origin for the upcoming destructions, had just taken root.

Happiness cannot be travelled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude.

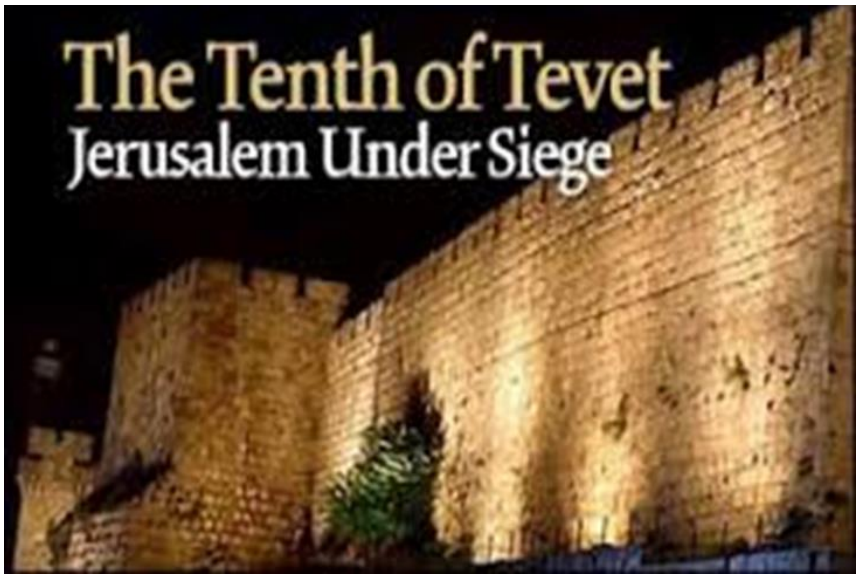
Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end.

Emunah



Another method for maintaining peace with others is with the realization that everything that happens is from Hashem. Yosef told his brothers, **ועתה לא אתם שלחתם אתי הנה כי האלקים *"It wasn't you who sent me here. It was Hashem"*** (45:8). ("Because two years of the famine already passed, and there will be another five years, when there will be no ploughing and no harvest. Hashem sent me before you to support and to save you.")

The Slonimer Rebbes zy"a taught that a person must always keep this passuk on his mind. We should constantly repeat to ourselves, "It wasn't you, it was Hashem." With this realization, we will never be angry at others.



Asarah B'Teves by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

Although to many the only notable aspect of the upcoming fast of *Asarah B'Teves* (the 10th of *Teves*) is that it is by far the shortest fast day in the Jewish calendar for anyone in the Northern Hemisphere (my heartfelt sympathies to the South Americans, So'Africans, Aussies, and Kiwis), nonetheless, the Fast of *Asarah B'Teves* is quite unique. For example, exclusive to this fast is that it is the only one that we do

actually observe as a fast on a Friday. Even *Tisha B'Av*, which commemorates the actual destructions of our *Batei HaMikdash*, gets pushed off. Yet, obviously, to maintain this distinction of being the only Fast Day that we actually do observe on Friday, there must be much more to the Fast of *Asarah B'Teves* than meets the eye. In turns out that *Asarah B'Teves* has several exceptional characteristics that are not found in any other fast day. Why This Fast?

The reason given for fasting on *Asarah B'Teves* is that it is the day that the wicked Babylonian king Nevuchadnetzar started his siege of *Yerushalayim*, foreshadowing the beginning of the end of the first *Beis Hamikdash*, which culminated with its destruction on *Tisha B'Av* several years later.

Therefore, *Chazal* declared it a public fast, one of four public fast days that memorialize different aspects of the catastrophes and national tragedies associated with the destruction of both *Batei HaMikdash*.

Three Day Fast?

According to the special *Selichos* prayers said on the fast, a unique aspect of *Asarah B'Teves* is that we are actually fasting for two other days of tragedy as well; the 8th and 9th of *Teves*. In fact, both the *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch assert* that if possible one should try to fast on all three days. Nevertheless, of the three, only *Asarah B'Teves* was actually mandated as a public fast day.

The 8th of Teves

On the 8th of *Teves*, King Ptolemy II (285 - 246 B.C.E.) forced 72 sages separately to translate the *Torah* into Greek (the Septuagint). Although miracles guided their work and all of the sages made the same slight but necessary amendments, nevertheless this work is described as "darkness descending on the world for three days", as it was now possible for the uneducated to possess a superficial, and

frequently flawed understanding of the *Torah*, as well as providing the masses with a mistaken interpretation of true morality.

The 9th of Teves

Although several decisors write that the reason for fasting on the 9th of *Teves* is unknown, nonetheless many sources, including the *Kol Bo* and the *Selichos* recited on *Asarah B'Teves*, as well as many later authorities, explain that this is the day on which Ezra *HaSofer* (as well as possibly his partner *Nechemiah*) died. Ezra, the *Gadol HaDor* at the beginning of the time of the *Second Beis HaMikdash*, had a tremendous impact upon the nascent returning Jewish community of *Eretz Yisrael*. He drastically improved the spiritual state of the Jewish people and established many *halachic takanos*, many of which still apply today. With his passing, the community started sliding from the great spiritual heights Ezra had led them. Additionally, since Ezra was the last of the prophets, his passing signified the end of prophecy.

Other sources attribute fasting on this day to the passings of other specific *Tzaddikim* on this day, including Shimon *HaKalphus* and Rav Yosef *HaNaggid*, or to the birth of '*Oso HaIsh*', the founder of Christianity, in whose name myriads of Jews over the millennia were *r"l* murdered . The *Sefer HaToda'ah* posits that it's possible that "the darkness descended on the world for three days" alludes to the triple woes of these three days: the 8th, 9th, and 10th of *Teves*.

Fasting on Friday?

Another exclusive characteristic of *Asarah B'Teves* is that, as mentioned previously, it is the only fast that can fall out on a Friday. This is fairly interesting as there is a whole debate in the *Gemara* about how to conduct fasts on a Friday, when we also must take *kavod Shabbos* into account, implying that it is a common occurrence. However, according to our calendar, a Friday fast is only applicable with *Asarah B'Teves*, and it happens quite infrequently.

The last few times *Asarah B'Teves* fell out on a Friday were in 1996, 2001, 2010, and 2013. It is next expected to occur in 2020 (5781). After that, 2023 (5784), 2025 (5785), 2034 (5795), and 2037 (5798).

Halachos of a Friday Fast

The halachos of a Friday fast generally parallel those of a regular fast day. In fact, even though there is some debate in the Rishonim as to the Gemara's intent that 'Halacha - Mesaneh U'Mashlim - a Friday fast should be completed' whether or not one may be mekabel Shabbos early and thereby end the fast before nightfall, nonetheless, the halacha follows the Shulchan Aruch and Rema that since Asarah B'Teves is a public fast (Taanis Tzibbur) and not a Taanis Yachid, one must fast the whole day and complete it at nightfall (Tzeis HaKochavim) before making Kiddush.There are those who maintain it is preferable to *daven Maariv* earlier than usual on such a Friday night, to enable making *Kiddush*, and breaking the fast, exactly at *Tzeis HaKochavim*.

A Shabbos Fast?!

The third and possibly most important attribute of *Asarah B'Teves* is that according to the *AbuDraham*, if *Asarah B'Teves* would potentially fall out on Shabbos, we would all actually be required to fast on Shabbos! (Notwithstanding that with our calendar this is an impossibility.) He cites proof to this from the words of Yechezkel referring to *Asarah B'Teves* (Ch. 24, verse 2) that the siege transpired "*B'Etzem HaYom HaZeh*", implying that the fast must always be observed on that exact day, no matter the conflicting occurrence. This would also explain why it is observed on Friday, as opposed to any other fast.

Yet, the *AbuDraham's* statement is astounding, as the only fast that *halachically* takes precedence over *Shabbos* is *Yom Kippur*, the only Biblically mandated fast. How can one of the Rabbinic minor fasts push off the Biblical *Shabbos*?

Additionally, *Asarah B'Teves* commemorates merely the start of the siege, and not any actual destruction. How can it be considered a more important fast than *Tisha B'Av*, which commemorates the destruction and loss of both of our *Batei HaMikdash*? In fact, the *Beis Yosef* questions this declaration of the *AbuDraham*, stating that he "does not know how the *AbuDraham* could know" such a ruling. As an aside, this does not seem to be the actual *halacha*, as other *Rishonim*, including *Rashi* and the *Rambam*, both explicitly state that if *Asarah B'Teves* falls out on *Shabbos* it gets pushed off.

Rebbe Yechezkel of Kozmir zy"a offers another answer.



Mechiras Yosef happened because of sinas chinam (baseless hatred) and when the brothers met, their renewed friendship and brotherhood was rectifying their past sin. However, Yosef and Binyamin both perceived that it wasn't sufficient. The seeds of sinas chinam and separation that were planted earlier will still bear its bitter fruit among Yidden in the future, causing more hatred and more division, and ultimately resulting with the churban. Therefore, Yosef and Binyamin increased their ahavas chinam, in an attempt to totally eradicate sinas chinam. Yosef cried for the churban that will happen in Binyamin's portion and Binyamin cried for the churban that would happen in Yosef's portion. Crying for a friend's sorrow is ahavas chinam, and they hoped that this ahavas chinam would fully rectify the sinas chinam.



Based on these ideas, we understand the Chazal that says, "Whoever gladdens a chassan and kallah it is as though he rebuilt one of the ruins of Yerushalayim."

Because when one celebrates by the chasunah of his fellow man's, he is being happy for someone else. That is ahavas chinam which negates sinas chinam, ultimately, leading to the final redemption.

Tefillah



The brothers told Yaakov that Yosef was still alive, as it states "they told him that Yosef was still alive and he is the ruler over the entire Mitzrayim. But Yaakov's heart didn't accept their words; he didn't believe them" **וַיָּפָג לִבּוֹ כִּי לֹא־הֶאֱמִין לָהֶם** (45:26). The next passuk states, **וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו אֵת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֲלֵהֶם וַיַּרְא אֶת־הָעֲגָלֹת אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף לָשֵׂאת אֹתוֹ וַתְּחִי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם**– they told Yaakov everything that Yosef said… and Yaakov's spirits were lifted." This time Yaakov believed them. What changed?

The first time, they told Yaakov that Yosef said that he became the king over Mitzrayim. Yaakov thought, how could it be that Yosef said that he became the ruler, as though the matter was up to him? Doesn't he know that he cannot become the ruler without Hashem?

This is the reason, at first, Yaakov didn't believe them. He knew that Yosef had emunah, and he wouldn't say such a thing. But the second time, they told Yaakov "kol divrei Yosef – everything that Yosef said," including that Yosef said that Hashem made him the ruler, etc. (see 45:5-8). This time, Yaakov believed them.

Kibud Av v'Eim

When Yaakov saw Yosef, he didn't recognize him. He realized from his clothing that he was one of the high-ranking officers of Mitzrayim, but he didn't recognize that it was his son Yosef, so he bowed in respect. Because Yaakov bowed to his own son, he lost ten years of his life. That is the reason why Yosef fell on his father's Yaakov's neck and cried. He cried that his father just lost years of his life, due to this error.



This story is stated in Targum Yonoson (46:29). He writes, "Yosef harnessed his wagon and went to meet Yisrael (his father). Before his father recognized him, his father bowed down to him. He was punished for this, and his life was shortened. This is the reason Yosef fell on his neck and cried." The roles between father and son need to be clear. The son is obligated to honour his father; the father isn't obligated to honour his son. The son may be the ruler of Mitzrayim, he might also be a talmid chacham, but the rule remains, that the child must honour his father, not vice-versa.

There was a time when several young men, students of Kollel Chazon Ish, were niftar. People asked the **Steipler Gaon zy"a** for an

explanation. The Steipler reasoned, "These yungerleit were raised in homes of holocaust survivors. Their parents aren't scholarly; they can read the siddur and the chumash, but not much more than that. This caused that their children didn't sufficiently honour their parents because they were bigger talmidei chachamim than their parents.This is the reason why they were punished." Because kibud av ve'eim is mesugal for long life, and unfortunately, they failed in this mitzvah and the opposite occurred. Despite their greatness in Torah, this shouldn't have caused them to disrespect their parents.

Rebbe Yechiel Michel of Zlotchev zy"a was only once by the Baal Shem Tov. He said that if he would go just one more time, Moshiach would come. But he didn't go again, because his father told him not to go. People asked him, "Isn't it worthwhile for you not to listen to your father just once, in order to bring Moshiach?" Rebbe Michel answered, "If I disobey my father, then I am no longer Reb Michel." (I will lose my spiritual greatness.) I can travel a thousand times to the Baal Shem Tov and nothing will happen.





There lived a special Yid in Yerushalayim called **Reb Berish Kornblitt z"l**. He had a meat store. When people came to his store, his eyes were generally glued to the Gemara that was open before him.

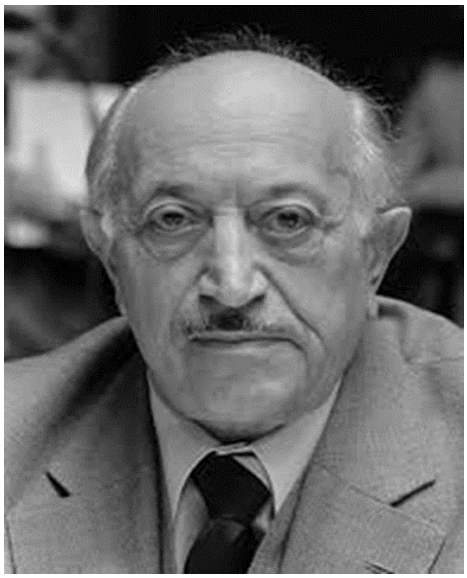
A woman once came into the store and asked for a piece of meat. He weighed the meat and sold it to her, but he didn't see her. After she left the store, Reb Berish realized that he sold her a slice of meat

that may not be kosher. He had set this piece of meat aside to ask a rav whether it was kosher, and he accidently sold it to this woman.

Reb Berish went outside to tell her, but the woman had already left. He had no way of contacting her because he didn't know who bought the meat. He feared that someone may eat non-kosher because of his negligence, so he immediately closed his store and went in to a beis medrash to say Tehillim.

Sometime later, the woman returned to his store, requesting another piece of meat. "A cat ate from the meat I bought earlier," she explained. When there is tefillah, there is never reason to lose hope. Everything can be taken care of with tefillah.

Living Jewish - Switching the View



A few years ago, **Simon Wiesenthal**, the famed Nazi-hunter, spoke at a conference of European Rabbis in Bratislava, Slovakia. The Rabbis presented the 91 year old Simon Wiesenthal with an award, and Mr.Wiesenthal, visibly moved, told the Rabbis the following story: He related how he was in Mauthausen after liberation and was visited there by **Rabbi Eliezer Silver**, the head of the Agudat Harabanim in the United States, who had come to help and comfort the survivors. Rabbi Silver also organized a special service, and he invited Wiesenthal to join the other survivors in praying. Mr. Wiesenthal declined and explained why.

"When I was in camp, I saw many different types of people do things. There was one religious man of whom I was in awe when I saw that he smuggled a siddur into the camp. I was amazed that he took the risk of his life in order to bring the siddur in. But then, the next

day, to my horror, I realized that he was taking this siddur and renting it out to people in exchange for giving him their last piece of bread.

This man was so thin, that when he started eating so much from the people renting out his siddur, he died before everyone." Mr. Wiesenthal continued: "I was so angry with this Jew -- how could he take a holy siddur and use it to take a person's last piece of bread away? So I am not going to pray, if this is how Jews behave, if this is what they do with something that is supposed to be a prayer book."

As Wiesenthal turned to walk away, Rabbi Silver tapped him on the shoulder and gently said in Yiddish, "Oy na'ar, na'ar (silly boy). Why do you look at the Jew who rented out his siddur to take away people's last meals? Why do you look at that bad Jew? Why don't you look at the dozens of Jews who gave up their last piece of bread in order to be able to use a siddur?

That's faith. That's the true power of the siddur." Rabbi Silver then embraced him. "When he said that," said Wiesenthal, "I walked together with him to pray." May we learn how to see the good in our family, community, and people. May we learn how to see the good in all of God's creation.

Yosef was sold as a slave by his brothers, but this humiliation led to his becoming a great leader. - Tamar was rejected, but this rejection led to her becoming the mother of the dynasty of King David.

We can learn from these and similar Torah incidents that any time we become discouraged from unfortunate events in our lives, we are acting prematurely. - Our lowest moments can lead to our greatest fortune – R' Zelig Pliskin.

The Power of Dancing



One Friday night the **Baal Shem Tov** was about to make Kiddush when he suddenly laughed out loud. In the middle of the Shabbat meal he laughed again, and a few minutes later he laughed a third time.

On Motzei Shabbat, **Reb Zev Kitzes** asked the Baal Shem Tov why he had laughed, and the tzadik replied that he would show him. He ordered his driver to ready the horses and wagon, and the entire group of disciples piled in for the ride. Throughout the night they traveled, reaching Kozhnitz at dawn. The Baal Shem Tov ordered that Reb Shabsai the Bookbinder be brought to him, and when he arrived with his wife, asked him what had transpired that Shabbat. "This past week, Friday morning came, and I did not even have enough money to buy flour. I asked my wife to promise me that even if the neighbours noticed we had no food, she would refuse to take any gifts.

Unbeknownst to me, while cleaning the house my wife had found an old dress with silver buttons on the sleeves. She had immediately sold them for enough money to provide a very sumptuous Sabbath meal. When I came home and saw the house brightly lit and the table fit for a king, I was very disappointed, assuming that she had been unable to withstand the temptation of accepting charity. I made Kiddush and we washed for the challa, but after the fish I couldn't control myself any longer. Very gently I chided her for having accepted our neighbours' generosity, but before I could even finish she told me what had happened.

Without even thinking I grabbed her arm and began to dance with her around the table. After the soup I was again overcome with joy, and we danced for a second time, and for a third time after dessert."

At that the Baal Shem Tov turned to his disciples and said, "I want you to know that the entire entourage of heavenly angels was dancing and rejoicing with Reb Shabsai and his wife. That is why I laughed aloud those three times."

The Baal Shem Tov blessed them to have an offspring, and this child grew up to be the holy **Kozhnitzer Magid**.

אֵלֶּה בָּרֶכֶב וְאֵלֶּה בַּסּוּסִים וַאֲנַחְנוּ בְּשֵׁם־ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ נַזְכִּיר... הֵמָּה כָּרְעוּ וְנָפָלוּ וַאֲנַחְנוּ קַמְנוּ וַנִּתְעוֹדָד תהלים כ:ח/ט

At 13, young Chezky Shoenig had leukemia. He had been in remission for 11 years and they thought he had beaten it, but it was back. A fellow approached his father, R' Elya, and said, "He will be fine. We say every day in davening, 'Some [trust] in horses; some [trust] in chariots; but we shall recall the name of HaShem, our G-d.' The whole town is davening for him, HaShem will heal him." This gave the father tremendous reassurance, but sadly, the unthinkable happened and the boy succumbed.



For months, it troubled R' Elya that the verse promised salvation that didn't arrive. Then it dawned on him. "The posuk isn't telling us how to fight the battle; it teaches us how to deal with the outcome.

The next line in that perek of Tehilim is: "They kneel and fall, but we stand and remain firm." Those who rely on their own strength and tactics second-guess themselves and try to figure what they could have done differently. We, however, know everything is in HaShem's hand, so even after defeat we can stand

tall knowing we did all we could, but could not have changed it; it was G-d's will.'

MeOros Ha Tzaddikim - Rav Avrohom Abba Leifer 10th of Teves



Of the three brothers learning in European Yeshivos, only **Rav Avrohom Abba** survived the Holocaust. The Nazis in charge of Czernowitz ordered all Jews to sew a yellow badge on their coats and to shave their beards. The Pittsburgher Rebbe did not shave his beard, and he once went outside to accompany a visitor home without remembering to put on his coat, on which the yellow badge was sewn. When the Nazi officials saw him, they arrested him and brought him to a large courtyard where thousands of Jews had been rounded up for deportation. Though most of the captured Jews spoke bleakly about their fate, Rav Leifer displayed strong emuna and immersed himself in heartfelt prayer.

Two days later, when the men were being led into cattle cars, an SS officer instructed Rav Leifer to stand to the side. After the transport left, the officer said to him, "You should know that in the past few days, I observed all of you, and I heard everyone talking with despair in their voices, except for you. You were busy praying to your G-d, so know that your G-d has heard your prayers and you are free to go."

The Rebbe ran back to his father-in-law's house, where his family was already mourning his demise. He recounted this story of his personal redemption at every Pesach Seder.

Segulos Yisrael



Since these are the last parshiyos of the story of Yosef HaTzaddik and he was the Ba'al HaChalomos – the Dream Master – here are some segulos related to dreams:

The Segulos Yisrael cites the Shaarei Emuna , who tells us in the name of **the Neshchizer** that whoever has bad dreams, especially if they result in impurity, he would tell the average person to give eighteen coins of the denomination of currency of that country to the kuppa (charity) of **Rebbe Meir Ba'al HaNess** and eighteen additional coins secretly to tzedoka where the donor and recipient do not know each other – known as matan be'seser. A wealthy individual he would advise to give two times that amount, thirty-six coins to tzidkas Rebbe Meir Ba'al HaNess and thirty-six coins to matan be'seser charity.

Regarding fasting for dreams, the Segulos Yisrael cites the opinion of **Rav Mendel of Lubavitch**, author of Tzemach Tzedek, cited in nachlas avos, that in earlier generations, whose dreams were closer to prophecy, it made sense to fast for negative dreams. In our generation, however, when most of our dreams are full of nonsense, there is no need to fast; the Segulos Yisrael concurs.

In Parshas Teruma, the **Noam Elimelech** teaches us that the reason we recite the tefilla for good dreams during Bircas Kohanim is

because the berocha of the Kohanim is true prophecy and we are therefore forbidden to gaze at their hands when they bless, for the Shechina rests on them at that time.

The Gemora, in Berochos, tells us that dreams are a sixtieth of prophecy, so when the Kohanim bless us through prophecy, it has the power to nullify and cancel any negative dreams, since all things are nullified be'shishim– one in sixty.

Since Vayigash deals with Yosef HaTzaddik who was known as Ish Matzliach, meaning that Hashem gave him much hatzlocha (success), here are some segulos for hatzlocha:

There is a segula from the sefer Mincha Belula to recite the angelic name Uriel seven times in one breath in the morning when you awake in bed after ritually cleansing your hands that you should succeed on that day.

The Birkei Yosef and Sha'arei Teshuva (O.C. Siman 293), in the name of the **Behag and Rav Chaim Vital**, say that on Motzo'ei Shabbos, when answering Borchu, if you stretch out the Borchu, this is a segula to be saved from any damages. The sefer Yimalet Nafsho cites that meticulous mitzva observance is a segula for success and wealth because the word hamitzvos equals behatzlochos in gematria.

There is a famous segula for hatzlocha from the **Kedushas Levi of Berditchev** to recite Gott Fin Avrohom three times as printed in all the siddurim and zemiros.

The sefer Abiya Chidos cites Sefer HaMiddos (Mamon) that **Rav Nachman of Breslov** said a segula for hatzlocha is always to be happy!

The sefer Yisrael LeSeguloso cites the Gemora in Avoda Zara 19b that Rav Yehoshua ben Levi said that whoever engages in Torah learning, his wealth and property – are successful. - ***May we all have hatzlocha rabba!***



וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ וְאַל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי
But now do not be sad...that you sold me here (45:5) - According to the Midrash, the word "now" refers to the act of teshuva, sincerely repenting of one's misdeeds and returning to G-d.

Thus, Joseph was saying to his brothers, "If you are truly intent on doing teshuva and regret having sold me, 'do not be sad' - do not allow yourselves to wallow in sadness. For true teshuva can only be attained through joy..." (Mishmeret Itamar)



The Kaiser of Germany once asked Baron Rothschild, "What is the total of your wealth worth?" Baron Rothschild told him he would let him know in a few days. When the allotted time arrived, Baron Rothschild declared he was worth 'Sixty Million Marks'. The Kaiser replied, "That's false, because I know for a fact that just in the banks of my country you have more than sixty million marks!"

Baron Rothschild responded, "Oh that is not my total wealth worth. This is money that can be lost or seized from me. However, sixty million marks is what I personally distributed to charity. This is what I consider the total worth of my wealth – since this is mine and can never be taken from me – and this is what I will take with me into the World To Come. What a beautiful way to look at wealth and the responsibility it entails.



Rav Mordechai Chaim Kastelantizl, 12th of Teves ["Reb Mottel Slonimer"]

Reb Mottel Slonimer once passed by a house, from where he heard a very powerful but sad niggun, which touched the heart. He wondered, "This feels like a very heilige (holy) niggun". Upon entering the house, he asked the ba'al habayis to explain what this niggun was all about. And here our story begins. He mentioned that he was born in Teveria (Tiberius) and was orphaned from both of his parents at a young age. He supported himself as a fisherman, who worked through the night, sleeping during the daytime. After several years, he eventually got married, and shortly thereafter, they had a son.

Not long after the pidyon haben, his wife passed away. He was left alone with the young child. Fortunately, he had good neighbours in Teveria, who helped bring up his son, as he needed to go out to fish every night.

Boruch Hashem, they were quite successful. When his father would come home from work each morning, his young son would serve him a hot cup of tea, help him get undressed and bring him his slippers and a towel with wish to refresh himself.

Despite their impoverished living conditions, the father and son developed a very deep bond with one another. The boy grew up, got married and moved to a town in the southern part of Eretz Yisrael, far away from Teveria. In those days, a journey from Teveria to the south of Eretz Yisrael could take several hours, even the good part of a day.

The son was financially successful, and from time to time would send his father a golden Napoleon coin, which was worth a lot of money.

His father asked him in a letter: "Why do you do this? Why are you sending me these coins?"



His reply: "Abba, you gave so much of yourself for me, you did so much for me, and we were so close. I want you to save these golden Napoleon coins, and when you have enough, you'll be able to purchase a decent house in which to live." And so it was – he eventually had enough golden coins with which to buy a proper dwelling in Teveria.

Later on, he received an urgent telegram message from his daughter-inlaw: "Come quickly, your son is very ill!" The father made the long journey to the south of Eretz Yisrael. Arriving at his son's home, he stood by the sick man's bedside, praying for him, as only a father can. (The Rebbe then told of the Chofetz Chaim, that when his son was very ill, no one told him about it, and the son passed away. He then scolded them, "Why didn't you tell me? Don't you know that the tears of a father can resurrect the dead?") And indeed here, the father stood and prayed and cried for his son, and the young man recovered.

The father returned to Teveria, and once more, the son began to send him the golden Napoleon coins. And again, the father wrote his son: "Why do you do this? Why are you sending me these coins?" This time, the son replied, "Abba, I want you to save these coins so that you can have a 'pension fund' for your old age." So again, the father saved these coins.

As they accumulated, they indeed became a viable source of funding. Sure enough, he again received an urgent letter from his daughter-in-law: "Come quickly, your son is very ill!"

And once more, he made the long journey to the south. This time, however, by the time he arrived, it was too late – his son had passed

away. All he could do was to cry at his bedside. After the shiva, he returned home to Teveria – to an empty house. He was back to "square one" – an orphan with no one and nothing in this world. He was so depressed that he wanted to die.

One night, he had a dream, in which he saw his son in Gan Eden, lying in a golden bed. He began to run toward his son, but his son withdrew – he didn't want his father to touch him, to come into the Olam HaEmes (the next world, the "world of truth" after petira). "I want to be with you again, next to you," the father told his son. "No, you need to stay in this world and do mitzvos!" was the son's reply.



"Do you see this golden bed I'm in? This is made from the golden Napoleon coins that I sent you, from the mitzva of Kibbud Av va'Em." "But I just want to be with you!" Then, in the dream, the son began to sing a niggun. And he continued to sing it, as his father joined in. They sang it together for a long time, until eventually the father learned to sing it alone. And then, the son disappeared and the dream was over.

"Then I awoke," said the father to Reb Mottel Slonimer. "And whenever I'm sad, I sing this niggun. This is the niggun my son taught me." Said Reb Mottel Slonimer: "This is the niggun of Kibbud Av va'Em." What is the niggun? This is the niggun that connected the father to his son, and to the next world... A niggun made from the Golden Mitzva of Kibbud Av va'Em.

Parsha Points to Ponder

The Medrash teaches (Yalkut Shimoni 151) that Yosef died 10 years prematurely as a punishment for the 10 times that he heard his brothers refer to their father Yaakov as **עבדיך- *your servant***, and remained silent without correcting them. As the verses which record the conversation mention that they did so only 5 times (43:28, 44:24, 44:27, 44:30, and 44:31), why was Yosef's punishment doubled? (Peninim MiShulchan HaGra Parshas Mikeitz) The Torah relates (42:23) that in order to disguise his true identity from his brothers, Yosef pretended not to recognize their language. This necessitated the use of an interpreter to translate everything that they had said into the Egyptian language.

The Vilna Gaon explains that although Yosef heard his father referred to as his servant from his brothers only 5 times, he heard it another 5 times from the translator.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

ויאמר פרעה אל יעקב כמה ימי שני חייך מז:ח Pharaoh said to Yaakov, "How many are the days of the years of your life?"



R' Mordechai Miron points out: The words of Pharaoh are strange. Yaakov Avinu comes to Egypt where eventually Pharaoh meets the father of the legendary Yosef, saviour of Egypt, the one who interprets dreams and even advised with an idea that spared the entire world from starvation – and at their initial meeting, the first question that comes into his mind to ask Yaakov is: "How old are you?"

This is what is heavy on his mind? Would it not have been more appropriate to ask how he raised such wise children as Yosef or some other interesting question? However, Pharaoh deified himself and as such should be above death and he should live forever. Pharaoh gave up on the thought that he would never die, still, he wanted to live as long as possible. Therefore, when he saw Yaakov Avinu, the prominent elderly man, he was immediately interested as to how he lived so long: "Tell me, how old you are and what is the secret to your long life?"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



Once, **Rav Yisroel Salanter** was staying at an inn in Kovna. He was up late at night learning Torah, when he overhead the conversation of two paupers who were lodging in a side room. One asked the other to accompany him to the well, as he was afraid to go out alone so late at night, and he really wanted to get a drink. The other drowsily mumbled that he was sleeping and would not go out. Immediately, Rav Yisroel Salanter interrupted his studies and went out to the well to get water for the pauper!

Happiness is like a cat, if you try to coax it or call it, it will avoid you; it will never come. But if you pay no attention to it and go about your business, you'll find it rubbing against your legs and jumping into your lap.

Rabbi's Musings - R' Dani Staum



One morning this week one of my fellow rabbeim chided me for eating a Greek Yogurt during breakfast. He wanted to know how I could eat anything Greek during Chanukah. I continued eating my yogurt without replying. When the container was empty I turned to him and said "See, I have consumed the Greek!" The truth is that Greek Yogurt has nothing at all to do with Greeks, and eating Greek Yogurt is not much of a Chanukah victory. There are far better ways to 'consume the Greeks'. Perhaps no one personified the essence and message of Chanukah in our time more than the late Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva, **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt'l**. Rav Nosson Tzvi grew up as a regular American kid, attending Day School in Chicago, playing sports, and eating pizza. During a visit to Eretz Yisroel with his parents during his high school years he met his great uncle, the then Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva, Rav **Lazer Yudel Finkel zt'l**.



Rav Lazer Yudel prevailed upon him to stay in the yeshiva, and Rav Nosson Tzvi agreed. It was a decision he deemed "the greatest siyata deshmaya (divine assistance) of my life". He joined the yeshiva and lived in his great uncle's home. After returning to America to complete high school Rav Nosson Tzvi came back to the Mir and lived in the yeshiva dormitory. Some time later he came back to America for a brief visit. Upon his subsequent return to Yerushalayim, Rav Lazer Yudel asked him to sleep in his

home that first night. By the time Rav Nosson Tzvi arrived Rav Lazer Yudel was already sleeping and Rav Nosson Tzvi went to bed in his great uncle's home. When Rav Nosson Tzvi awoke the next morning he saw Rav Lazer Yudel standing by his bed waiting for him to awaken. As soon as he opened his eyes, Rav Lazer Yudel kissed him on his forehead. Rav Nosson Tzvi recounted that Rav Lazer Yudel's kiss remained with him his entire life.

Rav Nosson Tzvi himself grew into one of our generation's foremost Torah leaders. Had he been healthy, he would have been a leader and role model for his incredible love of Torah, love of Jews, sterling character, and radiant personality. But the fact that he suffered terribly from Parkinson's disease, and yet accomplished more than most healthy people is staggering and incredible. He was moser nefesh for Torah, for the honour of Heaven, and for his people. It was to defend those very ideals that the Maccabees placed their lives on the line.

Contrary to popular understanding, the Maccabees never achieved complete victory over their enemies. Shortly after the Chanukah miracle they returned to battle. In fact, four of the original five Maccabees were killed in subsequent battles, and the fifth, Shimon, was murdered by his son-in-law. The period after the Chanukah miracle was similar to the period preceding it – dark and difficult.

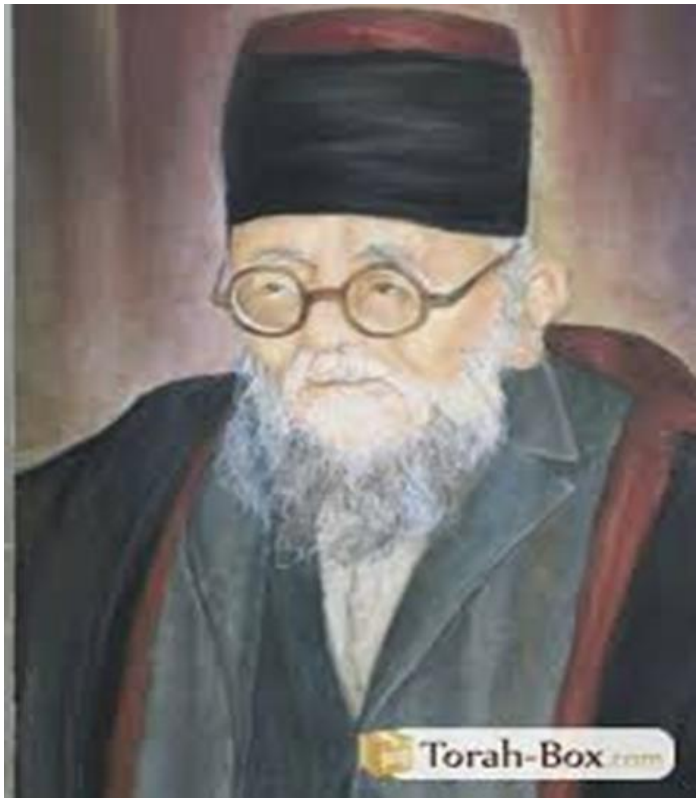
Rav Shimshon Pinkus zt'l explained that the Chanukah miracle was a symbolic kiss that G-d planted on the collective forehead of the Jews who remained loyal to Torah. It was a passionate sign that G-d was behind them and guiding them, that he was aware of their selfless efforts and desire to defend the honour of G-d.

The kiss was fleeting. Eight days is a mere blip in comparison to years of struggle and bloody battles. But that kiss gave them the encouragement to forge on and maintain their quest. It was enough to allow them to feel that G-d was with them even behind the veil of darkness and pain.

The holiday of Chanukah each year is a celebration and a re-experiencing of that kiss. That emotional connection must stay with us throughout the dark and cold moments of life. Its light must radiate well beyond the wicks and the oil. It's a fire that must burn within us and guide us throughout our lives. And that's how we consume the Greeks!

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

Rabbi Chaim Levy relates a story that took place in Eretz Yisroel in the 1930's. One day, in the Porat Yosef Yeshivah, a young student suddenly stopped coming to Yeshivah, for no apparent reason. The boys in the Yeshivah had no ideas where this boy had gone, and none of the Rebbeim knew either.



The Rosh Yeshivah, **Chacham Rav Ezra Attiya**, one of the greatest Torah scholars in the 20th in the Sephardic world, became very concerned and decided to pay a visit to the student's home.

When the Rosh Yeshivah spoke to the boy's father and asked where his son was, the father explained that their family business was a small grocery store and he needed the help of his son to be their delivery boy. The father explained that the business needed his son right now, and Yeshivah would have to wait.

The Chacham attempted to convince the father of the importance of Torah study and tried to find a solution to the issue they were

facing in the store, but it was to no avail. The father would not budge and allow his son to return to Yeshivah.

The next morning when the father went to the store, he was shocked to find Chacham Ezra Attiya, the Rosh Yeshivah himself, standing outside the grocery store in work clothes. When questioned by the father, Chacham Attiya replied, "Your son's learning is unquestionably more important than mine, and by not allowing him to go to Yeshivah, you are murdering the Gadol of the next generation! Therefore, I will be your delivery boy in his place. Just send your son back to Yeshivah, and I will do his work!"

The words hit the father like lightening, and he understood the seriousness of what the Rosh Yeshivah was saying. He agreed and sent his son back to Yeshivah and told the Chacham that he would work out getting a different delivery boy, and the Rosh Yeshivah should go back to learning as well.

This boy was very successful in his learning and turned out to be ***Chacham Rebbe Ovadia Yosef!***

Rabbi J. Gewirtz Migdal Ohr

When Yaakov was told that Yosef was still alive and was the ruler of Egypt, the world's superpower at that time, he didn't believe it. He was still mourning for his son Yosef until he saw the wagons Yosef sent along with those of Pharaoh.

Rashi tells us that Yosef was signalling to Yaakov that he remembered the lesson of the last portion of the Torah his father had taught him. It was upon seeing this that Yaakov was revived.

Those who understand that HaShem determines who will be rich or poor, and decrees if one will be brilliant or dull, are not impressed by the success one has in life. Seeing Yosef a wealthy prince, ruling over millions of people did not excite Yaakov. However, when he saw

that Yosef remained true to his faith, and kept the mitzvos as his father had taught him, he was filled to bursting with paternal pride. This is what true Jewish "nachas" is about. That our children understand what is truly important in life, and that they have become good people, not just "successful" ones.



וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ ***"And now, don't be sad."*** (45:5) Being broken-hearted is not the same as being sad. Sadness makes one lifeless and stone-like. On the contrary, a broken heart is at least responsive. **(Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi)** Sadness locks the gates of heaven. Prayer opens locked gates. And happiness has the strength to break through all barricades. **(The Baal Shem Tov)**

וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ וְאַל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה כִּי לְמִחְיָה שְׁלָחַנִי אֱלֹקִים לִפְנֵיכֶם ***"And now, do not be sad, nor be angry with yourselves that you sold me here, for it was to be a provider that G-d sent me ahead of you."*** (45:5)



Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz (founder of Artscroll) relates that he once entered the home of **Rav Moshe Feinstein zatz'l** just as the latter had finished arbitrating a dispute between two Jews (call them Reb Yoel and Reb Hillel). "Now apologize," Rav Moshe said to Reb Yoel. "I apologize for the aggravation that I caused you," Reb Yoel said. "Don't worry," Reb Hillel responded, "I obviously was

meant to suffer some heartache. It's alright." Rav Moshe listened attentively, and then said, "Tell him explicitly that you forgive him." "It's fine," Reb Hillel said. "I'm not upset with him. Everything worked out fine."

"That is not enough," said Rav Moshe. "You must tell him clearly and unequivocally that you forgive him." Realizing that Rav Moshe was insistent, Reb Hillel said, "I forgive you." Rav Moshe then wished Reb Yoel and Reb Hillel well and sent them on their way. "Why was the rosh yeshiva so insistent that Reb Hillel declare outright that he forgives Reb Yoel?"

Rabbi Zlotowitz asked Rav Moshe (referring to him in the reverential third person). Rav Moshe explained: "Chazal teach us that the Jews suffered the terrible loss of the ten martyrs (i.e., Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues) because Yosef's ten brothers sold him as a slave.

Rabbenu Bachya wonders about this and asks, 'Didn't the brothers ask forgiveness?' "The answer," said Rav Moshe, "is that Yosef responded, *'And now, do not be sad, nor be angry with yourselves that you sold me here, for it was to be a provider that G-d sent me ahead of you.*' It would seem from this that Yosef was not angry with his brothers; however, he never specifically said that he forgave them. Because of this, the sin still hung over their heads and they were punished for it through their descendants." (*Along the Maggid's Journey)*

"The key to Bitachon is to trust that Hashem has a plan for us, and to accept that plan with faith and gratitude." – Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

Rabbi Y Richtman - The Way You Say It…



The parsha begins with Yehudah and Yosef having a standoff. The pasuk describes how Yehuda approaches Yosef.

The Vilna Gaon finds a conversation between Yehuda and Yosef hidden in the *trop* of the first pesukim of the parsha. Yosef askes Yehuda , 'why are you stepping forward to protect Binyamin. Shouldn't that be the job of one of your older three brothers'?

The trup of the first three words in the parsha allude to this question. The trup is Kadma V'Azala then Munach Revi'i which can be translated as the fourth one got up and came forward. Yehudah responds that I am coming forward because my Olam Ha'ba is at stake. This is alluded to in the next few words, which have the trup munach zarka then munach segol. Zarka means I threw my munach, my place, in the segol which means the place of the am segulah Olam Haba. This is why I am confronting you and not my other brothers.



This letter was written by **R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler z"l** (1892-1953), rabbi in London, rosh kollel in Gateshead, England, and finally mashgiach ruchani in the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. Many of his teachings are collected in the mussar classic Michtav M'Eliyahu (translated into English as "Strive for Truth"). His wife, the subject of this letter, was a granddaughter of **R' Simcha Zissel Ziv z"l,** known as the **Alter of Kelm**, one of the leading students of **R' Yisrael Salanter z"l**. R' Dessler's son, to whom the letter was written, lived in Cleveland, Ohio.

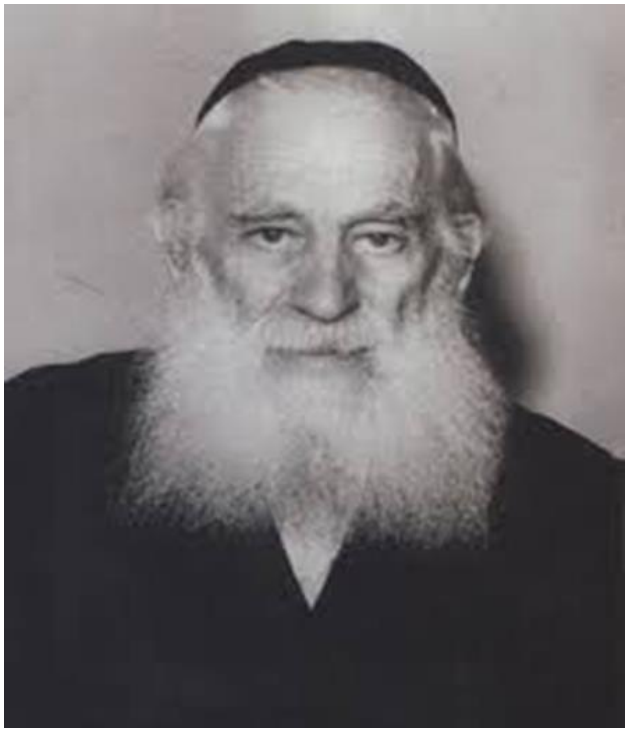
Motza'ei Shabbat Chanukah 5712 [1951], Bnei Brak



My son, the beloved of my soul, and the life-force of my spirit, R' Nachum Ze'ev, may his light shine, and my gentle daughter-in-law, Miriam, may she live, and my beloved grandchildren, may Hashem be with you! I am forced to write to you. It is difficult; almost impossible, but there is no choice. Hashem has given and Hashem has

taken away, may the name of Hashem be blessed [Iyov 1:21]. This is the situation. Today I finished sitting shiva. Thank G-d, I am strong and I am doing well. I hope you, too, are doing well. My dear children, we must strengthen ourselves. That is Hashem's will. The Holy One is just and His judgments are just. We no longer merited that mother a"h should live among us.

The last of the great people of Kelm has left us, the last of those holy souls whose root was from the traits of truth, modest ways, kindness, and sharing the burdens of others. As you know, the operation was simple, and the medical care outstanding. Before we decided how to go about the surgery, we received a telegram from Mrs. Sasson [of London], may she live, inviting both of us to convalesce at her home for two months and offering to send round-trip air tickets. I said to her [my wife] a"h that this is very timely and maybe we should both fly to London, have the surgery there and rest at the home of the Sasson family. Then she reminded me what I said last year: If the decree is to live, the surgery will succeed here also; if G-d forbid not, then we certainly must be in Eretz Yisrael. . . [At the funeral,]



I pleaded with the ***Ponovezher Rav [R' Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman z"l*** *(1886-1969)] to guard his health and ride in a taxi . . . but it did no good; he walked the entire way with everyone. Hashem showed us a miracle in that there was no rain. As long as the funeral went on, the sun shone. Even so, as soon as we left the gate of the cemetery, the rain resumed. . .* (Sefer Ha'zikaron L'ba'al Michtav M'Eliyahu)

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



Rebbe Leibele Eiger zt'l taught: A person can be woken up two ways: by shouting or by turning the lights on. Hashem uses these two methods too, when He wants to wake us up. On Rosh Hashanah, Hashem wakes us up by the sound of the shofar, and on Chanukah Hashem awakens us by the lights of the Chanukah menorah. Ahron HaCohen lit the menorah in the Mishkan and Rashi writes **להגיד שבחו של אהרן שלא שינה**. Rebbe Leibele Eiger explained that the Torah is praising Ahron that he didn't sleep. The lights of the menorah, and the message they imparted, always kept him awake. Although Chanukah has already passed, let us remain awake. The Chanukah lecht beamed rays of emunah. Let's continue to see Hashem's miracles and His constant hashgachah pratis.

During these few weeks we read the story of Yosef HaTzaddik. It's truly inspiring to learn about Yosef's pure, wholesome emunah; how he always remembered in all situations that everything happening to him is coming from Hashem. After revealing his identity to his brothers he said, *"Hurry and go up to my father. Tell him, 'So says your son Yosef, Hashem has made me the ruler over all of Mitzrayim. Come down to me…" (45:9).* He emphasized, **שימני אלקים**, that *"Hashem has made me the ruler…"* The brothers repeated Yosef's message to Yaakov, but not entirely. They said, *"Yosef is yet alive, and he is the ruler over all Mitzrayim"* (45:26). They didn't say that Yosef said, *"Hashem made me the ruler..."* The Torah tells us that Yaakov didn't believe them. Yaakov knew his son, Yosef, and he was certain that Yosef wouldn't say, "I became the ruler," with no

mention of Hashem. The brothers then relayed Yosef's entire message that Yosef acknowledged that Hashem made him the ruler, and only then did Yaakov Avinu's spirit soar. When he heard those words of faith, he believed that his son was yet alive.



The Torah states, "To his father, [Yosef] sent… ten donkeys, carrying the goods of Mitzrayim…" (45:23). Why did Yosef send specifically donkeys, and why exactly ten?

The Maharal explains that while donkeys work, they don't know what they're doing. The owner loads them with merchandise, but they are unaware of what they're carrying. Yosef was hinting to his father that he shouldn't be angry at his ten children for what happened and how they treated Yosef because they didn't know what they were doing when they sold him. Hashem told Avraham Avinu *"You shall know that your offspring will be in exile in a foreign land, and they will be enslaved and afflicted…" (Bereishis 15:14).* Yosef's going to Mitzrayim was the beginning of this process. When the brothers sold Yosef they had no idea what they were really doing.

The Marahal writes, "Yosef was hinting to his father that he shouldn't punish his children for selling him, because it was a decree from heaven… When the shevatim sold him, they were similar to a loaded donkey that doesn't know why it carries loads. Likewise, when the shevatim sold Yosef, they didn't know what they were doing… Hakadosh Baruch Hu decreed that they should go down to Mitzrayim… They intended to sell Yosef because of their hatred towards him. Nevertheless, the true purpose was to bring Yaakov to Mitzrayim…"

Perhaps the strongest exclamation of Yosef's faith is seen in the words that Yosef told his brothers: **ועתם לא אתם שלחתם אתי הנה כי האלקים** ***"and now, it wasn't you who sent me here. It was Hashem…"*** (45:8).

(The Shem MiShmuel said that a Yid should repeat those words every day.) Yosef acknowledged that his brothers weren't guilty for selling him to Mitzrayim because even that was from Hashem, and for a good purpose.

Why I Matter

כִּי־אֵיךְ אֶֽעֱלֶה אֶל־אָבִי וְהַנַּ֖עַר אֵינֶ֣נּוּ אִתִּ֑י ***How shall I go up to my father, and the lad is not with me?"*** (44:34)

This is a question that every Jewish parent must ask themselves. How can I go up after my 120 years to our Father in Heaven if I have not made sure that my children will follow after me on the Jewish path? (Gedolei Chasidim)

Every Jew must ask himself: How can I go up to my Father in heaven "and the lad is not with me" - without bringing the days of my youth? A person must be especially vigilant that he does not squander away his younger years. (Ma'ayana Shel Torah)

וְעַתָּ֗ה לֹא־אַתֶּם֙ שְׁלַחְתֶּ֣ם אֹתִ֔י הֵ֖נָּה כִּ֣י הָאֱלֹקִ֑ים וַיְשִׂימֵ֨נִי֙ לְאָ֣ב לְפַרְעֹ֔ה וּלְאָד֖וֹן לְכָל־בֵּיתֹ֑ו וּמֹשֵׁ֕ל בְּכָל־אֶ֖רֶץ מִצְרָֽיִם ***"So now it was not you that sent me here, but the Almighty, and he made me a father to Pharoh and a master over all of his house and ruler over all of the land of Egypt."*** *(45:8)*

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz notes the nature of many people is that when they do an act of kindness, they don't want to receive anything in return. This isn't necessarily because they want to do kindness; the opposite may be true. They want others to feel indebted to them

forever; therefore, they don't want anything in return which would allow the other person to feel that he has already repaid the debt. The obligation to do kindness requires that when we do someone a favour, we allow them to do something for us in return. In this manner, we free the other person from this debt of gratitude. Similarly, when one wrongs us, there is a tendency to want such person to feel guilty forever. This gives us a feeling of being "one up" and the other person a feeling of being "one down."



However, kindness requires that we allow a person to make amends. Yoseph wanted to do his brothers an act of kindness so that they would not feel guilty for what they had done to him. Therefore, he said to them that it was Hashem, not them, who had sent him to Egypt. When someone asks us for forgiveness, we should be sensitive to his / her feelings of guilt and regret and try to soften their pain.

Life Lessons: speak from the bottom of your heart, and make yourself heard!! - Benjamin A Rose

When Yehuda decides to argue with the Egyptian viceroy (Yosef) to not take Binyomin as a slave, the Torah states:

"And Yehuda approached Yosef and he said, 'Please my master, allow your servant to speak in the ears of my master and do not become angry at your servant for you are like Pharaoh" *(44:18)*

Yehuda was under the impression that this Egyptian leader (Yosef) did not understand Hebrew since he used an interpreter. Why then did Yehudah ask to speak in his ears?

The late Rosh Yeshiva of Brisk in yerushalyim, **Rabbi Yosef Dov Soleveichik**, explained this in two ways.

The first explanation: even though Yehudah thought Yosef did not understand the language he was speaking, he wanted him to hear the depth of feeling behind his words. Even if one does not speak the language, sincerity will come through. "Words that come from a person's heart enter the heart of the listener."

This happened to **the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan**, while speaking to a high government official in Russia to remove a harmful decree against the Jewish people. Even before the interpreter translated the Chofetz Chaim's words from Yiddish, the listener said that no translation was necessary. He understood the language of feeling that permeated each word that came from a pure heart.

Rabbi Soloveichik's second insight: when you try to influence someone, it is imperative that he be open to what you have to say. If a person is close-minded and has made up his mind not to pay attention to you, nothing you say will influence him. You can give all kinds of rational arguments for your position, but the person will be as if deaf. Therefore, yehudah asked Yosef to at least give him a fair hearing. "Keep your ears open to the possibility that what I will say has merit."

These two ideas are important to keep in mind when trying to impact someone. Speak with sincerity. When you speak from the bottom of your heart, your words have tremendous force and power. Secondly, make certain that the other person is open to hearing what you have to say. For instance, you might start by saying, "If what I say makes sense, are you willing to change your mind?"

Good manners mean more than learning. ~ Tanna Deve Eliyahu R.

Living Jewish - The Kohen Pals



Rabbi Shimon Freundlich, the Rebbe's 'Shliach' (emissary) in Beijing China, and his wife run a successful and very busy Chabad House catering to the Jews that live, visit or come to do business there.

In 2007, while on a visit to New York, he was invited to be the personal guest of honour at the Tish (public meal) of the Rebbe of Satmar in the Williamsburg district of Brooklyn. Satmar is a very large, wealthy, and influential group of Chasidim that was for a long time at odds with Chabad for various reasons. Nevertheless, because of the many Satmar Chasidim that had benefited from the Beijing Chabad House, the invitation was extended. Hundreds of Satmar Chasidim were present as their Rebbe whispered something to one of his assistants, whereupon the man pounded on the table and announced: "The Rebbe requests that 'the Lubavitcher' guest should speak."

Rabbi Freundlich asked permission to tell a story, something that had recently occurred in his Chabad House. The Rebbe nodded yes and he began.

"A lot of people come to visit our Chabad House for Shabbat, as you know. Well, one Shabbat evening a few months ago, and older man, maybe about eighty years old, who didn't look very religious, appeared in the company of a younger man in his forties. The old fellow found a seat and just minutes after we began the prayers he put his face in his hands and began to cry. He kept it up for almost an hour; he would calm down for a few minutes, dry his eyes and blow his nose and then begin again.

I quietly approached him and asked him if everything was all right. He told me not to worry. After the prayers he and his friend joined us all for the Shabbat evening meal. "There were over fifty people there. I sat him next to me and after he calmed down he asked if he could speak. He wanted to explain the reason for his weeping. I stood, and after only a few words I introduced him. He cleared his throat and began:

"'My name is Sam Katz (pseudonym). The reason that I want to speak now is because I became very emotional this evening and I want to tell you about it. The last time I was in a Synagogue was over sixty years ago in Poland. I was a young man then when the Germans came and took the entire Jewish population of my city to Buchenwald. I was there for four years and in that time I lost everyone; my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, my friends; all killed, some of them before my eyes. But I survived and when the war ended, I spent a few years searching for family or friends with no results. Finally, I moved to Australia.

I was totally alone and angry at G-d. I managed to succeed at business and make a lot of money, and to marry and have children. But my wounds and anger were so deep that I swore to never go into a Synagogue or have anything to do with Judaism again. Nothing! "But then just yesterday I came to China with my friend, and he said we should visit the Chabad House.

At first, I didn't want to come of course, but he said that he'd been here before and the food is good and anyway there was no better alternative, so I shrugged and agreed. But as soon as the prayers began everything suddenly came back to me. I remembered how good it is to be a Jew; how proud and happy my father and mother were. Suddenly it was as if a wall of ice just melted. That's why I cried. I thought I'd never forgive G-d again, but now I feel like a small child that just wants to be home. All thanks to this Chabad House and the

Rabbi here.' The crowd clapped, wiped tears from their eyes and congratulated him for the beautiful story.

A woman stood up and asked: "Tell me Mr. Katz. If you were in Buchenwald until the end, maybe you knew my father. His name is Naftali Kogen (pseudonym); he also was in Buchenwald." Mr. Katz's jaw dropped, his eyes bolted open and he held his head in wonder "Naftali Kogen!? What? Naftali is still alive?! Why we were the only two Kohanim in the camp and we were always together. We risked our lives for each other, and not just once. We were like brothers! Oy! Naftali!

There was such total confusion in those days; everything was upside down. We were put in different recovery camps and got separated. I searched for him for a long time after the war but finally I gave up. I thought he was dead. Now you say he is alive and you are his daughter! It's a miracle!!" Rabbi Freundlich finished his story by saying that after Shabbat a meeting was arranged between the two old friends.

At that point, much to everyone's surprise, a head of a Yeshiva in the Satmar community by the name of Rav Yaakov Kaplan (pseudonym) who had listened intently to the story called out! He raised himself in his seat a bit and fell back, his face pale as chalk and his eyes staring wildly at the ceiling. The others were startled and those seated near him rose to help him, but he came to himself in just seconds. He stood up to his full height and yelled aloud to all those present, "Tell them that Yaakov is still alive!" In the midst of an emotional hurricane, he continued to call out: "There weren't just two Kohanim in Buchenwald, there were three! Sam Katz, Naftali Kogan and me too!" He was obviously experiencing some sort of emotional hurricane. "There weren't just two Kohanim in Buchenwald." He continued, "There were three; Sam Katz, Naftali and …. Me!



We stuck together like brothers…. more than brothers. But just a few days before the end of the war I was moved to another camp. They probably thought I was dead, and I almost was, and I was sure that they were. I never considered it possible that they could still be alive even now!" Needless to say, soon after this story there was another joyous reunion.

Why Good People Suffer



David HaMelech said, **אפתח בכינור חידתי** ***"I will begin to tell my riddle with my harp …"*** (Tehillim 49:5) but the chapter doesn't tell any riddles.

Reb Yohonoson Eibshitz zt'l said that the riddle is why do good people suffer? What is the purpose of pain and distress? The answer is **בכינור**. The decibel of a harp (and all other string instruments) is dependent on how strong one pulls on the strings. Similarly, the hardships we go through tugs us, ripen us, and makes us into better people.

Two Yidden once came to **Reb Avraham HaMalach zt'l,** each had his individual problem. One of them had a bad wife that he wanted to divorce. The other had a failing business and many people were constantly nudging him to pay up his debts. He wanted to sell his

business and with the money, pay up all his debts. Reb Avraham HaMalach told both of them to leave matters as they were. This one shouldn't divorce his wife, and the other one shouldn't sell his business. A month later, one of those men returned to Reb Avraham HaMalach and said, "Please daven for my friend – the one with the failing business – he suddenly became very ill." "Tell me," Reb Avraham HaMalach asked, "what did he do with his business? Did he keep it, like I advised him?" "No, he sold it and paid off his debts."

"When you were here a month ago, I saw that both of you were destined to die. But since you had a bad wife, and he had a failing business, you were permitted to continue living. Because the Gemara says, "one who has a bad wife… his life isn't a life' (Beitzah 32). Chazal also say, 'A pauper is compared to the dead' (Nedarim 64). Your lives were a form of death and that redeemed you from dying a literal death. "You listened to my advice; you stayed with your wife. You will continue living. But your friend sold his business and freed himself from his financial hardships, so he doesn't have that protection anymore. What can I do for him now?" We learn from this story to be satisfied with our lot because the hardships that we go through may be saving us from far graver situations.

Seeking Buyers for The Torah

The holy tzadik, **Yakov Yosef of Polohnye** was one of the closest talmidim of the **Baal Shem Tov**. He composed a sefer of chassidut titled the Toldos Yakov Yosef and travelled from one town to another selling his new sefer. Arriving in a certain town, he was greatly disappointed for no one wanted to purchase his sefer. The preacher of the town comforted him saying, "Even the first author ever went around selling his sefer unable to find an interested customer." "Who was that?" asked the tzadik. "Hashem!" answered the preacher.

Bitachon



A father of fifteen children was celebrating the final sheva brachos of his youngest child. That is a very happy moment. It isn't easy to marry off children; the expenses are enormous. But with Hashem's help, he finished this phase of life. He stood up to speak, and his words shocked all the guests. He said, "My wife and I brought all of our fifteen children to the chuppah, and it was all without Hashem's help."

Everyone present was horrified. The children were afraid that their father lost his mind. How could he say such a thing? Their father smiled and explained, "Hashem didn't help me because Hashem did everything!

A Yid believes that Hashem does everything. Also when it comes to weddings, Hashem does every step, from who one chooses to marry, to covering all the expenses, and everything in between" send will Hashem, **ה' אלקי השמים ... הוא ישלח מלאכו לפניך**, Eliezer told Avraham His malach to choose the shiduch (Bereishis 24:7).

With these words, Avraham revealed to Eliezer our belief that the shiduch is entirely in Hashem's hands. The malach arranges it, and everything is exactly as Hashem decreed. However, when Eliezer spoke with Lavan and Besuel, Eliezer realized that these resha'im won't understand this high level of emunah. So he told them that Avraham said, **ה' ישלח מלאכו אתך** , Hashem will send his malach with you" (24:40). **אתך** implies that people do their share, and Hashem helps them succeed. This was the limit of emunah that they could grasp, but the truth is that Hashem does absolutely everything.

Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski

וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי "Then Judah approached him and said, *'If you please, my lord, may your servant speak a word in my lord's ears' "* *(44:18).*



What did Judah intend to do? Judah indicated that he wished to speak very softly, virtually whispering "a word in my lord's ears." What was the purpose of that? Furthermore, why does the Torah bother to tell something that does not appear significant?

The Torah is coming to teach a lesson in communications: If what you have to say really has merit, speaking softly and gently will enable you to be heard. Shouting is a giveaway that your argument is weak; the other person will tune you out and just think of his rebuttal. King Solomon says, "The gentle words of the wise are heard above the shouts of a king over fools" (Ecclesiastes 9:17). A soft voice can drown out a shout. Judah believed that his argument for the release of Benjamin was very convincing. In order to impress Joseph that what he was about to say was valid, Judah said, "I am going to say it to you softly."

"There is no greater attribute than displaying love for Hashem, for all Avodas Hashem comes from this. There is no comparison between one who serves Hashem out of love for Him, and one who serves Him out of fear alone.

Loving Hashem can be accomplished with thoughts alone and is easy to fulfil – even if done intermittently." ~ Pele Yoetz.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman - Teshuvah

People think that teshuvah is about mourning past evil deeds. Chazal tell us teshuvah is about focusing on the present. As Chazal say **ועתה**, ***"now,"*** refers to *teshuvah*. This is because teshuvah means to improve one's ways, so the primary focus is the present and the future, and not the past.

Does bemoaning the past help you refrain from repeating bad deeds? Generally, focusing on errors of the past will throw you into depression, and then you will probably commit those bad deeds again. Therefore, an ideal approach to teshuvah is to focus on what you can do to improve the present and the future. Chazal say, **הרהורי מעבירה עבירה קשין** . **The Chazon Ish** explained, "Focusing on the aveiros of your past is worse than the actual aveiros that you committed." Similarly, tzaddikim taught: More than the *aveirah*, itself, the yetzer hara wants the sadness that comes after the *aveirah*.

Yosef told his brothers **ועתה אל תעצבו ואל יחר בעיניכם כי מכרתם אתי הנה** 45:5 ***"and now, don't be sad, and don't let this anger you, that you sold me here…"***

The Shinover Rav *zt'l* explains that Yosef told them, "Don't dwell on your sin – that you sold me. Rather, **ועתה** – think about the present, **ואל תעצבו**, and then you won't be sad." A bachur was once very upset because of the aveiros he committed, and he spoke with the Lev **Simchah (of Gur) zt'l** about it. The Lev Simchah told him that according to the Ramban's commentary, Yaakov never asked Yosef how he got to Mitzrayim, and Yosef never told him about it. This means Yaakov Avinu never found out that it was his children who sold Yosef to Mitzrayim. This is because it isn't important to think about the past. What was, was. The focus should be on improving the future. The Lev Simchah advised the bachur to ignore the past, because the path of teshuvah is **ועתה**, to make the present and the future better.

The Beis Aharon *zt'l* once rebuked his son, and told him to be happy. The son asked, "Why do you rebuke me specifically about being happy? There are so many other things that I do wrong?"



The Beis Aharon replied, "All other *aveiros* and bad *middos*, you know that they are bad and you will eventually do teshuvah on them. I don't have to tell you about those *aveiros*. But people don't recognize how severe *atzvus* is. Therefore, I must rebuke you for feeling sad."

The Beis Aharon said, "*Atzvus* isn't an *aveirah*, but it pulls people down more than the greatest *aveirah*.

Simchah raises a person higher than the greatest mitzvah."

Yosef Davened for Kefitzas Haderech

וישלח את אחיו וילכו ויאמר אלהם אל תרגזו בדרך: ויעלו ממצרים ויבאו ארץ כנען אל יעקב אביהם מה כד-כה

Why is the passuk written in this order: first "vayelechu, and they went" and then "and he said to them." If they had already gone how could he say anything to them? **Harav Mordechai Hakohen of Tzefas** explained: Yosef did not say his words "lahem", to them, but rather "aleihem" – about them. He davened to HaKadosh Baruch Hu – after they left – that their way should be shortened so that the good news that he was alive and a king in Egypt should reach his father quickly. This would mean that his father's mourning state,

which he had been in since Yosef was sold by his brothers – could come to an end sooner.

This tefillah was accepted, as we learn from the two pesukim right next to each other: "And they ascended from Egypt" and immediately "and they came…to Yaakov their father." This tefillah of Yosef is alluded to in the passuk as **אל תרגזו בדרך** – is numerically equivalent to **א-ל אלקים הוי"ה יקצר לכם זה הדרך** [*Sifsei Kohein]*

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - A Second Hearing



R' Eliezer Papo instructs that when someone relates words of Torah to you that you know, make it seem as if you don't know it. One should let the other person feel as if he told him great words of Torah that he never heard before.

The Pasuk says **מסיר אזנו משמע תורה גם תפלתו תועבה**, *if one turns his ear from hearing the Torah, his Tefila, too, will be considered an abomination.* **The Gra** is bothered why it says **משמע**, from hearing Torah, and not **מסיר פיו מללמוד תורה** , turning away one's mouth from learning Torah.

It is the way of people that when they hear something they already heard not to listen again. This is how we can explain the Pasuk: **מסיר אזנו משמע תורה** —one turns his ear from hearing Torah because he heard it already (which is the case many times when someone is relating a short *vort*), **גם תפלתו תועבה** —the same Tefila he davens thrice daily that Hashem heard already will be considered an abomination.



R' Yitzchak Elchanan Spector (1817-1896), who was a dayan, was once sitting in Beis Din when there was a knock on the door. The person told R' Spector that a man named Moshe, whom R' Spector worked hard to have him freed from the army, was released from the army. This was exciting news because entering the army in those days meant the person didn't exit as a religious Jew (besides that it put one's life in danger). R' Spector thanked the bearer of the news profusely for relating this news to him.

A few minutes later, another person knocked on the door to relate the same news, not knowing that it was just told. R' Spector thanked this second person immensely just like he did with the first person. The same scene repeated itself with the many more people who came to relate the same news to him. The same heartfelt thank you was given. R' Spector made each person feel that he was the one that made him happy with the good news.

Rav Shimon Schwab - Why Does Yaakov Need Egyptian Wine?

"עֲשָׂרָה חֲמֹרִים נִשְׂאִים מִטּוּב מִצְרָיִם; Ten donkeys laden with the best Mitzrayim has to offer." (Vayigash 45:23) Rashi says this refers to old wine that old people are happy with.**שדעת זקנים נוחה הימנו.**

Rav Shimon Schwab asks, "Yaakov was a tzaddik and didn't need anything from Olam HaZeh. Was good wine going to make Yaakov happy? Also was wine the best thing Mitzrayim had?"

Rav Schwab answers with another question. "How could Yosef send wine from Mitzrayim that was assur because it was Stam Yeinam

(Yayin Nesech), and we know the Avos kept all the mitzvos even DRabanan? We must conclude from here that in Mitzrayim they did not have a practice of pouring wine before their gods. Because their wine was clean from any traces of Avodah Zara, Yosef calls the wine the best Mitzrayim has to offer. This is why the 'Zakein' which means, not old, but someone who learns Torah, enjoys it."

What was Yaakov's Mistake? by Benjamin A Rose



In this week's Parsha, Yaakov, the monotheist, meets Pharoh, the king of Egypt and the most powerful man in the world. What could they have discussed? The meaning of life? The famine? They don't.

Instead, the Torah records that meeting as having to do with something quite mundane. Age. Yet that discussion had severe ramifications for Yaakov Avinu.

The Torah relates how Yoseph presents his father to Pharoh. Bereishis 47: 9-10: "Pharoh asked Yaakov,'How old are you?' Jacob answered, 'the years of my sojourns are one hundred thirty; few and bad ones; they have not reached the days of my forefathers in their sojourns.' "

There is a Midrash that notes the bitterness of Yaakov's response and makes an amazing calculation. Yaakov lived to the age of 147. His father lived 'till 180. There is a difference of 33 years. Yaakov, explains the Midrash, lost 33 years of his life due to the 33 words that were used as he cursed his life's struggles.

The Midrash needs explanation. In the Torah's version of the story, Yaakov did not use 33 words to curse his fate. That number is only

arrived at if the original question "How old are you," including the words "and Pharoh asked Yaakov," are also counted. I can understand that Yaakov was punished for the words that he spoke: after all, he was saved from his brother Esau, his daughter Dinah was returned to him, and he did leave Lavan's home a wealthy man. But why should Yaakov be punished for a question posed to him, even if the response was improper? Why count the words that Pharoh used, and even more difficult, why count the words, "Pharoh asked Yaakov," which are obviously the Torah's addition? At most, Yaakov should only be punished for the 25 words that he actually used.

In order to understand the Midrash one must understand diplomacy. **Ramban** notes: World leaders do not normally greet each other with mundane questions such as, "how old are you?" Yet those are the only recorded words of the conversation that ensued between Yaakov and Pharoh. "Obviously," explains the Ramban, "Yaakov looked so terrible and so aged that Pharoh could not comprehend. He therefore dispensed with diplomatic etiquette and asked the discourteous query. Yaakov's response explained why his appearance overbore his numeric age.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt'l the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva, explains why the Midrash is upset with Yaakov. Had Yaakov worn his suffering with more cheer, on the inside, he would not have looked as old as he did. Pharoh would not have been astonished and would never have asked the undiplomatic question, "how old are you?" Yaakov was punished for prompting a query that resulted in open discontent of the fate he endured. And for that unfortunate repartee, an entire portion of the Torah was added, and Yaakov lost 33 years of his life.

The Torah teaches us a great lesson. No matter what life serves you, do not let the experience dwindle your spirit. One must never let his pain get to him in a way that it gets to someone else. Especially when you represent Hashem's word.

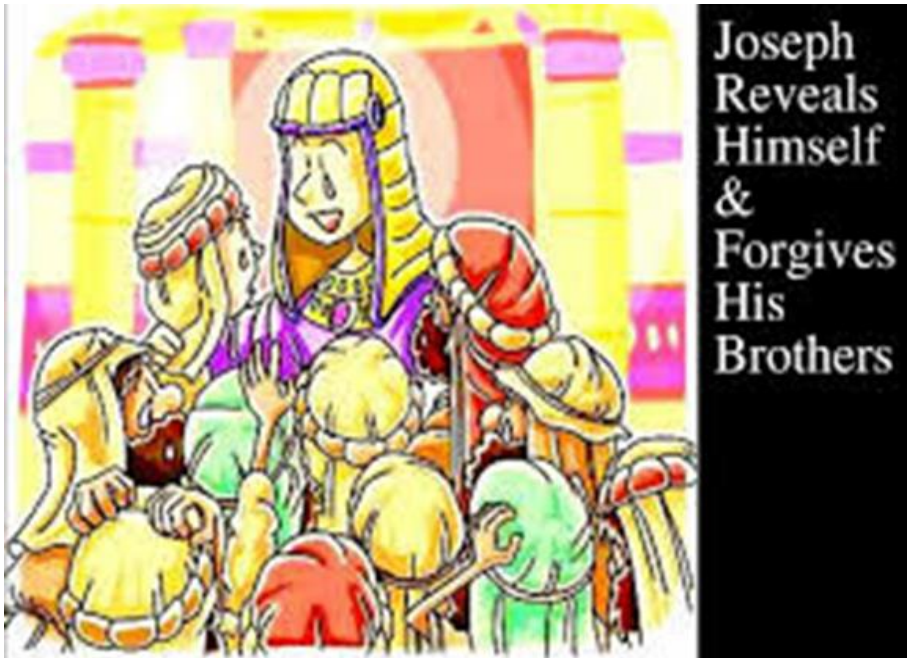
Vechol Maaminim - Life in the Merit of 90 Amens

ויאמרו החיתנו נמצא חן בעיני אדני (מז כה)



The Chida cites the mekubal **Rabi Eliezer Nachman Puah**, a talmid of the **Rema MiPano**: A woman heard from a mazik,(someone harmful) sent to harm her son that he could not fulfil his mission to harm the boy because she was careful to answer 90 amens that day. The record keepers cite an allusion to this concept from this passuk: "Vayomru hecheyisanu" – you have kept us alive in the merit of **נמצא** which are the letters of **צ אמן** - 90 amens. *Midbar Kedmos, Ma'areches 1:33*

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld-*Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*



At the moment that Yoseph was about to announce who he was and reveal himself to his brothers. The Torah just tells us one point before that. ***הוֹצִיאוּ כָל־אִישׁ מֵֽעָלָי- remove everybody, וְלֹא־עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ בְּהִתְוַדַּע יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו and there was nobody there when he revealed himself to his brothers.*** *45:1*

Can you imagine the vice President of the most powerful nation in the world? He does not stand there alone. He has a host of soldiers and an army of generals and security guards protecting him. He

always has other government officials with him. And he says, *"I want everyone to leave, nobody is to remain."*

The Medrash Tanchuma writes **סַכָּנָה גדולה ירד יוסף** - Yoseph put himself in tremendous danger by giving this instruction. His brothers could have theoretically killed him, as there was nobody else there. They could have done whatever they wanted with him. Says the Medrash, **מוטב שאהרג ולא אביש את אחי בפני המצרים**... Yoseph Haztaddik says , *"I would rather be killed, than to embarrass all my brothers in front of all the Egyptians."* And it goes further than this. Asks the **Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh**, for twenty-two years , Yoseph Haztaddik was separated from his father. Why couldn't he send a letter, or a message to his father saying that he is ok, he is fine. Why make him worry?

The Ohr Hachaim answers, because if he would have sent that letter, then it would have revealed what his brothers did to him. And that, he was not prepared to do. Says the Medrash even further, Yaakov had already been in Mitzrayim for seventeen years, and he never went to visit him even once. Why? Because he was worried that if he did so, there might be nobody there and his father could say, "now that we are alone, tell me what really happened. How did you get here and become the Viceroy?" He would have to reveal all, and this would cause pain and embarrassment to his brothers.

Look how far Yoseph went to ensure that his own brothers, (regardless of what they did to him and caused him for all these years,) wouldn't get embarrassed through him.

There was a boy in the Chabiner Yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel and he was going through a difficult time. One of his Rabbeim said, "you know what, I want to learn with you. Let's learn b'chavrusa. Come to my house Friday night at 8.30pm and we will learn together." This bochur was so excited. His Rebbe was such a choshive Yid. This was such an incredible opportunity to get such individual attention.

Amazing! just him and the Rebbe. He goes over regularly, and it is the highlight of his week.

One week, he is eating a little bit further away from the Rebbe's house and he didn't realise the time. He reckoned that it would be about 9.30pm before he got to him. It was much later than normal, but he was sure that he will still be up. His Rebbe normally has talmidim coming over and people asking him shaalos.



He starts walking and then running as it was raining. As he gets to the door, he is wet and exhausted. And he does what was second nature to him, and he pressed the doorbell! Ding Dong! He thinks Oh my gosh, it is Shabbos, how could I have just done that. He decides to run away for ten minutes and come back; they then won't realise that it was me. He decides that he can't do that because they have probably seen him. So he waits a few minutes and nobody answers the door. That's weird, he knocks, no answer. There is no way that they are sleeping. Its impossible, maybe he went to a Sholom Zocher. He keeps knocking. Fifteen minutes later the Rebbe opens the door. And the talmid gets the shock of his life. His Rebbe is in his pyjamas with a bath robe over them! He said, "I'm so sorry it took me so long to get to the door. I didn't hear the knocking. I was upstairs having a rest."

This bachur knew better than that. There is no way, the Rebbe never ever goes for a rest on a Friday night in his PJ's. It doesn't make sense. And he thought to himself, and he realised what had just occurred. He checked with one of the family members, and this is what transpired- The Rebbe said, "don't answer the door, he is going to be embarrassed. Let's all go upstairs and pretend that we are having a rest. I will eventually come downstairs, and he will not be embarrassed if he realises that nobody heard him."

See what lengths a person goes through to try to ensure that someone isn't embarrassed by their actions. This is an incredible message for us. – ***Have a wonderful שבת!***

Pearls and Insights on Birchas Hamazon -Bris V'Torah in a Dream



This is a unique and remarkable story that took place many years ago, and was recently publicized following the passing of one of the notable personalities involved, **Harav Eliezer Dovid Friedman, zt"l**. The story was heard from Harav Nachum Sheinin, shlita, Av Bais Din of Ashdod. In 5685 (1925), the mussar giant **Harav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zt"l**, moved from the Lithuanian town of Slabodka, after which he became known as the "Alter of Slabodka" and where he had established the renowned Yeshivas Knesses Yisrael, to Eretz Yisrael. He travelled together with many students from the yeshivah with the goal of establishing a branch in the Holy Land that would be a continuation of the yeshivah he had left behind in Lithuania.

The Alter, who was already quite elderly at the time, was infused with youthful vigour as he worked to re-establish his yeshviah in Chevron. Dozens of the bnei yeshivah who came with him joined the yeshivah, along with residents of the new yishuv in Eretz Yisrael. One of the close talmidim who came with the alter was **Harav Menachem Mendel Sheinin, zt"l**, the father of Harav Nachum Sheinin, shlita.

This story began when Reb Menachem Mendel entered the home of the Alter one day, just as the sage finished eating from the fruits of the Shivas Haminim with which Eretz Yisrael his blessed. He was about to make a Brachah Me'ein Shalosh, the brachah acharonah for these fruits. As a long-time talmid, Reb Menachem Mendel could appreciate this rare opportunity. He stood quietly at the door to the room, observing the Alter's face, and waited with anticipation to hear the brachah.

The Alter recited the brachah slowly, and with emphasis, as he always did. His pleasant voice and refined expression gave significance to every word he uttered. Reb Menachem Mendel listened, and suddenly tensed when to his surprised he heard the Alter change the regular nusach. He added the words "al bris v'Torah shenasata lanu." This was very surprising to Reb Mendel, and as soon as the Alter finished the brachah, he approached and expressed his surprise. Doesn't the nusach we say appear in the pesukim? he asked. Why was the Alter not using the regular nusach?


מחזור ויטרי

לרבינו שמחה

The Alter listened to the question and replied briefly: "This nusach has an early source, the Machzor Vitri, and I say it based on that." He added, "You can also do so, but I ask you, do not instruct others to do so."

Many years passed. The Alter passed away, and Reb Mendel married and established a family, following the path of his rebbi and mentor, the Alter of Slabodka. Among the things he continued to do in his home was reciting the Brachah Me'ein Shalosh with the words "bris v'Torah." His son also continued this tradition, until the day when Reb Nachum, Reb Menachem Mendel's son, was asked to give a shiur on the

halachos of brachos in a shul near where he lived, to an audience of Torah scholars. Reb Nachum delivered the shiur on the subject of Birchas Me'ein Shalosh, and he also mentioned the above story. He described what he had heard from his father, who saw the Alter mentioning Bris V'Torah in the Brachah Me'ein Shalosh, according to the Machzor Vitri. He also stressed that the Alter permitted his father to do this, but not to instruct others to do it.

A few days later, a few avreichim approach Reb Nachum with determined expressions on their faces: "We looked in the Machzor Vitri and did not see anywhere that he instructs saying Bris V'Torah.'" Reb Nachum was taken aback. It had been many years since he had begun sharing this story with many audiences, and no one had ever questioned it. He had also relied on what his father had said, and it never entered his mind to actually go look in the Machzor Vitri.

He immediately took the Machzor Vitri from his shelf and began to peruse it in search of these words. Indeed, these avreichim were right – there was nothing in the Machzor. This caused Reb Nachum a lot of distress. Was it possible that for decades, he had been making the brachah incorrectly? Was it possible that his father had made a mistake? Even more than that, could the Alter have erred? Or perhaps there was a mistake in the details of the story…

Distraught, he tried to speak to a number of people who he knew to be very proficient and knowledgeable, and asked them to clarify the matter, but they came up with nothing.

Late one night, Reb Nachum went to sleep very preoccupied with this mystery. And then he had a dream…His father, Reb Menachem Mendel appeared to him and said: "I saw that you are very distressed over not finding my words in the Machzor Vitri…You should know that the words of the Alter are absolutely right, and if you want to know where the Machzor Vitri wrote it, then contact this person and he will show you…"

Reb Menachem Mendel pointed to a venerable looking Yid standing beside him, and then disappeared in the dream. Reb Nachum knew that Yid very well. It was his neighbour at the time, Harav Eliezer Dovid Friedman, one of the eminent rabbanim of London, who was living on Rashi Street in Bnei Brak at the time, right near Reb Nachum's home.

Reb Nachum hurried to Rav Eliezer Dovid's house, told him about the dream, and asked him if, as the dream had related, if he knew where in the Machzor Vitri those words appeared. Reb Eliezer Dovid was very moved to hear about the dream, and exclaimed, "Indeed, a week ago, I saw the words of the Machzor Vitri for the first time, and although it is not in the normal place - in Hilchos Brachos – it is brought down in Hilchos Leil HaSeder (59).

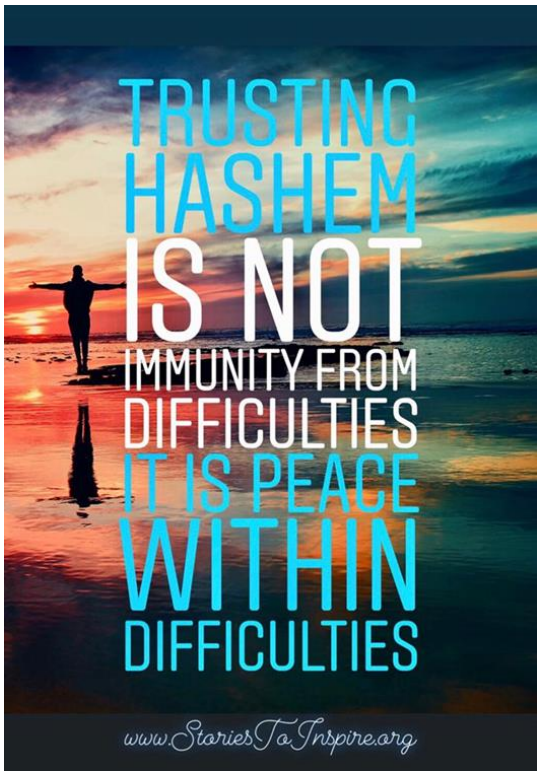


The Machzor Vitri there brings down the words of the Brachah Me'ein Shalosh recited after drinking the four cups of wine: "Baruch Atah Hashem….Al hagefen v'al pri hagefen v'al tenuvas hasadeh, v'al eretz chemdah tovah urechavah …le'echol mipiryah velisboa mituvah ulehodos Lecha aleha v'al bris v'Torah shenasata lanu."

Vayomer Eliyahu By Rabbi Eli Meyer Smith Shlit"a

The Suffering Itself Is the Source of The Salvation!

The verse states (Tehilim 118:21) אוֹדְךָ כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי וַתְּהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה ***"I shall thank You because You pained me, and You were my salvation."*** **The Be'er Mayim Chaim** states: It seems that Dovid Hamelech is thanking Hashem for saving him from his pain. However, from the actual words of the verse it appears that he is, in fact, thanking Hashem for the pain itself, as well as for the salvation. He explains by saying that Hashem often sends something a person's way that seems bad but is actually for the person's ultimate benefit.



Only after events have run their full course does it become clear that everything that seemed bad was actually good. Once that happens, it is obvious that all that Hashem does is with an exacting reason, and all that happens is for our benefit. While one is suffering, he may wish for his suffering to end; however, after it is over, he sees that every part of his pain was for his ultimate benefit. The verse thus states that Dovid thanked Hashem both for the salvation and for the suffering itself. After he saw how everything was for his benefit, and he saw that Hashem was his salvation, he understood that then pain was actually part of the salvation. He therefore expressed his thanks to Hashem for the pain.

The Be'er Mayim Chaim adds that the same thing happened to Yaakov Avinu. He mourned his son Yosef for 22 years and was greatly pained by what happened to him. However, he later understood that the great blow of losing Yosef was actually a blessing in disguise, as Yosef was put in place as the ruler of the land of Egypt and was there to support and sustain his family during the years of famine.

The Kedushas Levi similarly explains that this is why Yosef sent wagons to Yaakov (Bereishis 45:27). He says that Yosef was hinting to Yaakov that he should not be worried about going into exile, as the exile will be the source of the redemption.

The wheels of the wagons symbolized that Hashem is constantly turning the world and leading events to eventually lead to great salvation. Thus, going down to Egypt, which seemed like a bad thing, was actually part of the chain of events Hashem was orchestrating that would ultimately lead to a great redemption. We can see that all of the commentators we have quoted all base their words on the same fundamental concept.

The darkness is the source of the light and through darkness will ultimately emerge light. Hashem is with us in the darkness, and he will use it to create the great light of redemption that will shine down upon us.

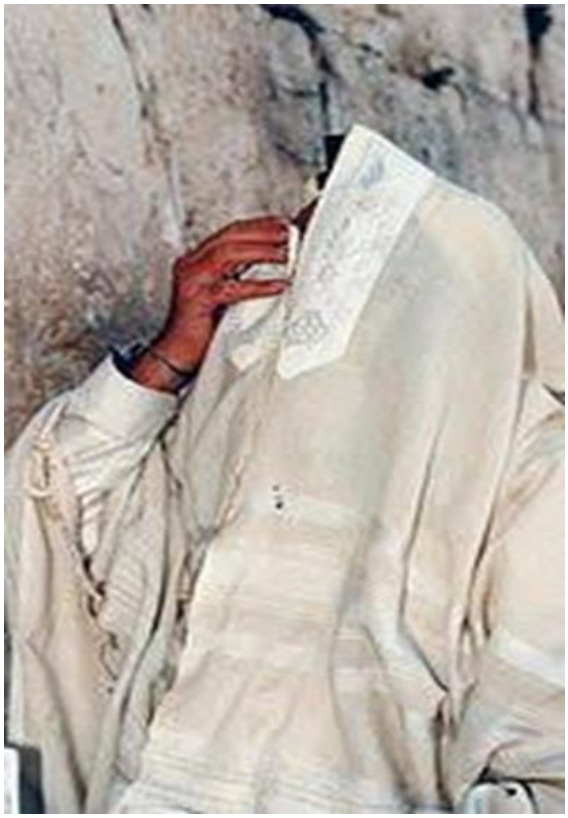


For the Shabbos Table

וַיַּרְא אֶת־הָעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף *"And he saw the wagons which Yosef sent"* (Beresishis 45:27) Chazal explain that Yaakov was rejuvenated upon seeing the wagons which Yosef sent as they symbolized the last Torah topic they discussed, that of Eglah Arufa. What was this message which Yosef was sending his Father?

Rav Uren Reich shlit"a explained at last year's Siyum Hashas, that Chazal say that when Yosef set out to find his brothers, his father began escorting him out. Yosef protested, "I do not require this escort, as I am not a guest, but rather a member of the household." Yaakov responded that any lone traveller may face dangerous

circumstances along the way. Escorting a departing traveller even just a small distance provides a symbolic accompaniment and a sense that they are not alone. Yaakov and Yosef's discussion was thus related to the laws of Eglah Arufa, which pertains to properly escorting a departing traveller. With the wagons here, Yosef hints to his father that he was in fact alive and well both physically and spiritually. For despite their geographical distance, he constantly felt his father's presence, and this feeling of never being alone enabled him to withstand spiritually the challenges he faced over the many lonely years in a spiritually devoid land.



When **Rav Shimshon Pinkus zt"l** lived in Yerushalayim, he would often daven with the Karliner chasidim on Friday night. Although he was not affiliated with that group, their minhag was to daven Friday night wearing a tallis.

R' Shimshon once explained that the reason he chose to daven with them was so that he could cover his head and face with the tallis and no one would be able to see him cry, as he longed to cry during davening on leil Shabbos. Clearly, these were not painful tears shed in mourning, but rather a deep expression of emotion he felt as he met the Ribono shel Olam who is very close to all of us on Shabbos. For Rav Pinkus this was very real that it brought him to tears. We should learn to realize that Shabbos is more than a day of rest; it's an opportunity to meet up with and connect to our Creator.

Parsha Pages - Did the Brothers Have Consequences to Their Sale of Yosef?

וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ וְאַל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה כִּי לְמִחְיָה שְׁלָחַנִי אֱלֹקִים לִפְנֵיכֶם ***But now do not be sad, and let it not trouble you that you sold me here, for it was to preserve life that G-d sent me before you*** *45:5*

Question: If the brothers intended to harm Yosef by selling him, what does it matter if G-d employed that for a positive outcome? Moreover, the Gemara (Nazir 23a) states if one who intended to pick up pork in his hand and eat it, and in fact he picked up the meat of a lamb in his hand and ate it, so that he did not in fact commit a transgression, nevertheless requires atonement and forgiveness.



Possible Answers:

The Ohr haChaim haKodesh (Bereshis 50,20) maintains actions of the Brothers was similar to the case where one intends to serve someone a poisonous drink and instead gives the other a cup of wine, where nothing harmful occurs. Similarly, the Brothers in fact did not affect any harm and are thus, exempt from needing atonement even from Heaven. Most commentators do not agree.

The Ra"n (Shabbos Perek haOreg) makes a distinction in the din. Where one intends to do a bad deed and it occurs that the bad deed did not happen one is exempt from the earthly court, but still needs

to obtain atonement. However, if one intends to do a bad deed and ends up to doing a Mitzvah one does not need even atonement. Even if one's final deed is for good it is similar to doing a Mitzvah as the case of the Brothers.

Shu"t VaShev haKohen (Derush 1) states that aveiros between a person and one's fellow Yom Kippur does not provide atonement unless one appears the offended party. Nevertheless, if one only intended to do harm to another but did not carry out the action then it is considered like an aveirah between G-d and the person, and Yom Kippur does atone. Therefore, if one's intention was for bad, but the result was for good and meanwhile Yom Kippur occurs, then atonement has been provided.

Pardes Yosef the intention of the Brothers was not for bad. They actually believed they were doing a Mitzvah that they actually maintained they judged Yosef according to Torah law that he was obligation to be killed, even though in the end they sold Yosef as a slave. They judged Yosef as a Rodef. Nevertheless, the Brothers were held to a higher standard seen to the world it appeared that they did this deed with an apparent malevolent intention.

Seforno (Berehis 50, 20) Yosef is saying it is not for me to judge you or judge the decrees of HaShem. Your act was in error. You had judged me as a Rodef and if correct, you act would have been justified.

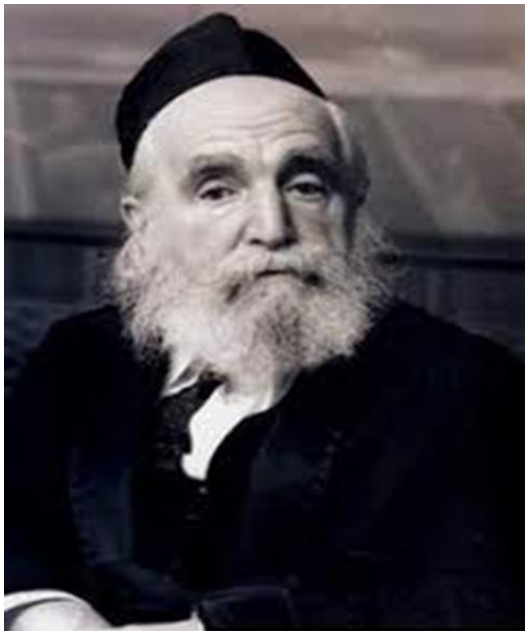
Yismach Moshe explains the case in Nazir, when one intends to eat Pork but ended up ending kosher meat, one is exempt from earthly courts but is still obligated in the Heaven court and needs atonement. However, Yosef is telling the Brothers since they are exempt in his world, he is not in the place of G-d to demand further atonement, and thus, according to him they are good and clear.

Emek Halacha (siman 61) maintains that Mitzvah for the good of the many is different from the good to one person. Thus, when one intends an act to be harmful and the result is a benefit to the

community, there is nothing wrong that even needs atonement. Thus, Yosef states that the ultimate good overrides any harm done by the Brothers.

The Aturei Chaim writes that only when one is obligated in the Heavenly court does one require atonement. However, when one is judges but the Holy One Himself, who causes a piece of kosher food to be eaten in lieu of non-kosher food, then one is totally exempt. Therefore, Yosef emphasizes that HaShem has considered their actions to be for good, they are now totally exempt.

L'maaseh



Rav Moshe Feinstein was once walking and conversing with someone at length while at a wedding. They passed by a certain wealthy individual who mistakenly thought that the Rosh Yeshiva was a meshulach collecting tzedakah and handed him a 'donation'. R' Moshe graciously accepted it and continued on his way. A few minutes later, he proceeded to circulate among the guests and collect for hachnasas kallah.

When the person accompanying him questioned why he was doing this, which was so out of character, he replied that soon, the man who handed him the money would probably discover that R' Moshe wasn't a meshulach and he would be embarrassed, but, he explained, 'if he sees me collecting for others, I will spare him embarrassment'.

"There is no wealth like health." ~~ Mivchar Hapeninim

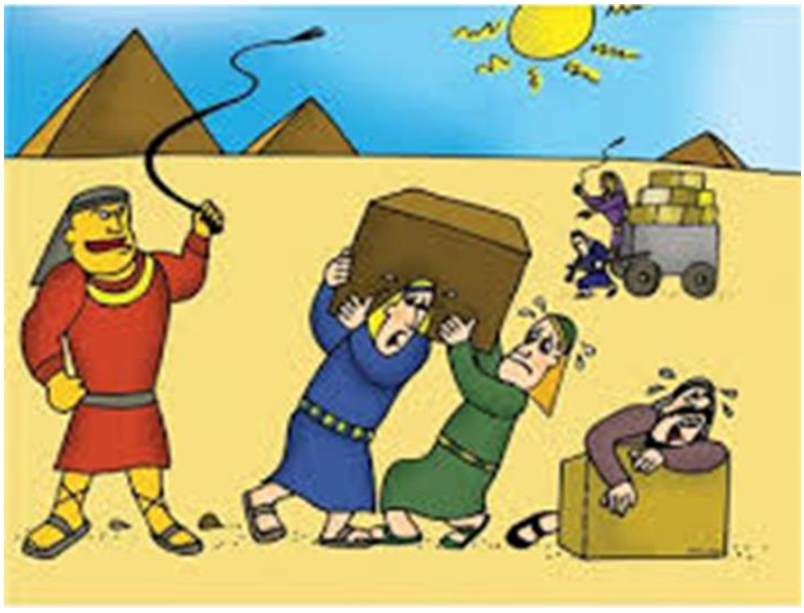
Yosef Cries Over the Asara Harugei Malchus

And Yosef fell on the neck of Binyamin and wept, and Binyamin wept on his neck. Yosef then kissed all his brothers and wept on them. Rashi says, Yosef cried over both Batai Mikdash that will be destroyed in the portion of Binyamin in the future. Binyamin then cried over Mishkan Shilo which will be destroyed in the portion of Yosef. What historical episode did Yosef cry about when he wept over his brothers?

The Meforshim explain, he wept concerning the Asarah Harugay Malchus. The 10 Martyrs that would be killed in the time of the Romans as a punishment for the sale of Yosef. The pasuk alludes to this when it says, "VaYaivch Alayhem" - he cried over them. The word "Alayhem" means - "Al" (Ayin Lamed) - on, "Yud" - the 10 , "Hay Mem" - is an acronym for Harugay Malchus. The pasuk is saying, "VaYaivk - and Yosef cried "Alayhem" Al Yud Harugay Malchus.

Tosefes Beracha

מַהֲרוּ֙ וַעֲל֣וּ אֶל־אָבִ֔י וַאֲמַרְתֶּ֥ם אֵלָ֖יו כֹּ֣ה אָמַ֣ר בִּנְךָ֣ יוֹסֵ֗ף שָׂ֤מַנִי אֱלֹקִים֙ לְאָד֣וֹן לְכָל־מִצְרָ֔יִם רְדָ֥ה אֵלַ֖י אַל־תַּעֲמֹֽד



Elsewhere (42,2), we are told the derasha that the Jews where actually going to be in Egypt for 210 years, the gematria of **רדו**.

In this pasuk, we have a further allusion, since it took about a year for the household to pack up and move to Egypt, and only 209 years remained, the verse uses the word **רדה**.(209)

Rav Shimshon Pincus - When Yosef & Binyomin Were Finally Reunited



"וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן־אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו" (45:14). Rashi tells us that when Yosef and Binyomin met after all the years of them longing to see each other, they cried about the Mishkan that stood in Yosef's territory and the two Bais HaMikdash that stood in Binyomin's territory that were destroyed. Twenty two long years of separation and a lot to catch up about, this is what they did?

Rav Shimshon Pincus says that this is a non-question. The Bais HaMikdash was about Hashroas HaShechina, our connection with Hashem. Asking this question is in essence asking how did Hashem make His way into their conversation! Is there another topic of conversation to our Holy ancestors, asks Rav Shimshon?

Their reunion was a celebration of the unity of Klal Yisroel a key element to Hashroas HaShechina. It was in this that they rejoiced upon seeing each other. Their joy and celebration was marred by the vision of the ultimate destruction of these great places and the exile of the Shechina.

Similarly says Rav Shimshon, when Yaakov met Rochel at the well for the first time they kissed and then cried. Rashi says he cried that she would not be buried with him. Again the same non-question is raised, why now? Yaakov represents HaKadosh Boruch Hu and Rochel the Shechina. Our goal in life is to reunite the two. Their meeting was a historic union. In Yaakov's joy and excitement he saw that Rochel would not be buried with him. Their union in this world would not last forever and would end in separation. For this Yaakov cried.

We cannot judge the Avos HaKedoshim with our shallow minds. We cannot comprehend their thoughts and emotions. What we do know is that first and foremost on the list was hashroas HaShechina and that meant a vibrant Bais HaMikdash that we should all be zocheh to witness bimheira biyameinu, amein!



Vilna Gaon - Did Yosef Want To Get Binyomin In Trouble Just Like Himself?

Yosef gave them wagons according to Paroh's instruction, and provisions for the way. To each man he gave a change of clothes, [but] to Binyomin he gave 300 pieces of silver and five changes of clothes. (Bereishis 45:21-22).

It is remarkable that Yosef should go ahead and do the very thing that created trouble for him in the first place. So much of the jealousy that the brothers had felt for Yosef stemmed from his father's special treatment of him. A man should never treat one son better than his other children, for, because of the two selayim of material Yaakov gave to Yosef more than the rest of his brothers, they became jealous of him and caused our fathers to go down to Egypt. (Shabbos 10b)

The Gemara in Megilah answers that Yosef was hinting that in the future Binyomin's descendant would wear the five pieces of clothing of kingship, as it says, "Mordechai went out with blue clothing of the kingdom ..." (Esther 8:15). (Megilah 16b).

The Vilna Gaon asks, even if Yosef had a reason for giving Binyamin more than his brothers, it would still cause jealousy? Secondly, the brothers probably did not even know that Yosef gave the five changes of clothes in order to allude to Mordechai?

He answers that the clothing which he gave to the brothers were of higher quality than Binyamin's. Their clothing was equal in value to all 5 which Binyamin got. Therefore there was not any jealousy

involved. The question was only why he divided Binyamin's amount in to 5? The Gemara answers to that, in order to allude to Mordechai.

A hint to this pshat can be found in the word "Chalifos". By the brothers it is written with a VAV - showing that they were expensive; as opposed to the word "Chalifos" by Binyamin which is spelled without a VAV - indicating that it was of lesser value.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

"Hold your Horses" on Those Wagons!



וַיָּקָם יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיִּשְׂאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם וְאֶת־טַפָּם וְאֶת־נְשֵׁיהֶם בָּעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח פַּרְעֹה לָשֵׂאת אֹתוֹ "*And Yaakov left Be'er Sheva and his sons carried him… in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.*" (46:5)

In a previous parsha, Yaakov had exhibited a high level of honesty when he watched Lavan's animals. Lavan had changed the details of Yaakov's wages 10,000 times. Yet Yaakov continued to watch Lavan's flocks as carefully as he could. He didn't rationalize that if this is how my employer treated me then I don't have to do my job carefully.

Here too, Yaakov teaches us the level of honesty that we must strive to follow. Pharaoh gave Yosef wagons to send back to the Land of Israel to transport Yaakov and his family to Egypt. Yaakov and his family travelled to Be'er Sheva. The pasuk does not mention Yaakov's mode of transportation. Only after Yaakov left Be'er Sheva to go

down to Egypt does the pasuk mention that Yaakov travelled in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent. Apparently, Yaakov did NOT use the wagons on the first part of his journey. Why didn't he?

Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin explained this beautifully. On his way to Be'er Sheva, Yaakov was not certain that he was going to go to Egypt. He was concerned about the bad influence that the Egyptians would have on his descendants. Yaakov felt that if he would not be going to Egypt it wouldn't be appropriate to use Pharaoh's wagons on the first part of his journey. After all, they were sent only for the express purpose of enabling him to travel to Egypt. When Yaakov arrived in Be'er Sheva, Hashem appeared to him and told him not to worry and that he should go to Egypt. Once Hashem told Yaakov to go, he used Pharaoh's wagons to transport his family. As soon as Yaakov was certain that he would be going to Egypt it was appropriate to use Pharaoh's wagons.

When Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky was a student, the custom was to eat meals in other people's homes. One Pesach, he received an invitation. The problem was that he was not certain he could rely on that person's level of kashrus for Pesach. It was a delicate situation. He didn't want to go yet he also didn't want to hurt the person's feelings.

He thought of a great idea. He explained to his prospective host that his custom was not to eat gebrokts whereas this host did eat gebrokts (some people have the custom on Pesach not to wet their matza. For example, they don't put their matzah in soup or eating matzo balls). His plan succeeded, and he did not hurt his host's feelings. However, since Rabbi Kaminetsky had declared this as his custom, he adopted the custom for the rest of his life! From that point on and no longer ate gebrokts on Pesach.

Acting with honesty is more than just a nice thing to do; it is obligatory!

Ben Ish Chai - Yaakov's Galus Is Like Old Wine

Yosef sent Yaakov "MiTuv Mitzrayim", old wine according to Rashi (45:23). The Pesach Eynayim says that Yayim Yashan is gematria 430. Yosef sent this as a remez to Yaakov that his descent is part of the galus that Hashem told Avrohom would last 430 years.

The Ben Ish Chai (Ben Yehoada Megila 16b) asks "Why at such a sensitive juncture of Yaakov's life would Yosef feel the need to remind him about the long difficult galus that Bnei Yisrael was destined to endure?"

He answers that on the contrary, Yosef was trying to console his father. While there was a tradition that the galus would be 430 years, Yosef signaled that Yaakov's descent to Mitzrayim would be reversed long before that time.

He sent him Yayin Yashan or old wine to hint that while the galus will last 430 years, nevertheless it is an old story like old wine, and it began many years before, at the Bris Bain HaBesarim. That meant that already half the galus was over before Yaakov even arrived in Mitzrayim.

Rav Chaim Of Tzanz - Yosef Reveals His Voice

To prove his real identity to his brothers Yosef says, "**פִּי־פִי הַמְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיכֶם**:" (Vayigash 45:12) Rashi explains that he spoke Lashon HaKodesh. What kind of proof was this, if the interpreter had spoken Lashon HaKodesh all along?

The Iturei Torah brings from Rav Chaim of Tzanz that the reason why the brothers did not recognize Yosef was because they never saw him with a beard. "However," asks the Divrei Chaim, "the Gemara (Chulin 96) says that you can recognize someone by their voice. Why did they not recognize his voice?"

He answers that a voice varies depending on the language you are speaking. Each language has its own intonation, articulation, and sing song. A voice is only recognizable in the same language that you are used to hearing it in. Since at home the Shvatim spoke with him Lashon Kodesh and now he spoke Egyptian, they did not recognize his voice.

To prove his identity to the brothers Yosef spoke to them in Lashon Kodesh and they were amazed to recognize that familiar voice that was certainly their brother Yosef.

Maharal MiPrague - Why Did Only Yaakov Say Shema And Not Yosef?



Rashi says that the pasuk (46:29) says that only Yosef cried when he met his father. Yaakov did not cry as he was in middle of Krias Shema. Why was Yosef not saying Shema at the same time if it was the proper zman?

The Maharal MiPrague (Gur Aryeh) answers that Yosef was also in middle of Krias Shema but Rav Yehuda says in Masechtas Brachos (2:1) that you may stop in middle of Krias Shema to greet someone whom you fear. Therefore Yosef, fearing his father out of awe, stopped to greet him. Yaakov however, was halachicly unable to interrupt Shema to greet his son. The Sifsei Chachomim brings another answer, that Oseik B'Mitzva Patur Min HaMitzva and Yosef was performing Kibbud Av and was therefore patur from Krias Shema at the time.

The Sifsei Chachomim also asks, how do we know Yaakov was saying Shema and not Shemoneh Esrei? He answers that it is forbidden to walk within four amos of someone davening Shemoneh Esrei. The mere fact that Yosef approached him, shows that Yaakov was not in middle of Shemoneh Esrei.



Daas Zikeinim - No Wagon For Yaakov

And Pharaoh said to Yosef, "Tell your brothers, this is what they should do. Take wagons from the Land of Mitzrayim for your small children and wives and carry your father and come here."

Daas Zikeinim MiBaalai HaTosfos learn, the wagons were for the Shvatim's small children and wives. "Carry your father" - means carry him on your shoulders and bring him here!

Rav Yehonoson Eibushitz - Yaakov Tries To Trick Yosef

In Parshas Vayigash (44:25) Yehuda tells Yosef that after the Shevatim came back from Mitzrayim and told Yaakov that Shimon was arrested, Yaakov told them, " שֻׁבוּ שִׁבְרוּ־לָנוּ מְעַט־אֹכֶל ***Go back and buy a little food***." Yaakov said that they should do this without taking Binyomin, even though Yosef told them not to come without him. Why did Yaakov tell them to bring only a little food? Why did he think he could send them without Binyomin?

Rav Yehonoson Eibushitz says that Yaakov wanted to fool Yosef. Yosef had a dream that there would be seven years of famine. Yaakov saw with Ruach HaKodesh that it would end after two years

in his zechus. He wanted the Shevatim to go to Mitzrayim and ask for only a little food so that they can tell Yosef that they will bring Binyomin on their next trip, since they would certainly need more to survive the seven years. He would then free Shimon.

Yaakov however planned accordingly and knew that this minimal amount of food would carry them through to the end of the famine according to his calculation, and they would never need return.

Yaakov And Yosef Meet, What Is All The Excitement?

When Yaakov arrived in Mitzrayim, Yosef went to greet him. The pasuk (46:29) says **וַיַּעַל לִקְרַאת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו גֹּשְׁנָה וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו** He went up to his father to Goshen." Rashi cryptically explains, **יוסף נראה אל אביו *"He appeared before him."*** What is Rashi teaching us?

Rav Naftoli Trop explains that when a son is about to encounter his beloved father after a harsh 22-year separation, the excitement is enormous. He cannot wait to embrace his father and fill the gaping hole in his heart. Rashi tells us that this was not what was on Yosef's mind. The only thing he cared about was ending his father's suffering and bringing him back his beloved son. "Yosef," says Rashi, "did not go to see his father, rather he went to appear before his father and let his father see him."

Yosef To The Shevatim, I Am No Worse Than Eisav

When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers he said, "**אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי**?" Why did Yosef ask if Yaakov was alive? Yehuda just finished giving a speech about Yaakov's frail health and how he may die if Binyomin doesn't come back.

Rav Yehonoson Eibushitz answers that the Shevatim were scared that Yosef who was now in a position of great power would have them executed as revenge for selling him. Yosef wanted to allay their

fears. He reminded them that although Eisav wanted to kill Yaakov immediately after he got the Brachos, nevertheless, the Torah says that Eisav didn't plan the murder of Yaakov until Yitzchok died, in order not to cause Yitzchok pain and grief.

Yosef rhetorically asked his brothers, "Is Yaakov still alive?" If so, they had nothing to fear because Yosef is no worse than Eisav and would not kill them in Yaakov's lifetime.

Sfas Emes - Yaakov Had No Mitzva So He Found Shema

The Kotzker Rebbe says that the reason Yaakov said Krias Shema upon seeing Yosef (see Rashi Vayigash 46:29) was because he wanted to channel the incredible love in his heart at this once in a lifetime moment towards Hashem. This begs the question why didn't Yosef take a cue from his father and recite Shema as well? Why did he cry on his father's shoulder?

The Iturei Torah brings the Sfas Emes who explains that Yosef was doing the mitzva of Kibud Av, and therefore did not say Shema. Not that he was patur from Ahavas Hashem because he was in middle of another mitzva, rather doing a mitzva is the greatest way to love Hashem and become close to Hashem. Yaakov had no mitzva, only love of his son. Therefore, Yaakov showed his love with Shema. But Yosef had a mitzva with which to attach himself to Hashem and needed no other outlet.

Make it a habit to tell people 'thank you' to express your appreciation, sincerely and without the expectation of anything in return. Truly appreciate those around you, and you'll soon find many others around you.

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky



אדני שאל את עבדיו לאמר היש לכם אב או אח
***"My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or brother?'"* (44:19)**

QUESTION: Binyamin was accused of stealing a magical silver goblet. How did Yehudah hope to defend him with this statement?

ANSWER: Yehudah said to Yosef, "Even if your allegations about Binyamin are correct — which they are not — I don't understand why you are making such an issue over an ordinary goblet." Yosef responded, "This is a priceless magical goblet; through it I can see the past and future. Therefore, Binyamin committed a major crime and deserves slavery."

Yehudah said to Yosef, "This is not true! The goblet is an ordinary one with no special value." He proved this by reminding Yosef, "You asked us if we have a father or a brother. If you have a magical goblet, why did you have to ask us questions? Could you not have known all about us by looking into your magical goblet?!" (**פרדס יוסף**)

ונפשו קשורה בנפשו ***"His soul is bound up with his soul."*** (44:30)

QUESTION: How did their souls become connected?

ANSWER: The word "*keshurah*" (**קשורה**) — "bound" — has the numerical value of 611, which is the same numerical value as the word "Torah" (**תורה**). Yaakov taught Binyomin Torah and through their Torah study, their souls became connected.

Torah is the language that unifies Jews of past, present and future generations.

"והיה כראותו כי אין הנער ומת" *"It will happen that when he sees the youth is missing he will die."* (44:31)

QUESTION: At that time, Binyamin already had *ten* children. Why wasn't Yehudah worried that the children would die if they did not see their father returning home?

ANSWER: Yehudah was well aware that according to human nature, a parent worries more about his children than children do about their parents. For example, often, a child will be late in coming home and not think of calling his parents who are "pulling their hair out" with worry. On the other hand, a parent will always do everything for his child, even if he is not happy with the way the child is behaving and growing up.

Therefore, Yehudah was afraid that Yaakov might not be able to live without Binyamin, although Binyamin's children would adjust to the situation. (**ר' מנחם מענדל מקוצק זצ"ל**)

"ויאמר יוסף אל אחיו אני יוסף העוד אבי חי" *"Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef; is my father still alive?'"* (45:3)

QUESTION: The first time the brothers came to Egypt, Yosef asked them about their father. At their second arrival he again asked about their father. Why did he ask the question a third time?

ANSWER: When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, he knew that they would be reluctant to believe him. He therefore gave them certain signs to prove who he was. - This time Yosef was *not asking* his brothers, but saying in effect, "From my question you can realize that I am really your missing brother. Whenever we meet I only ask about my *father* and not about my mother, because I know that she died many years ago. If I were a stranger and pretending, I would ask about both my father and my mother." (**אמרי יהודה**)

"ולא יכלו אחיו לענות אתו כי נבהלו מפניו" *"The brothers were unable to answer him because they were frightened of his face."* (45:3)

QUESTION: Why does it say **נבהלו מפניו**— "his *face* frightened them"? It should have simply said "*nivhalu mimeno*" — "they were frightened of him"?

ANSWER: Yosef's countenance was identical to Yaakov's. When the brothers met Yosef, the Torah says, "Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him" (42:8).Why didn't they recognize him since his resemblance to Yaakov was exact?

Yosef did not want his brothers to recognize him. Therefore, when he spoke to them, he covered his face with a veil (as is customary in many Arabic countries), and the brothers were unable to observe his face. Upon revealing himself, he uncovered his face and said to them, "I am Yosef." Knowing that Yosef looked identical to Yaakov, they became frightened when they saw that the *face* of the man speaking to them resembled exactly that of their father, Yaakov. (**זכרון ישראל**)

"And they said to Pharaoh: 'We have come to sojourn in the land; for there is no grazing for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan.'" (47:4)



Why did they not tell him that they came to Egypt because they had no food for *themselves* to eat?

The brothers wanted to convey to Pharaoh how intense the famine was in Canaan. They told him: "Grass is usually reserved for the flock. People consume fruits and vegetables. The situation is so critical that people are eating grass and there is no grazing left for the flock." (**רבינו בחיי**)

ויאמר פרעה אל יעקב כמה ימי שני חייך ויאמר...ימי שני מגורי שלשים ומאת שנה מעט ורעים היו...ולא השיגו את ימי שני חיי אבתי בימי מגוריהם



***"Pharaoh said to Yaakov, 'How many are the days of the years of your life?' Yaakov answered Pharaoh, 'The days of the years of my sojourns have been a hundred and thirty years. Few and bad have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not reached the life spans of my forefathers in the days of their sojourns.'"* (47:8-9)**

QUESTION: Why was Pharaoh so impolite as to ask Yaakov his age?

ANSWER: In Egypt there was very little rain, and they relied heavily on the Nile river which would overflow and irrigate the fields. During the years of famine, the Nile river did not overflow and, thus, the fields did not produce. When Yaakov arrived, the Nile began to overflow and the famine ended. Pharaoh was, therefore, thrilled with Yaakov's arrival. At the same time he was also was concerned, because Yaakov looked very old, and he feared that the blessing would not last long. Thus, out of anxiety, he asked Yaakov his age.

Yaakov understood Pharaoh's thoughts and therefore told him, "Do not worry: though I *look* very old, in reality I am quite young and have many more years ahead of me before reaching the life span of my parents." (**כלי יקר**)

Besamei HaTorah … Beneath the Surface R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(מו:ה) וישאו בני ישראל את יעקב אביהם ***The sons of Yisroel transported Yaakov their father*** (46:5)

Why doesn't the Torah write – **וישאו בני יעקב את יעקב אביהם** ***And the sons of Yaakov transported Yaakov their father?***

The *Chasam Sofer* explains that all the holy Forefathers and

holy Foremothers are hinted at in the word **ישראל.**

י = יצחק, יעקב

ש = שרה

ר = רבקה, רחל

א = אברהם

ל = לאה

Now we can better understand the *pasuk*. ***The children of all the Forefathers and Foremothers***, as hinted at in the word *Yisroel*, transported their father Yaakov. (*Chayim shel Torah*)

Besamei HaTorah … Beneath the Surface R' Shmuel Winzelberg

יש לנו אב זקן וילד זקנים ואחיו מת ויותר הוא לבדו לאמו ואביו אהבו

'We have an old father and a young child of his old age: his brother is dead, he alone is left to his mother, and his father loves him.' (44:20)

Rashi explains: His brother is dead. Because of fear, he let something false out of his mouth. He said to himself, "If I would say to him that Binyamin's brother is alive, he would say, 'Bring him to me.'"

The *Chasam Sofer* writes that Yehuda did not let something false come out of his mouth because it is possible to interpret the words as follows: "We have an old father" refers to Yaakov. "And a young child of his old age" refers to Binyamin. "His brother is dead" refers to the brother of our elderly father, Eisav, as the wicked are called dead. "He alone is left to his mother" refers to Yaakov who remained alone to his mother, Rivka, to whom Eisav was not considered at all. "And his father loves him" and in truth, Yitzchak loved Eisav!

It turns out that Yehuda did not lie! (*Umatuk HaOhr*)

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*



Yosef couldn't contain himself anymore and he had everyone removed from the room so that he could reveal himself to his brothers (45:1).

Rav Yeruchem Levovitz notes a fascinating lesson that Yosef was exemplifying. Although he was awash with emotions, he didn't let that inhibit his clarity of thought. He realized the concern of his brothers' respect and controlled his emotions while clearing the room.

This is a lesson for us to aspire to: the ability to control our emotions, even when they are high, and to be able to properly judge a situation with a clear mind.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

The *Chazon Ish*, *zt"l*, was an individual who excelled in *Yiras Shamayim*, and *Emunah*, faith in *Hashem*. He had tremendous appreciation for the majesty of those who studied *Hashem's Torah* and strived to emulate *Hashem's* ways. This is how he lived his life, as this mindset guided his actions and relationships with people.



The *Chazon Ish* was slightly near-sighted, and he often learned without wearing his glasses. However, he would never leave his apartment without his glasses on, explaining, "Without glasses, I might not notice someone's nod or other form of greeting to me, which might *Chas V'Shalom* offend them."

It was to such an extent that the *Chazon Ish* went in order to not hurt anyone else's feelings!

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS VAYIGASH

The Noble Long Walk

During the year that one of the main students of the **Chazon Ish, zt"l, Rav Kovalsky, zt"l**, was in mourning for his father, he arrived in Shul one morning to be the Chazan. The Shul he davened at had many Minyanim one after the other, and many other people also wanted to be the Chazan, so he waited his turn.

As he waited patiently, Rav Kovalsky caught sight of an elderly man who had just finished davening. He had very slowly removed his Tefilin and folded his Tallis, and he was now standing and asking

someone, anyone, to help him get home. But who has the time for that on a busy morning, when everyone is rushing to finish up his davening so he can get his day started?

This poor old man was looking at all the people streaming by him, with pleading eyes and outstretched hands, but they ignored him. Rav Kovalsky left the line he was waiting on to be the Chazan, approached the old man, and gently took him by the hand. The elderly Jew took hold of it with his shaking hand, and they began their walk home together.

It was quite a long walk, and the old man walked at a very slow pace. All the while, Rav Kovalsky whispered under his breath, "This should be a Zechus for the elevation of my father's Neshamah."

Finally, they reached the old man's home. He offered an emotional thanks to Rav Kovalsky, but the Rav's job wasn't over yet. Rav Kovalsky supported the old man on his slow walk up the stairs. It was only when the man was safely inside his home, that Rav Kovalsky turned back to go to the Shul to catch the very last Minyan, where another man had already taken over as Chazan.

This was the only time that Rav Kovalsky ever missed leading the Minyan when he had an obligation to do so. That night, Rav Kovalsky's father appeared to him in a dream. He said, "I'm willing to forgo every Tefilah of yours as the Chazan, as long as you do Mitzvos like that instead!" - *(Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U' Tefilah.)*

The Chofetz Chaim once asked a person how he was doing. The man responded, "it wouldn't hurt if things were a little better." the Chofetz Chaim responded, "how do you know that it wouldn't hurt?" Hashem knows what's best for you and only wants what's best for you. If He didn't give you something, it means that your current situation is the best situation for you.

The Power of a Photo Of a Righteous Jew

Once, a Bochur went off the Derech, R"L, but he was still living at home, and his parents gave him the privacy of his room, which they did not enter at all.



It so happened that a Jewish contractor, who was working in the home, had to enter this boy's room, and to his amazement, among the various inappropriate pictures and posters on the wall, was a picture of the Lakewood Rosh HaYeshivah, **Rav Aharon Kotler, zt"l!**

Not sure what to make of this, he discussed it with the boy's mother and with a Rav as well, and he said that he didn't feel it was fitting or respectful for the picture of Rav Aharon to be hanging on a wall shared with those other pictures.

The Rav he spoke with told him to not make anything of it and the mother should not even speak to her son about it. He explained, "At least let him have some connection to Yiddishkeit."

Eventually, Baruch Hashem, this boy started realizing his mistakes. He started to do Teshuvah and return to the proper way, and he began to once again join the family at the Shabbos Seudos.

When he was asked what had helped him make his turn around, he explained that he once gave a donation to the Lakewood Yeshivah, and they sent him a poster of Rav Aaron Kotler. He said, "I don't know why, but I hung it up on my wall. Something about the picture talked to me, and I could feel Rav Aharon looking at me. It was this feeling that finally shook me up and got me to leave my bad ways."

Word of this story reached **Rav Malkiel Kotler, Shlit"a**, the current Rosh Yeshivah of Lakewood, and he remarked, "The Kedushah of the Zaide was so powerful, that even a picture of him can bring someone back to Yiddeshkeit!"

Knowing the Difference Between The Two Telephones in Life

Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky, of blessed memory had just received wonderful news that his dear colleague and friend, **Rav Moshe Feinstein**, had come home from the hospital. Reb Yaakov wanted to call the venerable sage and personally extend his good wishes.

Reb Yaakov, who never had an attendant make calls for him, went to the telephone and dialed. The line was busy. A few minutes later, he tried again. The line was still busy. "Perhaps," thought Reb Yaakov, "many people are calling to wish him well."

One of his grandchildren who was present during the frustrating scenario asked Reb Yaakov a simple question. "I don't understand," he asked. "Aren't there times that it is imperative that you speak to Reb Moshe? After all, you sit together on the "The Council of Torah Sages". What would happen if there were a matter of national significance that required immediate attention? Shouldn't Reb Moshe get a second telephone line?"

Reb Yaakov smiled. "Of course Reb Moshe has a special private line. And I, in fact, have the telephone number. But that line is to be used solely for matters relating to Klal Yisroel. I now wish to extend my good wishes to Reb Moshe on a personal level. And I can't use his special line for that. So I will dial and wait until his number becomes available."

The Silent Appeal By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach



The vishnitzer Rebbe of blessed memory was in the habit of taking a short evening stroll for his health in the company of some of his followers. One evening he stopped in front of the luxurious home of the Jewish head of a local bank and informed his escorts that he was going inside for a visit. This raised some eyebrows, for this banker was not a particularly observant Jew and certainly not one of the rabbi's followers.

The banker was even more surprised as he invited the rabbi to sit down. To his even greater surprise the rabbi took a seat but uttered not a word. His continued silence so rattled the nerves of his host that he finally asked him the purpose of his visit.

"I came to fulfil a mitzvah," explained the rabbi. "Our Sages rule that just as it is a mitzvah to admonish someone who will heed your reproof, it is a mitzvah to refrain from saying something which will not be heeded. I am convinced that what I want to say to you will be ignored but if I stay home and refrain from saying it I will not really be fulfilling that mitzvah. I therefore came here where I have the opportunity to say it, and refrain from doing so because it will be counterproductive in making your guilt greater by ignoring the reproof."

The banker's curiosity was aroused and he repeatedly begged the rabbi to reveal the nature of this secret message. The rabbi then told him that the bank he heads was about to foreclose its mortgage

on the home of a widow in the community and he wanted him to show special consideration for her.

The banker countered by pointing out the large sum of money involved and the fact that he was only the manager and not the owner of the bank.

"You see," said the rabbi as he rose to leave, "I told you that I didn't want to say anything because I knew you wouldn't listen."

The banker's conscience, however, was so touched that a few days later he took money from his own pocket to save the widow's home.



Chesed

Reb Meir Shapiro *zt'l* was in America together with an assistant, collecting money during the month of Tishrei, 1916/ **תרפ"ז.** Unfortunately, his assistant became ill and couldn't go to shul on Simchas Torah.

When Reb Meir Shapiro completed the hakafos and returned to his apartment, he felt sorry for his bedridden helper. He knew he was certainly disappointed that he couldn't participate in the hakafos.

Reb Meir Shapiro decided that he would conduct hakafos for his friend. He pretended to be the chazan in a shul and recited the **אתה הראת** . When he completed the pesukim in the Simchas Torah nigun, he sang and danced hakafos in the room, so his shamesh could feel the joy of Simchas Torah, even in his state.

People say that Reb Meir Shapiro didn't need to hold a sefer Torah during these "hakafos" because (a) Reb Meir Shapiro, himself, was like a "live sefer Torah."

(b) The chesed he performed there is the essence of Torah. Additionally, when one does chesed, Hashem does chesed with him.

The following story happened a few weeks ago: Reb Mendel from Beit Shemesh works for a caterer. One morning, in a, Reb Mendel noticed an elderly Yid collecting money. Reb Mendel approached him, "I see you are limping. Are you feeling okay?"

The elderly person responded that he has an infection on his foot a רויז making it difficult for him to walk.

"You should be in bed, not standing on your feet, going around collecting money!" Reb Mendel told him.

"I know, but lying in bed won't pay off my debts. My creditors aren't willing to wait until I heal…"

Reb Mendel told him, "I will collect money for you. You can go to bed."

Reb Mendel called his boss and told him that he would be taking the day off. His boss replied, "I have a large order for *arbes* (cooked chickpeas). All I ask is that you prepare the *arbes*, and then you can go do your mitzvah."

Reb Mendel filled a sixty-litre pressure cooker with *arbes*, closed the lid firmly, and placed it on the flame. Reb Mendel calculated that he has a few minutes until the *arbes* is ready. So, he returned to the shtibel and collected some money.

When he returned to the kitchen, he saw that the pot had exploded. The old pot was a bit worn out and didn't close perfectly, and it couldn't contain the pressure. *Arbes* were everywhere. The cover hit the ceiling and broke a light fixture. The pot was far away from the stove. Apparently, it flew off from the pressure.

If Reb Mendel were there, he wouldn't have noticed the problem before it was too late. But because he was occupied with chesed, he was spared from severe injury or even death.



Serach Bas Asher by Menachem Posner

She Is Known for Telling Yaakov That Yoseph Was Still Alive.

Yaakov had long believed his beloved son, Yoseph, to be dead. When Joseph's brothers found him alive and well in Egypt, they were afraid that breaking the news to their father would come as a shock and endanger his health.

What did they do? They asked Serach to break the news to him gently. How did she go about it?

According to one tradition, she waited until he began praying and then began saying the following rhyme:
Is Yoseph alive in Egypt (Mitzrayim)- With children on his knees (birkayim) -Menasseh and Ephraim?

As he prayed, he still could not believe it to be true. However, once he finished and saw the wagons Yoseph had sent, he was finally convinced that his son was alive.

According to the most popular telling of this incident, we are told that she shared the news while strumming on a harp.

She Identified Joseph's Underwater Tomb. When it came time for Moshe to take Joseph's remains with him on the way out of Egypt, it was Serach who directed him to the bottom of the Nile River.

She Never "Died". In fact, she never died in the conventional sense of the word. Because of the service she provided her grandfather, she merited to enter the Garden of Eden while still alive.



Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*



Yosef sent ten laden donkeys to his father (45:23). **The *Maharal*** explains (*Gevuros Hashem* 10) that Yosef was sending Yaakov a message. Although Yaakov had gone through twenty two years of anguish longing for his son, Yosef wanted to stress that his brothers were not responsible.

Just as a donkey does not control where it is going, so too his ten brothers were not in control regarding what happened to him. Yosef was entirely confident that his experiences were directly from *Hashem*.

Beneath the Surface *R' Shmuel Winzelberg*

לכלם נתן לאיש חלפות שמלת ולבנימין נתן שלש מאות כסף וחמש חלפת שמלת ***To each of them he gave changes of clothing, but to Binyamin he gave 300 pieces of silver and five changes of clothing*** (45:22)





Why did Yosef give his brothers clothing? Because when the goblet was found in Binyamin's sack, the brothers tore their garments (44:13). Yosef gave them new clothes to replace the clothing he caused them to tear.

ויבך עליהם (מה:טו) , *And he wept upon them* (45:15)

Why did the Torah write 'Aleihem', 'on them'? Why not write a more meaningful word like 'Vayeich Osom' or 'Vayeich Biglalam', that he cried for them. Was Yosef not crying for the Shevatim? 'Aleihem' is an acronym for: **עתידים להיות י' הרוגי מלכות *'There will be ten martyrs in the future'***. Yosef was crying because ten of their descendants will die because of the incident of their sale of him. (Otzros Yosef)

Torah Tavlin

וַיִּשְׁלָחֵנִי אֱלֹקִים לִפְנֵיכֶם לָשׂוּם לָכֶם שְׁאֵרִית בָּאָרֶץ וּלְהַחֲיוֹת לָכֶם



Once, as **R' Eliyahu KiTov zt"l** was about to set off on a journey to America, one of his neighbours approached him with a request: He had a relative in America who would send him a generous amount of money every year before Pesach. This year, the envelope didn't arrive. The neighbour asked R' Eliyahu if he could look him up and send regards, hoping that the relative would remember and send the money that he desperately needed.

R' Eliyahu agreed to visit the man. Upon his return, R' Eliyahu presented his neighbour with an envelope stuffed with cash. While the man was initially grateful for the Rabbi's efforts, he wanted to know why his relative hadn't sent dollars as he usually did. R' Eliyahu

explained that he had saved him the trouble and gone to the bank to exchange the funds into Lira, the local currency at the time.

Rather than thanking him, he became angry at him for changing the dollars at the bank instead of on the black market, which would have yielded a better rate. The man summoned R' Eliyahu to a din Torah where they ruled that the Rabbi had indeed caused him a loss and must pay the difference out of his pocket.

R' Eliyahu did so, and it wasn't until much later that the neighbour discovered that the reason his uncle hadn't sent him money before Pesach that year, was because he had passed away several months prior, and not only had R' Eliyahu personally funded the post-Pesach gift, but he had undergone the embarrassment of the din Torah and further expense without uttering a word.

In an attempt to alleviate the brother's embarrassment after he revealed himself, Yosef told them that Hashem put him in this exact situation in order to support them. We don't always know why, but when it comes out, we see the reason.

Essential Rabbi Nachman - Prayer

Prayer is the root of all attachment and devotion to Hashem. Prayer is the gate through which we approach G-d, and through prayer we may come to know Him. (Likutey Moharan)

Prayer helps for everything. Even if a person is unable to study Torah, he will be able to do so if he prays for it. Everything good can be attained through prayer: Torah, devotion, holiness... everything good in all the worlds! Amen. (Likutey Moharan)

It is best to pray early in the morning. Prayer is of supreme importance - who knows if you will be able to pray later? Make every effort to pray as early as you possibly can. (Sichot Haran)

The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Isamar Rosenbaum

Chushim, The Deaf One, Heard The Cry

The Medrash Rabbah (93:3) states: "Immediately, Yehuda got angry and let out a loud roar. His voice was rung out for a distance of 400 parsah until it was heard by Chushin, the son of Dan. He jumped from the land of Canaan and came to the side of Yehuda."

The Imrei Emes zy"a (quoted in Sefer Likutei Yehuda) explains that even though Chushim was deaf (as is stated in Sotah 13A), he still heard the sound of the loud roar, and he jumped to Yehuda's side.

When a Jew screams to Hashem from the depths of his soul, nothing stops this cry from being heard! Even if the gates of Heaven are closed, the cry will still get in!



Joy Through Emunah

Sefer Orchos Tzadikim (Shar 9) writes that one who trusts in Hashem and believes in Him with all his heart will always be happy. He will be able to deal with whatever comes his way without breaking down.

He compares this to a sick person who must take medicine to be cured. Even if the medicine is bitter, he trusts that it is for his good. So too, if someone has emunah in Hashem, even if he goes through bitter times, he will trust that it is for his own good and he will naturally be happy.

He says that when a Jew is happy, it is a sign that he believes and trusts in Hashem, because emunah and bitachon are the source of happiness.

Joy Helps Even When it is Not Genuine

Rav Tzadok of Lublin (Tzidkos Hatzadik, Os 260) writes that when one is having a hard time feeling happy, he should engage in joking around. By acting as if he is happy and in a good mood, even if it isn't genuine, he will be presenting an outward appearance of joy. By doing so, he will be "fooling his body" into thinking he is happy, which will lead to genuine happiness.



In this vein, the **Maharil** writes that when the **Rabenu Tam** was involved with learning a difficult, complex topic, he would put a large pile of money next to him on the table so that he could pretend that he was a rich man who lacked nothing.

In this way, he was able to immerse himself in his learning without any worries. So too, one can fool himself into thinking he is happy because even imagined happiness calms and benefits a person.



From our Sages

וְעַתָּה אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ ***But now do not be sad***...(45:5)

The emotion of sadness is essentially selfish, as it is derived from an individual's feeling that something, either spiritual or material, is lacking that rightfully belongs to him. Such an outlook concentrates solely on the self, rather than on others. (**R. Chanoch Henoch of Alexander**)

Short Story Of The Week With Rabbi Mordechai Levin

In the town of Minsk, there lived a wealthy man who married off his daughter. Unfortunately, after a few years of marriage, the couple had a fight and the husband ran off. The father used his resources to try to locate the husband to attain a divorce but was unsuccessful.

Fifteen years later, a man bearing a close resemblance to the husband showed up in Minsk and claimed to be him. He was now sporting a beard and it was hard to know if this man was, in fact, the husband. Upon questioning, he was able to correctly recall many minute details of the couple's life together. The father-in-law was satisfied and ecstatic, but the wife was extremely hesitant, claiming that it didn't feel right.

The father travelled to the **Vilna Gaon, ZT" L**, to seek his advice. The Gaon said that either this man was the long-lost husband, or that he had met the husband and stole his identity. The Gaon recommended the following test: In Minsk, the custom was to seat a chosson in a special place in Shul. On Friday night, the father should walk in with this person and appear to be side-tracked. He should direct the stranger to take the same seat that he had sat in as a chosson.

The Gaon explained that if he was an imposter, then he was a terrible wicked man who assumed the husband's identity. However, a wicked person wouldn't think of finding out about matters of "kedusha", such as where to sit in Shul. The Gaon's plan was followed, and the stranger had no idea where to sit! Upon interrogation, he admitted that he had met the husband and plotted to deceive everyone and take the husband's place.

Comment: Yaakov Avinu was told "Od Yosef Chai", Yosef is still alive! However, he refused to believe the news. Perhaps, this man claiming to be Yosef was in reality an imposter. When Yaakov saw the "Agolos", wagons, and was told that Yosef had said to tell his father

that they had last learnt the subject of "Elgah Arufa", Yaakov believed that his dear son was alive, for an imposter would never know details of "kedusha"!

Rabbi Frand on Vayigash

Do Not Waste the Precious Years of Youth

כִּי־אֵיךְ אֶֽעֱלֶה אֶל־אָבִי וְהַנַּ֖עַר אֵינֶ֣נּוּ אִתִּ֑י "For how will I be able to go back to my father if the youth is not with me." [Bereshis 44:34].

The job of raising your children never stops, and the job of raising your grandchildren never stops. If there is one message that we should impart to our children and grandchildren and, IY"H, our great-grandchildren, it is: Do not waste these years. They are not going to repeat themselves!

The Kotzker Rebbe cited a pasuk from Tehillim: ***"Like the arrow in the hand of the mighty archer, such is youth"*** [Tehillim 127:4]. The Rebbe taught: When an archer pulls back his bow and is about to shoot his arrow, he still is in control of what is going to happen with that arrow. He can shoot it up, he can shoot it down, he can shoot it right, or he can shoot it left. Once the arrow leaves the bow, it is on its own. He cannot take it back. He cannot guide it. It is not like a 'smart bomb' that can be redirected mid-course.

The Rebbe said, "So too it is with youth." When a person is young, he is in control. He does not have illness, he does not have all the worries that come with older age, and that frustrate his ability to accomplish what he wants to accomplish with the talents and strengths the Almighty has granted him.

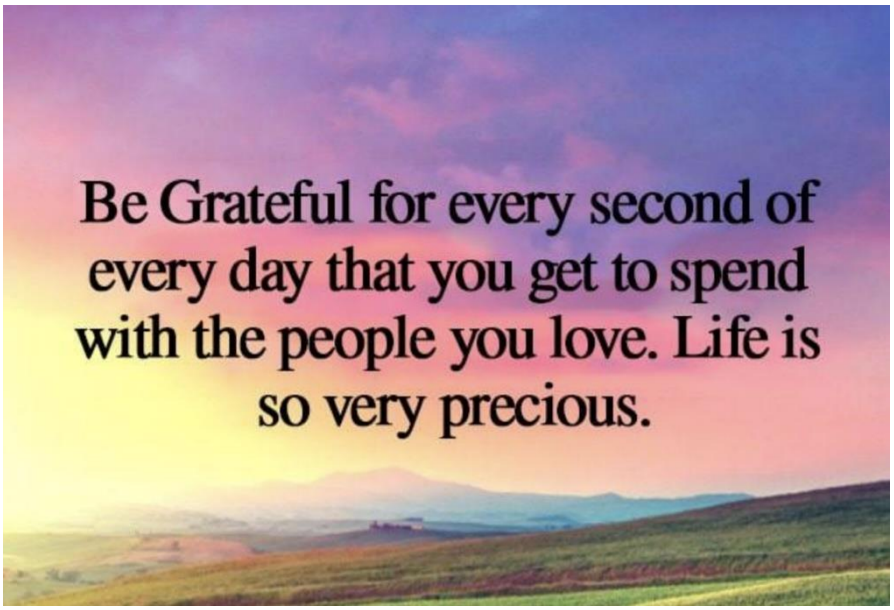
There is a famous quip – Youth is wasted on the young. When a person reaches a certain stage in life, that youth-like freedom is there no more. I knew an older Jew who was in a retirement home. He used to get up in the morning and his fellow residents would ask him "What

hurts today?" A person loses all kinds of powers and capabilities that he one once had when he reaches old age. Ah, for the days of youth – bnei ha'neurim!

This is a message that we need to impart to our children, and even if our children are grown, we need to impart it to their children. "You must not waste the precious years of youth."

Sugary Saying Of The Week - Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"If we can appreciate being alive, missing anything won't upset us."



In the first year of the famine, everyone came to buy food. They bought first with money and livestock - until there was none left. In the second year, they came to Pharaoh and said "we have nothing left besides our bodies and land; you can have it all and own us, as long as we can stay alive!"

The most precious thing is life itself. Let's appreciate that Hashem gave and continues to give us life. With this in mind, we can be happy with what we have and be able to serve Him joyfully!

No matter how busy you are, you must take time to make the other person feel important.

Rabbi Frand on Vayigash

Sensitive News Must Be Delivered with Sensitivity

וַיַּגִּדוּ לוֹ לֵאמֹר עֹוד יוֹסֵף חַי ***"They told him that Yosef was still alive and that he ruled the entire land of Egypt…"*** [Bereshis 45:26]

The Sefer HaYashar says that the brothers were afraid that if they would suddenly break the news to Yaakov that his beloved and presumed-dead son Yosef was still alive, he would die on the spot. The news would be too shocking. An older person can die from sudden shock.

So, what did they do? Serach, daughter of Asher, knew how to play violin. She played her violin and kept on singing "Od Yosef Chai; Od Yosef Chai." Yaakov Avinu thus already had put into his consciousness these words stating that Yosef was still alive.

Consequently, when the brothers came in and they said "Od Yosef Chai!" it was not the same shock as it would have otherwise been. Yaakov had been inoculated, so to speak, to the concept that Yosef was still alive.

This is all well and good. But what is the lesson we learn from this Medrash?

Rav Pam writes in his sefer that the lesson we learn is how sensitive we need to be about how we say certain things. We need to anticipate how our words will be taken by the intended recipient. Sometimes news needs to be broken softly. In all cases, we must speak sensitive words with sensitivity!

Rav Pam writes that Rav Yaakov Bender (Rosh Yeshiva of Darkei Torah in the Five Towns) has two rules whenever he calls a parent on the phone. The first thing he says is, "Hello. This is Rabbi Yaakov Bender. Your child is fine." Why? Because whenever a parent gets a call from the principal the parent braces himself: "Okay. What did my kid do now? What did he break? What happened to him?"

Therefore, the first thing out of the principal's mouth is "Your child is fine" thus relieving the parent.

The second policy Rabbi Bender has is that whatever a child has done, he never suspends a child on Erev Shabbos. That is all that is needed to ruin a Shabbos. The kid gets thrown out of school; the kid is suspended; the kid flunked…. The kid will sit there at the Shabbos table with this just having happened to him. It will put a pall over the entire Shabbos for the whole family.

Maybe the child will be suspended… but that can always wait until Sunday morning. On Friday afternoon, he does not suspend students. That is a lesson learned from the Medrash about Serach bas Asher. "Od Yosef Chai." We must always break news gently, softly, — even good news. This is the sensitivity we must have when dealing with people.

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk - TRY

This week's Parsha is called Vayigash. It is the first word of the sentence, Vayigash Ailav Yehuda, that Yehuda stepped forward to defend his brother Binyamin from the Egyptian viceroy (who, he didn't realize, was his brother Yosef.)

It is worth considering the fact that the Parsha's name doesn't focus on the defence, or if it was successful, but simply on the act of stepping up.

We cannot control whether our actions will be effective or not. All we can control is whether we will try to take action. But that is enough to be noteworthy.

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport

46:5 ויקם יעקב מבאר שבע וישאו בני ישראל את יעקב אביהם ואת טפם



On Yaakov's journey with his family from Beer-Sheva to Egypt, the Torah stresses that they travelled in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent for him. However, in relating Yaakov's travels (46:1) on the first leg of the journey – from his home to Beer-Sheva – this fact is curiously absent.

The Maharil Diskin beautifully explains that initially, although Yaakov set out on the journey, he remained in doubt about whether he would continue all the way to Egypt or would abort the trip and turn around.

He feared for the spiritual well-being of himself and his family, and that he would not merit to be buried with his parents and grandparents in Me'aras HaMachpela in Chevron. Therefore, Yaakov would not allow himself to benefit from the wagons that had been sent to him by Pharaoh for the express purpose of escorting him on his journey to Egypt. Because he was not yet sure that he planned to reach this destination, he considered making use of the wagons to be dishonest.

In Beer-Sheva, Hashem came to Yaakov in a night vision and reassured him regarding the trip, promising to establish his descendants as a great nation in Egypt and to eventually return them to Eretz Yisroel (46:2-4). At that point, confident in the spiritual ramifications of the trip, Yaakov awoke and resolved to continue all the way to Egypt, and only at this point did he allow himself and his family to travel in Pharaoh's wagons.

The Importance Of Living A Torah Life With Joy, Enthusiasm, And Simcha!

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל־יַעֲקֹב כַּמָּה יְמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיֶּיךָ

In the Torah portion of Vayigash Yaakov comes before Pharoah for the first time and the Egyptian monarch is flabbergasted by our forefather's old appearance and inquires just how old Yaakov is. Yaakov replies that he has gone through a very hard life and many trials and tribulations.

G-d informs Yaakov that, by virtue of his being on such a high level of perfection, he is being held responsible for his complaining and not accepting that everything G-d does is for the best. G-d then explains the punishment for this crime. For every word that Yaakov spoke negatively, G-d would remove one year away from his life. Indeed, we know that Yaakov's father lived to 180 and Yaakov passed away at 147 years young.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz asks a powerful question. The only way, asks Rav Chaim, to get to 33 words, is to include Pharaoh's question to Yaakov in the equation. Otherwise, the answer is much less. Why is Yaakov being punished for Pharaoh's question?

Rav Chaim answers that a Torah Jew is responsible for always reflecting the joy, privilege and grandeur of being a Torah Jew. For Yaakov's face to betray the troubles he went through reflected a shortcoming on one of the spiritually greatest men of all time. To that end, the very fact that the question begged, "How old are you?!," is included in the condemnation of Yaakov.

Let us recognize the intense privilege of being a Torah observant Jew and, if our observance is not up to snuff, let us recommit to growing our observance with joy... ...so much so that people can see it reflected in our faces!

Parsha Points to Ponder

The Midrash teaches (Yalkut Shimoni 151) that Yosef died 10 years prematurely as a punishment for the 10 times that he heard his brothers refer to their father Yaakov as **עבדיך** (your servant) and remained silent without correcting them. As the pesukim that record the conversation mention that they did so only five times (Bereishis 43:28, 44:24, 44:27, 44:30, and 44:31), why was Yosef's punishment doubled? (Peninim MiShulchan HaGra Parshas Mikeitz)

The Torah relates (42:23) that to disguise his true identity from his brothers, Yosef pretended not to recognize their language. This necessitated the use of an interpreter to translate everything that they had said into the Egyptian language.

The Vilna Gaon explains that although Yosef heard his father referred to as his servant from his brothers only five times, he heard it another five times from the translator.

They Miraculously Did Not Recognize His Face

וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו ***And They could not answer him because they were startled by his face***. (45:3)

Sefer Imrei Pinchos quotes **Rav Chaim Krasner** as explaining that Yosef's face closely resembled Yaakov's If so, why didn't his brothers recognize him right away?

The only possible answer is that a miracle occurred, and they were unable to recognize him until Hashem decided that it was the right time for him to reveal to them who he was. Once that time arrived, they immediately recognized that he looked exactly like their father. Thus, the pasuk says that they were startled by "his face". They now saw that his face looked like their father's and this startled them greatly.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah

45:28 Rashi: וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב עוֹד־יוֹסֵף בְּנִי חָי אֵלְכָה וְאֶרְאֶנּוּ בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת רב לי עוד שמחה וחדוה, הואיל ועוד יוסף בני חי : רב עוד

"Enough! My son Joseph is still alive: I have enough happiness and joy, since my son Joseph is still alive."

I would like to share with you a fabulous vort. If you take a look in the Pasuk, it says **רַב** which means an abundance. Rashi says that this is an abundance of simcha that Yaakov had - **עוֹד־יוֹסֵף בְּנִי חָי - *"My son Yosef is still alive."*** Yaakov heard this heartwarming news that he had been waiting for 22 years. And now he says **אֵלְכָה וְאֶרְאֶנּוּ בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת *"Let me go down and see him before I die."***

However, **Rav Matisyahu Salamon** brings the Medrash Rabbah 94:3 **וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב, רַב כֹּחוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף בְּנִי, שֶׁכַּמָּה צָרוֹת הִגִּיעוּהוּ וַעֲדַיִן הוּא עוֹמֵד בְּצִדְקוֹ**. **רַב** means something else.: **רַב** means an abundance of recognition that Yosef is greater than Yaakov. He still remained a tzaddik although he had so many troubles, whether it was with his brothers or with Potipher or being in jail and in Mitzraim.

This is a great lesson for all of us. Many of us have challenges in life. We may ask, "why do we have to go through these challenges?" The answer is that he becomes a better person when he overcomes these challenges. Life is a test.

This is what Yaakov recognized in his son Yosef. That he had issues and challenges in his life. Nevertheless, he overcame them and became greater. This is why he wanted to go and see him, pay his respect and see his beloved son.

"The one who causes a good deed to be performed is as meritorious as the one who performs it." ~~ Talmud, Sanhedrin



Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו ***And Yoseph said to his brothers, "I am Yoseph. Is my father still alive?" but his brothers could not answer him because they were startled by his presence.***(45:3)

The Sefas Emes says a powerful vort. He explains why they were startled. When Yoseph said, "I am Yoseph", the brothers were amazed to see that Yoseph remained a tzaddik in the lowest of places like Mitzrayim, they were therefore startled by his presence. They thought to themselves, imagine how great he would have been, had he remained by our father! Even in Mitzrayim, he has managed to preserve his greatness. Surely by our father, he would have reached even greater heights.

But to this, Yoseph responded and said, **אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־ מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה** ***"I am your brother Yoseph, whom you sold into Egypt."*** Meaning, that it is precisely because of the challenges of being in Mitzrayim that I became great. Precisely because you sold me, and I have faced all these challenges, was I able to achieve this.

The word **אֲשֶׁר** in the Pasuk can be interpreted as " thanks". Yoseph was in effect thanking his brothers for selling him, because the challenges brought out the best in him.

The Chasam Sofer says a powerful vort. The Pasuk in parshas Vayigash says **וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו** ***"And he fell on his brother Binyamin's neck and wept, and Binyamin wept on his neck."*** (45:14)

Rashi says **על שני מקדשות שעתידין להיות בחלקו של בנימין וסופן ליחרב**: that Yoseph was crying over the two Botai Mikdash that would be built on Binyamin's portion of Eretz Yisroel but ultimately would be destroyed. And Binyamin was crying for the Mishkan that would be built in Shiloh in Yoseph's portion of Eretz Yisroel but would be destroyed.

The Chasam Sofer asks, we know that Yoseph revealed himself to his brothers on Shabbos. How do we know that it was Shabbos?

In Parshas Miketz, it says that Yoseph ordered that a meal of meat should be prepared for the brothers, and it says that it was Erev Shabbos. **הָבֵא אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים הַבָּיְתָה וּטְבֹחַ טֶבַח וְהָכֵן כִּי אִתִּי יֹאכְלוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים בַּצָּהֳרָיִם** 43:16.

The brothers left the following morning, and the whole story of running after them and their returning ensued. At any rate, the day that Yoseph revealed himself to his brothers was on Shabbos. The Chasam Sofer asks, what is the *heter* to cry on Shabbos? One is not allowed to mourn on Shabbos. How did Yoseph and Binyamin mourn the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash on Shabbos when mourning is not allowed?

The Chasam Sofer explains as follows: Yoseph and Binyamin saw that the Botei Mikdash would be destroyed, and that even 2000 years later, Yidden would be strengthening each other to keep on going. They saw the strong faith that Yidden will have so many years later.

They were crying out of joy, seeing how great the generation will be, even many years after the Churban.

And such a cry is permitted on Shabbos! It is a cry of yearning for Hashem, caused by seeing the greatness of the future generations of Galus, that even after 2000 years, Yidden are still holding out strong, sanctifying Hashem's name with so much Torah and Yiras Shomayim. - This caused Yoseph and Binyamin to cry from joy.

A Shabbos Vort- Rabbi Yisrael Bronstein

וְהִגַּדְתֶּם לְאָבִי אֶת־כָּל־כְּבוֹדִי בְּמִצְרַיִם "Therefore, tell my father of all the honour that is given me in Egypt" (45:13)



The Ohev Yisrael (R' Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apta) was travelling with his son, **R' Yitzchak Meir**, through the neighbouring towns. Wherever he went, hundreds of Jews came out to greet him, the gadol b'Yisrael, and showed him great honour.

The Ohev Yisrael was distressed by the amount of honour that he was receiving, and, because of his great modesty, he truly believed that he did not deserve it. He therefore turned to his son and asked, "My son, why is everybody honouring me so much, being that I am not worthy of it?"

R' Yitzchak Meir saw how distraught his father was, so he consoled him: "Do not let it worry you, Father, for these people have come to honour me."

And why do you deserve such honour?" asked the Ohev Yisrael. "That's obvious," replied R' Yitzchak Meir. "It is because I am the son of the Apter Rav!"

The Rebbe smiled, and he said, "This, my son, is what Yosef meant when he stated, ***"Therefore, tell my father of all the honour that is given to me in Egypt- for all of the fame and honour that I receive in Egypt is only thanks to my father's merit!"***

Yehudah! by Rabbi Sender Haber



So much of the parsha centres on Yosef, but I think it is important for us to think about Yehudah as well.

The Parsha begins with a showdown between Yehudah and Yosef. Besides for the immediate issue of Binyamin, there was a natural friction between the two of them. Yehudah was the king of Israel, yet Yosef was the apparent leader. He had all the keys and all of the charm. In the dreams they were all bowing to him. Although they didn't know it at the time, they were having an argument that would last for centuries. Eventually, we would be split between the Kingdoms of Yehudah and Ephraim.

Yosef was an Ish Matzliach. He had a difficult life, but everything that he put his hands on was blessed. All of his endeavours were successful.

Yehudah did not have that same mazal. Yehudah walked around for years knowing that he was the one who told the brothers to sell Yosef. He had two children, Er and Onan, who both died. Then he had the difficult story with his daughter-in-law, Tamar. Finally, last week, he took responsibility for Binyamin, and Binyamin was caught. Everything seemed to go wrong.

The Torah discusses ploughing and reaping. There is a big difference: When you plough the field, you don't see anything. It looks like a lot of dirt and mud. If someone comes and sees you

ploughing, he might think you're not doing anything at all. But when someone is harvesting, you can see something happening. You can pick an apple or an orange and eat it for lunch.

The ploughing is less rewarding and also more important. It is the one who did the ploughing that put in the effort so that whatever would be planted there would grow.

The Zohar writes that Yosef is the harvester but Yehudah ploughs. In Vayigash, Yosef appeared to be getting his way in a very short-sighted way. He arrested Binyamin for simple possession of the goblet, but Yehudah had an entire story to tell. He told Yosef that he cannot decide based on the goblet alone.

Yehudah must be very frustrated. He had finally convinced Yaacov to let him take Binyamin and here this went wrong as well. He was about to lose his portion in the world to come. It was only later that it emerged that everything had worked perfectly. Yosef had become a leader in Mitzrayim because of Yehudah's sale. Now, he was overwhelmed to tears and revealed himself thanks to Binyamin's presence.

Everything worked out in the end. Yehuda was right and, in fact, he was sent by Yaacov to establish a place of Torah in Goshen before everyone else arrived. Yehudah had a sense for the long term success of Klal Yisroel.

This is the difference between Ploughing and Reaping. Reaping gets us immediately satisfied, but ploughing is equally important. It just takes time. And that is the natural reality of most things we do.

Yehudah was not a man of immediate successes, but he was responsible for saving Yosef, for bringing us to Mitzrayim and for leading the Jewish people.

The Pasuk in Amos (9:13) says, "Venigash Choresh Bekotzer" – "the one who ploughs the field and the one who reaps the harvest will get together when Moshiach comes".

Yehudah and Yosef will come together at the end of days. At that time our efforts will meet our successes and everything will become clear. Ha'zor-im B'dimah; B'rinah Yiktzoru.

Chazu Bonai - Emunoh In The Parsha

מד:יח ויגש אליו יהודה ויאמר בי אדני ידבר נא עבדך דבר באזני אדני At this stage in the showdown involving **יוסף** and his brothers, **יהודה** was obviously aware of the extreme danger and difficulty he and the **שבטים** found themselves in. He must have been very agitated. And yet we find that **יהודה** remained relaxed and calm. How did he maintain his composure when faced with such a challenge?

The **שפת אמת זי"ע** answers with a beautiful rendition of the **פסוק** above. " **ויגש אליו יהודה**, and **יהודה** approached him". The name **יהודה** is of course rooted in the word **הודאה**, thanksgiving. Despite the difficult situation, **יהודה** remained thankful and grateful for all the good things in his life. He did not allow his challenges to completely cloud his vision and tip him into darkness. He remained positive, optimistic and upbeat by focusing on his **ברכות.**

Interestingly, the **פסוק** does not specify who **יהודה** approached – it just says **אליו**, to him.

The **שפת אמת** explains that it is actually referring to the **רבש"ע**. Davening is always the best option when faced with a problem and **יהודה** was in fact reaching out to **ה'** for help. But he didn't daven from a place of desperation, rather from a place of gratitude.

And this, he says, is true for all of us. We are all faced with challenges. But the way to overcome them is with **שמחה**. And the way to feel that **שמחה**, is to remind ourselves of all the wonderful things **ה'** has blessed us with, despite the difficulties. **ויגש אליו** , how? **יהודה** - with an attitude of gratitude.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt- Valiant Vessel



The question has been asked that if Hashem provides us with what we need, why can't a person just open a small bodega and expect to support his growing family with that income?

The answer is because according to nature, he won't earn enough money to support his family. It is akin to asking Hashem for a miracle. We trust that Hashem will provide — but naturally, not miraculously. To earn a respectable salary, it is imperative for a person to have the proper conduit.

Someone once came to the Satmar Rebbe and asked for bracha for parnassa so that he can support his large family. When the Rebbe asked the man what he does for a living, the man replied that he was a taxi driver. The Rebbe told him that in that case his bracha will not help. "You need to be a receptacle for the bracha. To sustain a large family, you need a nice amount of income which doesn't come from being a taxi driver. The bracha has no place to take effect."

For a person to earn a large sum of money to sustain his family, he needs to put himself in a position where he can do that. In the saga of Elisha and the widow, he tells her to borrow empty vessels and fill them with oil. She fills up vessels with oil until there were no more vessels. Elisha then tells her to sell the oil and pay her creditor and that she and her sons will live on the remainder. So when there were no more vessels, the oil stopped — **אין עוד כלי ויעמד השמן**

The story is told of a fisherman who went to catch all types of fish. The large fish that he caught, he threw back into the ocean while the small fish he kept. The man who accompanied him was astounded

by his practice and questioned him about this. The fisherman told him that the reason he only keeps the small fish while ejecting the large fish was because his bucket wasn't big enough to contain the large fish.

This idea can be applied to livelihood: if a person desires a certain amount of wealth, then he must make his bucket large enough; he needs to find work that will put him in the position of making that wealth.

Emunoh In Our Lives

The daughter of the holy **לשם** was married for many years but had not been blessed with children. She travelled a long distance to see a famous medical expert in Warsaw who told her that she would never have children. During the 2-week train return journey, she tried keeping her emotions in check, but when she arrived home she burst into heartrending sobs, davening to **ה'** to grant her the gift of children. Her father saw her crying and asked her what had happened. She told him the doctor's prognosis. The **לשם** gave her a **ברכה** that she should have a child who would light up the world. One year later, **Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv זצ"ל**, the eventual **גדול הדור** was born.

She asked her father "Why couldn't you have given me a **ברכה** before I went to Warsaw, it would have saved me so much heartbreak and so much effort?!"

Her father answered "I needed you to realise that no one else could help besides for Hashem. Once the doctor had given up hope and you realised that only Hashem could deliver you from your predicament, only then could my **ברכה** help..."



Kibud Av v'Em



The Targum Yonoson writes that when Yaakov met Yosef for the first time, "*Before he recognized [that it was Yosef], he bowed down to him,and Yosef lost years of his life as a result.*" Yosef didn't have the opportunity to correct his father, to tell him that it was he, Yosef, and not the king of Mitzrayim, as Yaakov thought. Nevertheless, this was considered a pgam, imperfection, in Yosef's kibud av, and therefore, Yosef lost ten years of his life. He was supposed to live until 120 but was niftar at 110.

According to the Targum Yonoson, we can explain that Yosef was crying because he lost years of his life. Pirush Yonoson on Targum Yonoson explains that Yosef lost ten years of his life because just as honouring parents grants a person a long life, as it states **כבד את... למען יאריכון ימיך** - when, one doesn't honour his parents properly, the result is the opposite, r'l.

Long life isn't the only reward of this mitzvah. Rabbeinu b'Chaya says that it is clear that those who excel in kibud av v'em enjoy success in their life: either long life, tranquillity, wealth, or some

other form of success because honouring parents brings success to a person even in this world.

A courageous young child once asked the **Chazon Ish**, "How does one become a Chazon Ish?" The Chazon Ish replied, "If you will honour your parents as I did, you will become a Chazon Ish."

Kibud av v'em grants success, to each person in a different way. If your goal is to grow in Torah, it will grant you success in Torah. If your goal is wealth, it can grant you success there. Some people merit good shidduchim in the merit of their kibud av v'em.

Once, a bachur in Brisk received a letter from his father requesting that he come home. The student asked **Reb Chaim Brisker** what to do because his father didn't attach money for the trip, and kibud av v'em doesn't generally require one to use one's own funds to perform the mitzvah.

Reb Chaim replied, "True, you aren't obligated to pay for the trip, so you don't have to pay for the train. But walking doesn't cost money, and you can walk home!"

The Greatest Treasures are Deep in the Earth

Few people want to work in a diamond mine. They are located deep underground, with oxygen scarce, and are exposed to dangerous gasses. In the past, only people on death row or people who didn't value their life worked there. Yet, from these low places come the rare diamonds, those that are set in the king's crown.

The Beis Avraham zt'l says that this represents our lowly generation. We live at a time when there are very difficult tests, particularly in areas of kedushah (such as guarding the eyes, etc.). People don't want these difficult tests. When confronted with such tests, they feel they fell so drastically. Yet, it is from these places that the most precious gems emerge. Hashem takes our successes

and creates from them diamonds that become part of the King's crown.

When a person is on a low level, confronted with difficult tests, and he krechtz before Hashem, the Beis Avraham says that Hashem loves his krechtz. In Hashem's eyes, this krechtz is higher than the greatest madreigos. He krechtz and moans that he fell so low, and from that low place, from the deepest mine, comes forth the most beautiful diamonds.



Someone yearned to serve the king. The king told him, "I have all the generals and advisers I need. But there is one thing you can do for me. I need a soldier to stand outside, knee-high in the mud, to guard the palace."

Reb Gad'l Eizner zt'l used this mashal to describe this generation. Sometimes we must go down to very unpleasant places, places and tests we wish we wouldn't know of, but when we act as Yidden there, with kedushah and taharah, we are collecting diamonds that will go into the king's crown. Even in these unpleasant places, Hashem is with us. This is written in this week's parashah. Hashem told Yaakov Avinu (46:4) **אנכי ארד עמך מצרימה ואנכי אעלך גם עלה** - "***I will go down with you to Mitzrayim, and I will also bring you up***." Wherever Yidden go, Hashem goes with them.

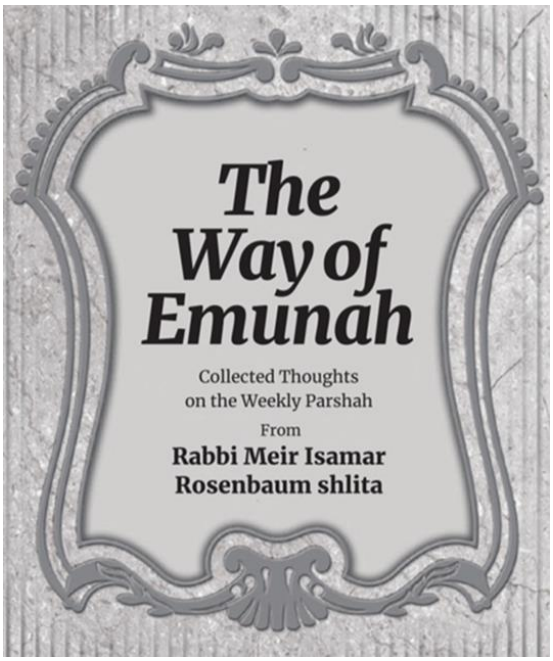
The Kli Yakar adds that Hashem goes to galus before us, as it states **ארד** before **עמך** And when we leave galus, we will leave galus first, and then Hashem will leave. This is as Hashem told Yaakov, **אנכי אעלך גם עלה** - "***I will bring you up, and then I will also come up, out of galus***."

The Kli Yakar compares it to someone who must go into deep water, and he doesn't know how to swim. Someone tells him, "I will go into

the water with you. I know how to swim, and I will help you." He will reply, "I request that you enter the water before me and leave the water after me, so as long as I am in the water, you will be there.

This is what Hashem does. He comes to galus before us and leaves after us, never leaving us alone in galus. This applies to the difficult tests we must endure. Hashem is with us. We are never alone. With this awareness in mind, we will find it easier to pass these tests.

Daven and Daven Again





וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְאַל־יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדֶּךָ כִּי כָמוֹךָ כְּפַרְעֹה *"And Yehuda approached him and said, "Please, my master, let now your servant speak something into my master's ears…"* (44:18

Sefer Zera Kodesh explains the concept of tefillah by quoting Chazal (Bereishis Rabbah 93:6), who say that the word "hagasha", coming close, applies to prayer because tefillah connotes "dveikus", connecting to Hashem.

This is seen from the pasuk (Bereishis 30:8): "Naftuli Elokim niftalti. With Divine bonds, I have connected", which means that through prayer one can create a bond with Hashem. Once one has created this connection, it is certain that his tefillos will be very powerful and will have a strong effect.

Chazal also state (Brachos 30B): "If one prays and is not answered, he should go back and pray again." He should not give up and he should turn to Hashem once more because Hashem desires the tefillos of Klal Yisroel.

Even if someone davens many times and does not receive what he asked for, he should not say that he tried and was unsuccessful and, therefore, he sees no reason to try again. Rather, he should persist in davening to Hashem because every prayer evokes His compassion.

Hashem wants us to speak to Him. Therefore, he places a "chelek Elokah m'mal", a portion of His Divine holiness, within each of us, which helps our tefillos to be accepted. Every time we daven, this holy portion that He placed within us davens alongside us, which helps our prayers to ultimately be accepted.

This idea is hinted to in the pasuk of "Vayigash ailav Yehuda." The first letters of these words spell out the word "ayo" (aleph, yud, hei), which means: "Where?" This hints to the question of: "I have davened and prayed for Hashem's mercy and compassion. Where is it?"

The next words in pasuk are: "Bi adoni" (which can be translated to mean: "My master is in me)" This is the answer to the question. A portion of Hashem's is within me. Therefore: "Let now your servant speak into my master's ear." We can always continue to speak to Hashem and He will hear and accept our tefillos. Thus, one should always remember that when he davens, part of Hashem is davening along with him. Therefore, he should never despair, and he should always continue to daven.

"Never stop doing your best just because someone doesn't give you credit."

Do Not be Ungrateful Even to a Gentile

רַק אַדְמַת הַכֹּהֲנִים לֹא קָנָה כִּי חֹק לַכֹּהֲנִים מֵאֵת פַּרְעֹה... ***Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had a law from Pharaoh***...(47:22)



The Shlah Hakadosh (Derech Chaim Tochachos Mussar) explains that this pasuk is teaching us that one must be grateful and appreciative for any favour one receives from another person, even if that person is a non-Jew.

The Egyptian priests had done a favour to Yosef. They had been the judges on the court case when Yosef was accused of serious crimes by the wife of Potiphar and they had ruled not to give him the death penalty (as is stated in Targum Yonason, Bereishis 39:20).

He expressed his gratitude by not taking their land and feeding them for free.

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger



A misnagged once told Harav Shneur zalaman of Liadi: "I obtained a copy of the sefer Noam Elimelech, and I tossed it beneath my couch!"

The Rebbe replied, "A pity you don't know its author. Were you to have thrown him behind your couch, he too would not have uttered a word!"

One Who Trusts in Hashem Lacks Nothing

כִּי לְמִחְיָה שְׁלָחַנִי אֱלֹקִים לִפְנֵיכֶם ***For it was for sustenance that G-d sent me here before you***. (45:5)

The Lisker Rebbe zy"a (Sefer Ach Pri Tevuah) explains this pasuk by noting that Hashem's name of "Elokim" has the same gematriah as the word "teva", nature. He states that it is known that if a person attempts to live a "natural" life, he is not assured that he will have sufficient livelihood and that he will not lack sustenance.

If a person places his trust in Hashem, he will lack nothing, as is stated in Chovos Halevavos, Shaar Habitachon. From the story of Yosef, it was obvious that Hashem guides every detail of this world. The Shevatim sold him as a slave, yet Hashem orchestrated events to make him into a king, which led to the Shevatim being provided with food to eat during the years of hunger.

This chain of events clearly displayed that Hashem is in charge of all occurrences and that He rules over "nature". Thus, when he said that Elokim sent him to Egypt before the brothers in order to provide sustenance, he was saying that Hashem's rule over nature – which is represented by the name "Elokim" – sent him to this land in order to display how He provides for all those who trust in Him.

Meriting Children in The Zechus of Hachnasas Orchim

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־הָעָם... הֵא־לָכֶם זֶרַע וּזְרַעְתֶּם אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה ***And Yosef said to the people…"Here you have seed, so plant the land." (47:23)***

Rav Meir of Premishlan zy"a (quoted in Sefer Asifas Divrei Chochomim) states that the word "**הֵא**" ("here") is an acronym for "hachnasas orchim".

Thus, the pasuk is hinting that through the mitzvah of welcoming guests, one merits "zera", children, and many other good things!

Salvation

A Slonimer chasid wrote a letter to his rebbe, **the Nesivos Shalom** expressing all the hardships he was going through. He wrote in the letter (Tehillim 121) **מאין יבא עזרי** "***From where will my salvation come?***"

The Nesivos Shalom replied, "I don't understand; if you write one pasuk, why don't you also study the next pasuk? - The pasuk answers, **עזרי מעם ה' עושה שמים וארץ** -"***My salvation comes from Hashem creator of heaven and earth***" (Nesivos Shalom, Michtevei Kodesh 95).



Meriting The Shechinah's Presence in the Zechus of Hachnasas Orchim

The same sefer also quotes the following vort in the name of **Rav Meir of Premishlan zy"a**: The pasuk in Parshas Vayeirah states: "And Hashem appeared to him and he was sitting at the door to the tent in the heat of the day…"

Why does it say that He "appeared to him", rather than saying that "Hashem appeared to Avrohom"?



The pasuk means to say that Hashem appears to every Jew, not only to Avrohom. Every Jew can merit having the Shechinah appear to him if he "sits at the door of the tent", meaning that he welcomes guests into his home. - ***If one warmly welcomes guests, the Shechinah will be with him in his house.***

They Recognized On His Face That He Was Still a Tzadik

Agrah D'Kallah asks what it means that they were startled "by his face". Why doesn't it simply say that they were startled "by him"?

He answers that they looked at his face and saw that it was illuminated with holiness. They realized that their brother was still a tzadik and they were startled. They were amazed that he had managed to overcome the temptations of this immoral land and that he had remained completely righteous. They wondered how he could have stayed so holy, with such a shining face while living in such a corrupt place.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series [לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה]



וַיְכַלְכֵּל יוֹסֵף אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אֶחָיו וְאֵת כָּל בֵּית אָבִיו לֶחֶם לְפִי הַטָּף . Yosef Hatzadik provides for Yaakov Avinu and his brothers, and gives them property and a place to live. He gives them sufficient food that there was plenty, and there was even enough for the children. (Rashi - **לפי הצריך לכל בני ביתם**) 47:12

The Sifsei Chachamim explain that when children eat, there are often more crumbs found on the floor, then went in their mouths.

Yosef provided enough produce for them so that even the children would be able to eat in their regular messy fashion! There would be no stress that they were dropping valuable crumbs all over the floor!

Toras Avigdor - Balancing Our Personalities

Yehuda was chosen for his boldness; for his ability to stand up for what's right and be tough when it was needed. But Yehuda was also a model of humility.

All of our great men were like that – they were strong and humble – because they were emulating Hashem. The Paradigm of being Mighty while remaining Humble is Hakodosh Boruch Hu and this idea is delineated in the second *bracha* of *Shemoneh Esrei* which discusses Hashem's Gevuros as well as His Kindliness. - We strive to emulate the *middos* of Hashem and act powerful while acting kind.

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע״ה בן ברוך הלוי נ״י

וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְאַל־יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדֶּךָ כִּי כָמוֹךָ כְּפַרְעֹה ***Then Judah approached him and said, "Please, my lord, let now your servant speak something into my lord's ears, and let not your wrath be kindled against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh.44:18***

In last week's parsha, Yehudah was the one who had guaranteed his father Yaakov that he would bring Binyamin back safe and sound. Now that Yosef was taking Binyamin as a slave, it was Yehudah who stepped forward to beg and plead for his youngest brother's release.

However, there seem to be some extra words and letters in this pasuk. The word **בִּי** and the word **נָא** don't seem necessary, as well as the word **וְאַל**. The pasuk could have said **ולא** as it usually does.

And the **כ** of **כְּפַרְעֹה** seems extra too? The whole pasuk could really have read as follows:- **וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֵּר עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְלא־יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדֶּךָ כִּי כָמוֹךָ פַּרְעֹה**

The letters **כ – אל – נא – בי** seem to be hinting at something…

The **מתוקים מדבש** brings an amazing remez in our pasuk as follows:

According to the Sifrei Kabbalah, there is a special pasuk in Tehillim, that when recited with proper concentration, has within it the power to save one from becoming angry: **בַּמֶּה יְזַכֶּה־נַּעַר אֶת־אָרְחוֹ לִשְׁמֹר כִּדְבָרֶךָ** ***- In what manner should a youth purify his way? To observe according to Your word. 119:9***

So as Yehudah approached Yosef to beg for mercy to try to save Binyamin, he alluded to this pasuk in Tehillim with the seemingly extra letters… **ב-בַּמֶּה יְ-זַכֶּה־נַּ-עַר אֶ-ת־אָ-רְחוֹ לְ-שְׁמֹר כְּ-דְבָרֶךָ** hoping to be saved from Yosef's wrath!

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez

וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְאַל־יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדֶּךָ כִּי כָמוֹךָ כְּפַרְעֹה *Then Judah approached him and said, "Please, my lord, let now your servant speak something into my lord's ears, and let not your wrath be kindled against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh.44:18*

At the end of last week's parsha, Yosef demanded that Binyamin stay in Mitzrayim as a punishment for 'stealing' his goblet, and the rest of the brothers return home.

Yehudah had been the one who had guaranteed his father Yaakov that he would bring Binyamin back safe and sound, and so he was the one who stepped forward to attempt to convince Yosef to set Binyamin free.

With which merit did Yehudah feel he had protection to stand up to the most powerful commander in Mitzrayim?

It was in the zechus of a most righteous descendant of his, who would become the king of Klal Yisrael when Moshiach will arrive: Yehudah had a son called Peretz. Peretz had a great grandson called Aminadav, who had a great grandson called **בועז** who married **רות** and had a grandson called **ישי** who was the father of **דוד** – Melech Yisrael!

Yehudah hinted to this special protection in his words - **יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר** – "In the zechus of my descendants: **יִשַׁי דָּוִד בֹּעַז רוּת** allow your servant to speak a word…"

Dovid HaMelech is the **fourth** **רגל** of the Kisei HaKavod. The first three are our Avos- Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. However, the gemara tells us in Mesechta Moed Katan on 16b that in the future, Dovid HaMelech will lead the way – BEFORE the avos!

Amazingly, the '*trop*' on the first six words of our Pasuk alludes to this:- **וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי**

The *Trop* (Hebrew cantillation) are called **קַדְמָא וְאַזְלָא רְבִיע זַרְקָא מֵנַח סָגּוֹל**

'Dovid HaMelech , the **FOURTH** רגל of the Kisei HaKavod, will be **THROWN** ahead and **PLACED BEFORE** the ⁘ -סָגּוֹל **–** the **3** Avos in the future!' (**חמרא טבא**)

Beneath the Surface By R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(מד:כח) ויצא האחד מאתי ואמר אך טרף טרף ולא ראיתיו עד הנה One has left me and I said (to myself): 'Alas he has surely been torn to pieces, and I have not seen him until now!' (44:28)



The Chasam Sofer states that Yaakov knew that Yosef did not die, for if Yosef had died – so said Yaakov – he would have come to me in a dream. If he did not come to me in a dream – then he did not die.

The Chasam Sofer says this is hinted at in this Posuk: "One has left me and I said: 'Alas' he has surely been torn to pieces' – he was just taken, he did not die. What is the proof? "For I have not seen him until now" – I did not see him in a dream until now, and if he had died, he would have come to me in a dream. (Yechi Reuven)

Rav Yitzchak Hutner, zt"l, would say, "Tefilah wasn't invented to get us out of problems. Problems were invented to get us into Tefilah!"

Torah Tavlin

R' Chaim Kamil zt"l (Imrei Chaim) would say: **וַיִּשְׂאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־** 46:5 **–יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם... בָּעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח פַּרְעֹה..**



Why does the Torah stress that Yaakov went on the wagons that Pharaoh sent? And why does it say this only after the conversation between Hashem and Yaakov?

The answer is that Yaakov assumed the wagons were sent by Pharaoh for use only if Yaakov decided to live in Egypt. At the beginning of the trip, Yaakov was only going to see Yosef but not to stay there. Hence, he did not want to steal from Pharaoh.

However, once Hashem spoke to him, Yaakov knew he was there to stay and was willing to accept Pharaoh's gesture."

Sugar Rush On The 613 Mitzvos With Rabbi Eli Reit - Mitzvah # 54 - To Be Happy On Yom Tov

We are required to be happy on the Yamim Tovim as the Pasuk (Devarim 16:14) says, "V'somachta Bichagecha". Women are also obligated in this Mitzvah. Included in this mitzvah is eating meat, drinking wine, wearing fine clothing, and giving out candy to the children. In the Beis Hamikdash, they'd have music and dancing.

We are required to include in the Mitzvah of gladdening people who are weak/poor or converts, orphans, and widows. A husband is responsible to make his wife happy, and a father is responsible to make his children happy. This is done by providing them with their Yom Tov needs.

Short Story Of The Week With Rabbi Mordechai Levin

A Rosh Yeshiva once came to the **Chazon Ish, ZT"L** to request permission to expel a student who wasn't following the rules of the yeshiva and was a bad influence on others. Reluctantly, the Chazon Ish allowed it. However, he told the Rosh Yeshiva to ask the student if he would agree to learn with the Chazon Ish, as he was "looking" for a study partner. Thus began a seven-year relationship between the young man and the great Chazon Ish, in fact for a number of those years he actually lived in the Chazon Ish's home.

He carefully observed the Chazon Ish and wrote down all that he witnessed. The Chazon Ish was a tremendous *masmid*, one who studied Torah with all his physical strength. His nightly routine was that he famously learned until he had no more strength, and then collapsed onto his bed to rest. He leaned his head against the wall and left the lamp burning. As soon as he felt his strength return, he would resume his learning.



One day, a bochur from the Mir Yeshiva came to stay overnight in the home of the Chazon Ish. As he prepared to go to sleep, a strange thing occurred. The Chazon Ish also began preparing for bed and changed into pyjamas. When the bochur got into bed, the Chazon Ish asked his student to put out the lamp. The room was dark and all three inhabitants went to sleep.

The next morning, the student asked the Chazon Ish about his unusual behaviour the night before. He had never before seen the Chazon Ish change clothing and prepare for sleep, nor had he ever seen him lay in the dark.

The Chazon Ish explained that he was concerned that the Mirrer bochur wouldn't sleep properly if the Chazon Ish was learning and

with the lamp on in the room; therefore, he went to bed and asked that the lamp be extinguished.

Although the Chazon Ish lived in a spiritual world, he concerned himself with the welfare of others. He gave his precious time to facilitate the well-being of his fellow Jew.

Comment: When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, they were stunned and embarrassed. The Midrash writes that every Jew must worry about their eventual Yom HaDin (Day of Judgement). We must care about others and seek out opportunities for Chesed and Mitzvos, so that we would not be embarrassed upon our eventual Yom HaDin.

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, they were speechless (45:3). **וְלֹא־ יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו**

Rabbeinu Ephraim explains that because Yosef did not include in his revelation that he was their brother, they were scared that he felt hatred to them, and therefore, they were at a loss of words. His omitting a few sensitive words caused them such great confusion.

We see how careful we must be with our speech to prevent unnecessary pain, even by just forgetting azer few crucial words, or by adding even a few insensitive words.

"Nefesh Shimshon" – From the Teachings of Rabbeinu Shimshon Dovid Pincus Zt"L - A Good Sign

וַיַּרְא אֶת־הָעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף ***He saw the wagons that Yosef sent. (Bereishis 45:27)***



He gave them a sign about the subject he was occupied with when he left him – the passage of eglah arufah. Thus it says, "He saw the wagons that Yosef sent," and does not say, "that Pharaoh sent." (Rashi)

There once was an *agunah* whose husband had left her many years before and disappeared. One day, a man showed up, claiming he was her husband. To prove his claim he showed that he knew all about everything connected to the home.

The *Vilna Gaon* instructed them to ask him about his seat in the *shul*. Because if he is lying, and he procured the information from the husband in order to steal his wife, he would not have asked the husband about *kedushah* matters at all. And so it was. He did not know where his seat was in the *shul*, and his evil scheme was revealed.

When great *tzaddikim* have a question about a certain matter, they often search in the Torah for an indication, because everything is in the Torah. It is possible that the *Vilna Gaon* found an indication here, in our *parshah*, for the instructions he gave.

Yaakov was looking for a sign whether the viceroy in Egypt was really Yosef as claimed. Yaakov didn't believe it until he received a sign about a *kedushah* matter, which was that they had learned the subject of *eglah arufah* together.

Yesodos M'HaSedra - Yosef's Tears



The Torah seems to emphasize that Yosef **cried**, and that he **cried** often. When his brothers threw him into the pit, he pleaded with them and he **cried**. When Binyomin came down to Mitzrayim, Yosef could not contain himself, so he went to another room and **cried**. When Yosef revealed his true identity to his brothers, the posuk emphasizes that he **cried**. Then he embraced Binyomin and they both **cried**. Later, when he was reunited with Yaakov Avinu, Yosef **cried** again.

True, we can certainly understand Yosef's tears while pleading for his life and the other times when he cried were also quite emotional experiences. However, it seems that the Torah over-emphasizes the fact that Yosef **cried**.

HaRav Shimson Pinkus zt"l explains that there is a lot more to crying than meets the eye. While we tend to think that crying it is no more than a way of expression emotion such as anger or frustration when words won't suffice, it is actually more than this. Tears are the expression of the neshama and it is the avenue by which the soul connects with Hakadosh Boruch Hu and the upper worlds.

Indeed, Chazal tell us that although after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, the gates of prayer were locked, the gates of tears remain open. It is a unique way of connecting to Hakadosh Boruch Hu and does what even the best chosen words cannot accomplish. This was Yosef. Yosef represents every Jew. Although he was one, Yosef does not represent the talmid chacham or the melech. Yosef connected with Hashem through his tears. Every Jew has the ability to make a spiritual connection in the same way.

The Nesivos Sholom points out that before Yosef revealed his identity he commanded everyone else to leave the room. On a simple level, this was to save the shevatim from being humiliated in front of the Mitzrim. On a deeper level this was a time of hisva'adus - a private moment for the brothers to be together alone. The words of the posuk, "v'lo amad ish ito" - an no man should be there with him, convey that something special was about to happen.

The Nesivos Sholom points out that we find a similar wording when the Torah commands the Kohein Gadol to enter to Kodesh ha'Kodoshim of Yom Kippur - no man shall be there. The Gemara questions how this could be. After all, the Kohein Gadol was there, so at least there was one man present.

The Gemara answers that the Kohein Gadol became so elevated that he was transformed into an angel and indeed, no man was present. It would therefore seem, suggests the Nesivos Sholom, that Yosef and his brothers also transcended their existence as men and reached a higher spiritual plane. Perhaps this was why Yosef cried loudly as he revealed his identity.

We daven and make berachos all day long. Even if we are careful not to swallow the beracha faster than the food and pay attention to the meaning of the words we say, we often do so without feeling or emotion.

The same is true with tefilah. We say words by rote without feeling or connection. First, we must realize that we are standing in front of Hashem but more than this, we must realize that Hashem wants us to connect to Him, and that we need that connection. By putting a little emotion into our tefilos, we can accomplish this, and since the gates of tears remain open, our tefilos will then be able to achieve so much more.

Sparks Of Shabbos

During the period of time when **Rav Shimshon Pinkus zt"l** lived in Yerushalayim, he would often daven with the Karliner chasidim on Friday night. Although he was not affiliated with that group, their minhag was to daven Friday night wearing a tallis.

R' Shimshon once explained that the reason he chose to daven with them was so that he could cover his head and face with the tallis and no one would be able to see him cry, as he longed to cry during davening on leil Shabbos.

Clearly, these were not painful tears shed in mourning, but rather a deep expression of emotion he felt as he met the Ribono shel Olam who is very close to all of us on Shabbos. For Rav Pinkus this was very real that it brought him to tears. We should at least learn to realize that Shabbos is more than a day of rest; it's an opportunity to meet up with and connect to our Creator.



Torah Temimah

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר כִּי מָטֵי לְהַאי קְרָא, בָּכֵי: "וְלֹא יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו", וּמָה תּוֹכֵחָה שֶׁל בָּשָׂר וָדָם כָּךְ, תּוֹכֵחָה שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא — עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה.. חגיגה ד:

Whenever he would read how Yosef's brothers were so embarrassed and confused when he revealed himself that they couldn't answer him, R' Elazar would cry, because he realized that this is nothing compared to the embarrassment a person will have when he will have to face his Creator.

With Tears Not Water



When the foundation stone was laid for Yeshivas Ponovitch, the **Ponovitcher Rov** told over the story about **Rav Chaim M'Voloshin**, who founded the "mother" of all Yeshivos. When Rav Chaim Voloshin was to lay the foundation stone for his Yeshiva, the cement was not mixed with water, but with Rav Chaim's own tears. Rav Chaim commented that the way to found a Yeshiva is with tears.



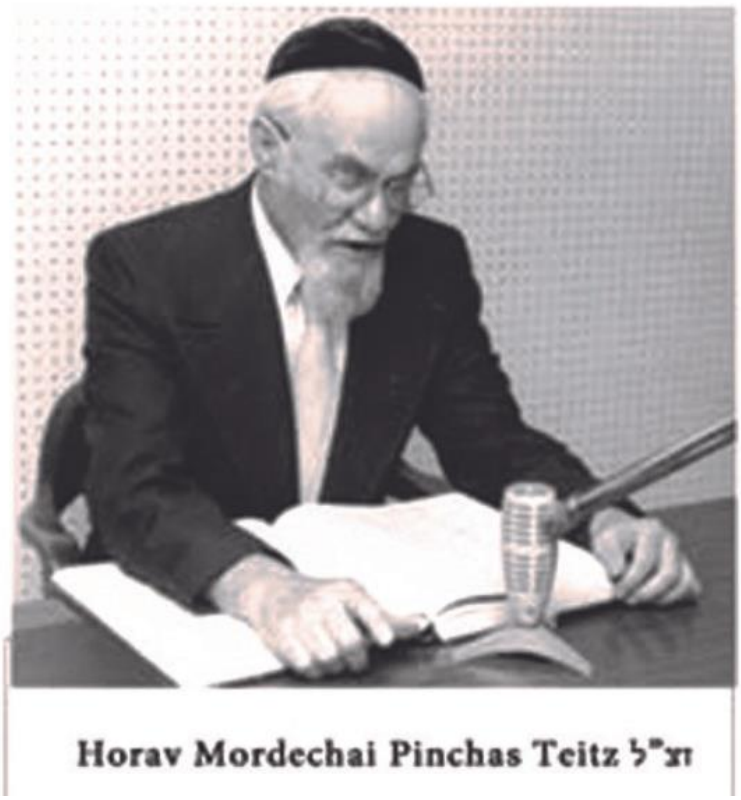
The same applies to the foundation of all areas in life. The foundation of marriage, before one gets married, and the foundation of a child's life before a child's born. The couple should cry to Hashem for zeessah shalom bayis, and both parents should cry for the Hatzlacha of their children. As we know, we all want Shalom Bayis and the key is to continue davening that you find חן in each

other's eyes. It is not enough just to daven under the chuppah and then your good to go.

Rav Pincus said further, after a child is born, young children have a tendency to come down will all sorts of illnesses, all this is to remind us that Hashem wants us to turn to Him. If we don't, we missed the boat, and the train.

Parents should never stop crying out and beseeching Hashem for their children to remain healthy and safe and that they gain a love for Torah, fear of Hashem and Middos Tovos. All these things are not built through water, but through **tears**!

A Daf Gemarah



Horav Mordechai Pinchas Teitz זצ"ל

In the early 1950's, **Horav Mordechai Pinchas Teitz** זצ"ל noticed that many of the older people did not know how to learn gemara. He decided to start a learning session on the radio every motzai Shabbos and learned a daf of gemara each week.

After the first year, Rav Teitz made a melaveh malkah for all of the people who listened to his daf hashavuah. He was very happy

when he saw that there were over 1,400 people who learned with him!





Reb Shmuel Minkus zt'l (renowned chassid of the **Baal HaTanya zt'l**) felt that he needed chizuk in avodas Hashem, so he went to the marketplace and sought someone who could take him to Liadi, where the Baal HaTanya lived.

A spirit merchant told him that he was traveling in that direction, but he only had room for him to sit in the uncovered wagon next to the barrels of spirits.

Reb Shmuel went with him. It was freezing in the uncovered wagon, and Reb Shmuel asked the spirit merchant for permission to drink some vodka from the barrels so that he could warm up. Permission was granted.

When Reb Shmuel came to the Baal HaTanya, he said shalom aleichem and tzeschem l'shalom at the same time. He explained that he was ready to return home.

"You just came!" the Baal HaTanya said with a smile, well accustomed to Reb Shmuel's humour. "Why do you want to leave so quickly?"

"I came because I needed chizuk in avodas Hashem. However, I received my inspiration on the way here. Therefore, I can go home now."

The Baal HaTanya asked him, "What inspiration did you get?" Reb Shmuel said, "I sat among barrels of alcohol as I travelled here, but the barrels didn't warm me up. I became warm when I drank the alcohol. I learned from this that it isn't sufficient to learn chassidic ideas. To become warm, I must allow these ideas to become a part of me."

In reference to Chanukah, now is the time to think about what we acquired over Chanukah and to consider how we can take those lessons, attitudes, and inspiration with us for the entire year.

L'Maaseh



A certain yeshiva in the New York area made a fundraising weekend event in a hotel in a nearby town. A few of the women who worked in the yeshiva's office were assigned with the task of greeting the guests as they entered, directing them to their rooms and handing them the information packets they had prepared.

One of the honoured guests was none other than **Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlit"a**, the Philadelphia Rosh Yeshiva, and a well know gadol in America. When he entered, the woman who greeted him asked him "what's your name". Clearly, this woman had never seen a picture of him, but was certainly familiar with his name.

Knowing that answering "Shmuel Kamenetsky" would likely embarrass her for not realizing who he was, he thought quickly and answered

"Kamenetsky". As she examined the guest list she noticed a few Kamenetsky's and asked him for his first name. "Sammy. My name is Sammy!" responded R' Shmuel.

After examining the list, she turned to him and said "I don't see a Sammy here. There is a Shmuel, though." "Oh! They must have used my Hebrew name! I guess that's me!", said R' Shmuel!

Etz Hachaim – 'Cool' Tears

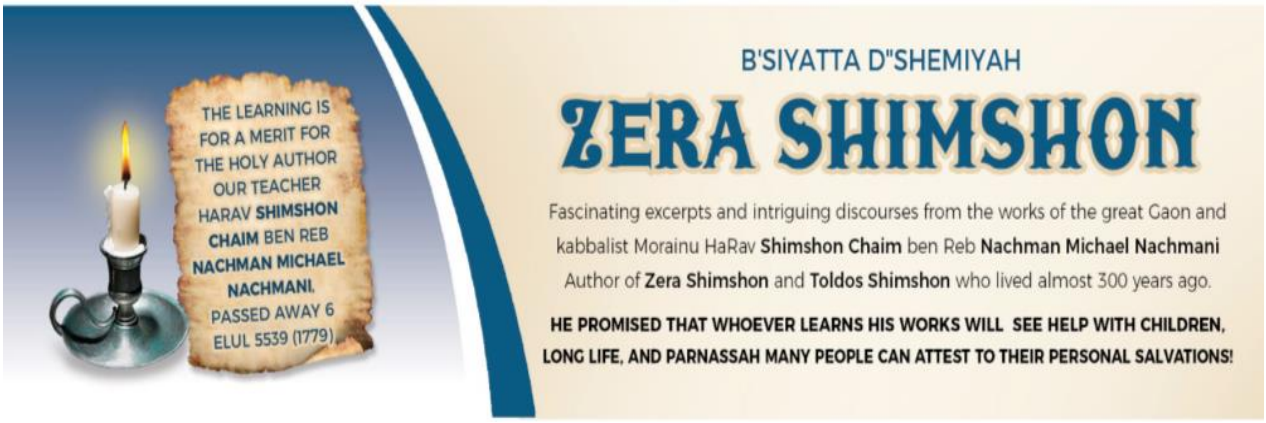
We see that Yosef is constantly crying…Yosef overhears the brothers regretting the sale… Yosef wants to cry…Yosef upon seeing Binyomin wants to cry…Yosef falls on the neck of Binyamin and cries…Yosef finally meets Yaakov and Yosef is crying…At the end of the Parsha when the brothers suggest to Yosef that they be his servants… Yosef cries.

But it does not start from Yosef. Yosef's mother Rochel was also constantly crying to the extent that Hashem tells Rochel **מנעי קולך מבכי ועניך מדמאה** "***Withhold your voice from crying, and your eyes from tears***"!

Rav Shimshon Pincus זצוק״ל asks why does the Torah go at such lengths to elaborate on all the tears of Yosef? Rav Pincus explains that the Torah teaches us here, that tears are something that is meant to be part of the genetics of a Yid! A Yid must have regesh!

Rav Pincus continues "Nowadays, a Bochur who is *mekulkal* is one that Chas V'Shalom looks at what he is not meant to etc. However, it used to be that if a bochur did not cry by "V'Hu Rachum" there was already something to be concerned about!

In our modern world, however, it is not "cool" to cry, who cries? Even by a funeral, the only ones who are crying are the women (perhaps). "It used to be that all Yidden cried! Explains Rav Pincus.



וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ מִפָּנָיו - *Yosef said to his brothers, "I am Yosef! Is my father still alive?" And his brothers were unable to answer him because they were frightened of him.* (45:3).

The Medrash (Rabbah 93:10) says that when **Abba Kohen Bardela** would reach this passuk, he would begin to cry, saying, "If Yosef, the Shevatim's younger brother's rebuke, left them unable to respond to him, what will we have to respond to Hashem when He judges us for our actions?!"

The Zera Shimshon asks - what great lesson did Abba Kohen Bardela see in Yosef HaTzaddik's rebuke, that seemingly, he gained great insight into what it will look like when Hashem Himself judges us? Were it not for this story, would Abba Kohen Bardela not have realized the severity of what it means to be judged by Hashem Himself?

The Zera Shimshon explains that immediately when Yosef HaTzaddik revealed himself to his brothers, they recognized him instantly. The embarrassment they felt was from the fact that although they had spent much time with Yosef HaTzaddik, speaking to him, eating with him etc. they heard his voice and saw his mannerism, still, not once, did they entertain the possibility that this was their brother, Yosef HaTzaddik!

Notwithstanding, that when Yosef HaTzaddik eventually revealed himself to the Shevatim, it was so clear to them that he was indeed Yosef HaTzaddik without a doubt.

This is why they were so embarrassed - that such a seemingly clear thing was totally and utterly obscured from them the entire time - they couldn't fathom how they had not realized such a blatantly obvious thing.

In this, explains the Zera Shimshon, Abba Kohen Bardela saw a tremendous analogy to how the judgment that Hashem will pass upon us will also look. - After living many years in this world and doing many actions numerous times we never realized or even entertained the possibility that they are in reality sins and transgressions against Hashem's will.

When Hashem rebukes us for our actions, everything will become instantly clear and our embarrassment will be so great, leaving us with the same question the Shevatim had - how could it be that something that in retrospect is now so clear, didn't even cause us the slightest suspicion when we did it?!



Honesty

As reported by his son-in-law, **Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch** was worried towards the end of his life. The long-standing practice of his community was to pay the Rabbi his annual wage on 1st January for the coming year. Rav Hirsch was worried that if he died sometime during that year, he'd be accused of having not fulfilled the job he was paid to do - he'd be stealing from the community.

In the end he had nothing to fear: He passed away on 31st December (1888). If a person desires honesty Hashem will assist them.

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

45:14 וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן־אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו

After Yosef revealed his identity to his brothers, he and Binyomin fell upon each other's necks and wept. Rashi writes that the tears they shed were their way of mourning the Holy Temples and Mishkan that would be built in the portions of Israel to be inherited by their descendants that they saw prophetically would eventually be destroyed.

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein recounts that an elderly woman once passed away, and in her will, she left instructions to divide her estate equally among her grandchildren, except for an extra $10,000 that was to be given to a certain granddaughter on top of her regular portion.

What was the reason for the additional inheritance?

Later in life, the woman opened up to her family and shared the bitter story of the travails she endured during the Holocaust. While most of them sat listening stoically, one granddaughter cried profusely at the tales of her tortuous pain and suffering. In recognition of her compassion and empathy, the grandmother allotted her more than the others.

Rav Zilberstein derives from here that if a human being chooses to give additional money as a reflection of the special bond she felt with a granddaughter who cried when hearing about her suffering, Hashem will certainly feel even more connected to us for every tear we shed over His pain at the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, and the reward we receive will be unfathomable.

Great wisdom and intelligence is needed to properly acquire Yiras Shomayim. - Mesillas Yesharim, Introduction

To Gladden a Broken Heart

After **Rav Moshe Feinstein's** petirah, when his son **Reb Dovid** got up from shivah, he spoke in the yeshivah following Shacharis, sharing a very short dvar halachah. It was only at the sheloshim that Reb Dovid delivered a real address, speaking about the special merit his father had in being married to a bas kohein, as Rebbetzin Shima was the daughter of a kohein.

It seemed a strange way to pay tribute to the niftar, and on the subway back to Brooklyn, the throngs of bnei Torah who had come to be inspired by Rav Moshe's legacy, who had been searching for stories and chizuk, spoke of their disappointment. But those who knew Reb Dovid well understood.

The new rosh yeshivah, whose every word was measured, saw an opportunity — his mother was present, and it was a chance to gladden her broken heart, to mention her lineage and what she had given her husband.

Rabbi Label Lam - What's in a name?

In the greatest fashion possible and in the most remarkable way, Yosef Ha'Tzaddik lived up to at least two of the meanings of his name. Yosef, to gather. He gathered together and collected food, saving Egypt and his family and the whole world from starvation. And he gathered together his family, as his dreams had indicated.

And secondly, Yosef means he added. He added two nations to Klal Yisrael, Ephraim and Menachem. And it could be that the biggest addition he made was by unifying his family, because the total is always greater than the sum of its parts. So we can ask ourselves: What's in a name? - Everything!

Parsha Pearls

"And Yehuda approached him…" Why are the Jewish people called Yehudim?

It comes from the name Yehuda יהודה. Why was Yehuda named that way? Because his mother Leah said הפעם אודה את ה' "***this time I will thank Hashem***" - יהודה is related to the word אודה.

In his insights on the parsha, **the Sefas Emes** (Vayigash, 5631) quotes the **Chidushei HaRim** saying: We are called Yehudim because we thank Hashem for every small and big thing, since we know that everything is from Him.

As you go through your day, notice the big and the "little" blessings that your loving Father in Shamayim sends to you, and thank Him for each one of them. Why? Because you are a Yehudi!

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk - My Son the… Rabbi?



When Yaakov was told that Yosef was still alive and was the ruler of Egypt, the world's superpower at that time, he didn't believe it. He was still mourning for his son Yosef until he saw the wagons Yosef sent along with those of Pharaoh.

Rashi tells us that Yosef was signalling to Yaakov that he remembered the lesson of the last portion of the Torah his father had taught him. It was upon seeing this that Yaakov was revived.

Those who understand that Hashem determines who will be rich or poor, and decrees if one will be brilliant or dull, are not impressed by the success one has in life. Seeing Yosef a wealthy prince, ruling over millions of people, did not excite Yaakov. However, when he saw

that Yosef remained true to his faith and kept the mitzvos as his father had taught him, he was filled to bursting with paternal pride.

This is what true Jewish "nachas" is about. That our children understand what is truly important in life, and that they have become good people, not just "successful" ones.

The Zera Shimshon – The Limud that Brings Yeshuos

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו גְּשׁוּ־נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגָּשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה 45:4

When Yosef proclaimed to his brothers that he is Yosef and not only the second in command in Mitzrayim they jumped back out of astonishment. The Torah goes on to say what happened next, "And Yosef said to his brothers, "Please come close to me." And they came close to him. And he said to them, "I am your brother Yosef, who you sold me to Mitzrayim.""(Braishis 45/4) Rashi comments, "PLEASE COME CLOSE TO ME- He saw that they shied away from him and he said to himself, "Now my brothers feel ashamed." He therefore called to them in a gentle manner and showed them that he was circumcised".

Zera Shimshon asks in the name of the mefarshim that Rashi previously explained (41/55) that after the famine began, whoever came to get food from him had to be circumcised. Therefore since all the Mitzriyim were circumcised, how is the fact that Yosef was also circumcised a proof that he is their brother? Maybe he was a regular Mitzri who was circumcised to be able to receive rations? Secondly, why did Yosef choose specifically this mitzvah for everyone to do to get rations and not some other Mitzvah?

He answers by asking and answering another question. It is written in Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Dayo 263/5) that one is not permitted to circumcise a gentile if it is not for the purpose of conversion. If so, asks Zera Shimshon, how was Yosef permitted to order all of the

Mitzriyim to circumcise themselves? Yosef had no intention to convert them!

He answers this question in the name of the Yeffa Toar that in Mitzrayim at that time, a circumcised man was considered flawed and because Yosef was obviously circumcised, he was made fun of by the other Mitzriyim. He wanted to circumcise everyone in order that they would stop ridiculing him, but he had a problem with the aforementioned Shulchan Aruch.

Therefore, he came up with a great idea; he circumcised the Mitzriyim in such a way that it looked like a milah but in truth it was not halachiky valid - he didn't completely cut off the foreskin (He made chaticha but not preeya). By doing this Yosef was saved from ridicule (since everyone also looked circumcised) but didn't do anything against the Shulchan Aruch.

The Zera Shimshon – The Limud that Brings Yeshuos



וַיֵּרָ֤א אֵלָיו֙ וַיִּפֹּ֣ל עַל־צַוָּארָ֔יו ***(Yosef) presented himself and fell on his (Yaakov's) neck*** (46:29)

Rashi writes that Yaakov Avinu did not fall on Yosef's neck since he was reciting Kri'as Shema. The question asked by many of the commentaries is why was it only Yaakov Avinu who was saying Kri'as Shema? If it was the time to recite Kri'as Shema, then Yosef HaTzaddik should have also been saying Kri'as Shema? And if it was not the halachically required time to read Shema, why was Yaakov Avinu reciting Shema. Another point that needs clarification is that is seems from passuk that immediately when Yaakov Avinu

saw Yosef HaTzaddik he saw it necessary to recite Shema. What was it about seeing Yosef that caused Yaakov Avinu to say Shema?

We cannot answer that Yaakov Avinu had by chance started reciting Shema and raised his eyes and saw Yosef since one must recite Shema with his eyes closed. The answer and explanation to this is follows: There are two big letters (in the Torah) in the words of Shema, the last letter of **שמע**, the **ע**, and the last letter of **אחד**, the **ד**. The **ד** symbolizes the four mothers of the Jewish people. The **ע** hints to our three forefathers, in the following manner. With regards to Avraham Avinu, who embodies the trait of Chessed, kindness, the **ע** represents a concept called the 70 bridges of kindness (**ע** has the numerical value of 70. I do not know the source or understanding behind this concept).

Regarding Yitzchak Avinu, who embodied the trait of din, strict judgment, the **ע** represents the 70 elders who serves as judges (Bamidbar 11:16). And regarding Yaakov Avinu, from whom the Jewish nation grew, the **ע** represents the 70 souls of his family that were the beginning of the Jewish nation. Until this point in time, Yaakov Avinu has never seen all the 70 souls together since Yosef was gone before all 70 souls had been born. This was the first time Yaakov Avinu saw all 70 souls together, when he finally met Yosef in Egypt.

This is why immediately upon seeing Yosef, Yaakov Avinu said Shema since this was first time he was able to say Shema with the **ע** fully representing him as the father of the 70 souls that became the Jewish nation.

This explains why although Yaakov Avinu was reciting Shema, Yosef did not. This is because it was not the time to recite Shema. Yaakov Avinu's reason for reciting Shema is as explained above and not because of a timely obligation to recite Shema.



The Gerrer Rebbe, Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter (1847-1906), author of the **Sfas Emes** lived and led his Chassidus in Tsarist Russia which was a very difficult time for the Jewish people.

The Jews of Tsarist Russia endured horrible mistreatment under Tsar Nicolai the First. In 1827, through the issue of "The Cantonist Decree", he tried to convert young Jewish children by forcibly placing them on a path to become Russian soldiers where the chances of remaining Frum were perilously thin. This was done in part, by kidnappers who would kidnap young Jewish children. These kidnappers who were called "Khappers", would forcibly take the children from their homes and induct them into training camps to prepare them for army service so that at the age of 18 they could begin their 25-year service in the Russian army.

Fortunately, after the rule of Nicolai the First, there was a bit of a reprieve. The next Tsar, Alexander the Second, came to power in 1855 and was friendlier to the Jews. He undid the 'Cantonist Decree' and the Jews breathed a sigh of relief. The harsh regime and rule of Tsarist Russia subsided. However, the reprieve was short-lived – Alexander the Second was assassinated in 1881. The next Tsar, Alexander the Third was a despot. He hated Jews and unleashed a notorious era of cruelty and antisemitism.

The despairing Chassidim of the Sefas Emes who lived during this era looked to him for guidance and inspiration. In Parshas Vayigash of 1884, the Sfas Emes inspired his Chassidim with the following. He explained one of the Pasukim in this week's Parsha (Bereishis 46:4) אָנֹכִי אֵרֵד עִמְּךָ מִצְרַיְמָה - "***And I [Hashem] shall go down with you [Yaakov Avinu] to Egypt***" in the following manner.

This Pasuk is not only a commitment to Yaakov, that Hashem will be with him in the exile of Egypt, but also a promise that Hashem will be with the Jewish people in future exiles – even in our own time. It is connected to the Pasuk in Tehillim (91:15), עִמּוֹ־אָנֹכִי בְצָרָה "***And I shall be with him in sorrow***." This is what is elaborated in the Gemorah (Megillah 29a): "When they were exiled to Egypt and to Bavel, the Shechina [Hashem] was with them."

However, the Sefas Emes continues, this is a conditional promise. To merit Hashem joining us in exile, we need to be like the Yaakov who Hashem accompanied for that first exile to Egypt – which means that we need to grab hold of his quintessential Middah of Emes. If we do so, then Hashem will dwell among Israel, even in the exile. The meaning of the Possuk above "And I[Hashem] shall go down with you[Yaakov] to Egypt" is "I shall go down with you, because of you (for those who are like you), to Egypt."



The Shevatim selling Yosef as a slave ultimately caused Yosef to go down to Egypt. Yosef caused Yaakov to go to Egypt. And when Yaakov went down to Egypt, Hashem went down with him.

Hashem is telling Yaakov and the Jewish people that by grabbing hold of Yaakov's Middah of Emes by always being truthful, Hashem will remain with them in Egypt and in future exiles.

(Author's note: It is quite clear that the Sefas Emes means to apply this message to the Tsarist Russia exile that he and his Chassidim were currently facing. He was telling them that if they grabbed hold

of Yaakov's Middah of Emes, Hashem would be with them and protect them from the Tsar.)

The Sefas Emes continues, do not be mistaken and think that always being truthful is too difficult for us to obtain. The fact is that within the nation of Israel, the essence and root of Yaakov – to always be truthful, is constantly with us as Chazal have said in a Midrash, "***the face of Yaakov Avinu is etched onto the Kisei HaKavod [Hashem's throne], therefore, any place that he [Yaakov] went down to, the Shechina went with him as well***."

The metaphorical meaning of the face of Yaakov being etched onto the Kisei HaKavod is that Hashem will always be with us when we exhibit the trait bequeathed to us by Yaakov. This is the trait of Emes as it states in Micha (7:20), **תִּתֵּן אֱמֶת לְיַעֲקֹב חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר** "***You shall give the truth of Yaakov, the loving-kindness of Avraham, which You swore to our forefathers from days of yore***" – which refers to the signet ring of Hashem.

By grabbing hold of the trait of Emes – we can receive a Chiyus (a life-sustaining injection of strength and fortitude) in this exile as well. For the withholding of redemption is because of Sheker.

(Author's note: It is clear that the Sfas Emes is referring to why the temporary reprieve of Alexander the Second was so short. He was explaining that this was due to the spiritual decline of not being faithful to Yaakov's Middah of Emes.

Events don't just happen. They are connected to the behaviour of the Jewish people. This Tsar, who was kinder to the Jews then his predecessor, was assassinated not for political purposes, but rather because the Jews did not grab hold of Yaakov's Middah of Emes and no longer deserved this kinder regime.

For the fact is Hashem's dominion exists no matter what the government or temporal authority may be. Therefore, through the character trait of truth, redemption is awoken.

The message of the Sefas Emes applies to us as well. For Hashem to be with us in our exile, we must grab hold of the Middah of Yaakov and always be truthful.



Toras Avigdor – Rabbi Avigdor Miller Zt'l

Lion of Yehuda

We have in this week's *sedrah* a very dramatic scene, maybe one of the more dramatic scenes in the entire *kisvei hakodesh*. The *mishneh lamelech*, the ruler of Egypt, is sitting on his throne and he's castigating the *shevatim;* he's threatening to take away their little brother Binyomin and to imprison him for stealing the royal goblet.

You remember the story, how the brothers went down to Mitzrayim in order to buy grain and they were dealing now with the *mishneh lamelech* who was being very tough to them – they didn't know it was their long-lost brother Yosef – and now he was taking Binyomin into captivity. And it seemed like all was lost;

Binyomin will be imprisoned now and he would remain in Mitzrayim as a slave and die there in prison. And the brothers would have to come back now to their father without Binyomin. That was the *psak* of the *mishneh lamelech.*

Now, if we're going to set the scene properly, we have to first forget about whatever we think a king is. Today we look at leaders, at presidents and prime ministers, as nothing people, as pushovers. And there's a good reason for that – it's because they *are* pushovers.

Their threats are usually empty threats and their dignity is usually an empty dignity.

Who's our President today? A peanut farmer (Clinton), an empty suit. Even a king today, it's nothing; it's nothing compared to the ancient days.

Playing With Fire

But in the good old days when a king spoke, you quaked in your boots – if you looked at him wrong, it was "off with the head". And there were no parole boards and no appeals to the Supreme Court. No silly liberal judge was going to save you. An order was given and the head was promptly removed from the body.

And so when the *mishneh lamelech* was telling the brothers what was going to be now with Binyomin, so there shouldn't have been a peep. It's true, Binyomim is going lost now and they'll have to return to their father without Binyomin but there's nothing to do. With a king you don't argue.

Suddenly something happened. The *possuk* says **וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה** – '***And Yehuda approached the mishneh lamelech***.' They were standing there in great dread but Yehuda mustered up his courage, and he approached.

וַיִּגַּשׁ means *he came close* to the king **וַיֹּאמֶר**, *and he spoke to him*. Now just to open up a mouth in a king's presence requires nerve; it requires a stiff spine. The truth is even to stand back and meekly beg for mercy is something already. But to approach the *mishneh lamelech?* It requires a certain spirit. And not only he approached, but he spoke at length.

Now, to make a long speech to a king, an argumentative speech, is a most unwise and perilous thing to do – it's like playing with the *malach hamaves*. But Yehuda was *moser nefesh* and he made himself the spokesman. He spoke with diplomacy but still he spoke, and he spoke tough. And that's how Binyomin was saved.

Rav Miller's Theory



Now, I want to tell you something. This following principle is my own; I didn't hear it from my rebbes and therefore I take the responsibility for it. If it's not good, I'm to blame. But I'm inclined to say that this *parsha* is one of the reasons why the Am Yisroel today is made up of Yehudim: the people of Yehuda.

Not only are we *called* Yehudim but to a very great extent, we *are* Yehudim. Are all Jews today from Yehuda? No. But most of them are. Some are from the tribe of Binyomin, some are from the tribe of Levi. All Kohanim and Levi'im come from the tribe of Levi. And there is a small admixture from all the other tribes too – it's a fact that we have a little from every tribe among us. But we are mostly of the tribe of Yehuda.

Now, what is the importance that we descend from Yehuda? Why not one of the other *shevatim*? It wasn't an accident. Nothing is an accident but something so big like this, the future of our people? There's something there. And so it's a fair question: why is it that Yehuda was the one who turned out to be the Jewish nation? What about all the other brothers?

I think that this story is one of the more important reasons. Because we see that Yehuda had a certain quality of *gevurah* and in order to be successful in anything, especially as a Yehudi, you have to have a backbone. I think that's the reason why Yehuda became greater than his brothers.

Bold And Energetic

Why was Yehuda chosen? Because of his quality of boldness, of energy. Yaakov compared Yehuda to a lion: **גּוּר אַרְיֵה יְהוּדָה** – ***a young***

lion is Yehuda. Why a lion? Because he was known for the quality of being fearless, of not shrinking before the enemy.

That's the defining quality of a lion that we are urged by the Sages to emulate: **הֱוֵי עַז כַּנָּמֵר, וְקַל כַּנֶּשֶׁר, וְרָץ כַּצְּבִי, וְגִבּוֹר כָּאֲרִי, לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן אָבִיךָ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמָיִם** –'***Be as mighty as a lion'- to do the will of your Father in heaven*** (Avos 5:20).

That doesn't mean the 'strength' of a lion; An elephant is stronger than a lion. It could be that an ox could pull a stronger load. But a lion is fearless. And therefore Yehuda was considered the one who would be the mightiest, the most persistent in carrying out the service of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. He was the one who most utilized his energies **לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן אָבִיךָ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמָיִם**

The Lion Plunges In

You remember when they came to the Red Sea, to the Yam Suf, and they had to walk into the water; but it was deep water. The water wasn't open before them. And the nation was in despair. Here on one side the army of Pharaoh was pursuing them to take revenge and here on the other side was the deep sea.

It was Yehudah that decided to enter the water. Nachshon, the prince of Yehudah, went into the water. It took verve and gumption, it took boldness, to do such a thing. The water went up to his neck but he remained a lion and then the waters parted and opened up.

When they came into Eretz Canaan in the days of Yehoshua, and they were commanded to drive out or to destroy all the Canaanim, it was *Shevet* Yehuda who acted with the boldness that Hashem wanted.

The Lion Conquers

You have to know that this *mitzvah* of destroying the Canaanim was very unpalatable, very distasteful to the Am Yisroel. They were *rachmanim*. They had pity. It was very difficult for them to do such a thing. And therefore the *shevatim* were lax. They did something but they were lax in carrying out this *mitzvah*.

Only one *shevet* fulfilled the *mitzvah* entirely. Yehuda drove out allmthe Canaanim. He destroyed all those that remained. It's stated in *Sefer Shoftim* that Yehuda fulfilled this *mitzvah* perfectly.

That's an important point when you want to understand the greatness of Yehuda. And because of that, Yehuda was always successful.

The Lion Stands Strong

It's my theory that this quality that Yehuda developed of being *'strong like a lion to do the will of Hashem'*, was what made him great.

Of course, a man can have a drive and be a failure; he still has free will and he might utilize his drive to be a conqueror and a tyrant. But that's a misuse of a very important *middah*, a *middah* that was given to you for *avodas Hashem.*

You can't be a weakling. You can't be a milquetoast and a *nebach'l.* You have to have backbone to be a Jew. A Jew has to have 'fight' in him, because all around us we are surrounded by enemies. External enemies and internal enemies, we have plenty of internal enemies. We have half Jews and one percent Jews and zero percent Jews and minus percent Jews; and they claim to be Jews, they claim they are *the real Jews*. We have to fight constantly against them.

The Lion And The Bums

Not only as a nation living among the nations of the world but also as an individual living among other people. A person who has a weak character, no matter how virtuous he is, how good his intentions are, usually he doesn't accomplish much. You need a drive to be something.

We are serving the Almighty, but it's a battle. And so you have to have guts, you have to have fire in you, you have to have viciousness in you.

And that's what Yehuda was and that's why the Jew today is personified by Yehuda. That's why even till today, we're the Yehudim.

Whether you live in Canada, or in New Zealand. Whether you live in South America, wherever a Jew goes, he remains a Jew; he's a Yid, a zhid, a zwid, a Judean, a Judah, a kike. Whatever it is they'll call him, in all languages, and in all climes, he doesn't budge because he knows that's the truth; no matter what he remains a Yehudi!

For the Shabbos Table

"וַיַּרְא אֶת־הָעֲגָלוֹת" "*And he saw the wagons which Yosef sent*" (Bereishis 45:27)

Chazal explain that Yaakov was rejuvenated upon seeing the wagons which Yosef sent as they symbolized the last Torah topic they discussed, that of Eglah Arufah.

What was this message which Yosef was sending to his father?

Rav Uren Reich shlit"a answers: Chazal say that when Yosef set out to find his brothers, his father began escorting him out. Yosef protested, "I do not require this escort, as I am not a guest, but rather a member of the household."

Yaakov responded that a lone traveller may face dangerous circumstances along the way. Escorting a departing traveller even just a short distance provides a symbolic accompaniment and a sense that he is not alone, giving him confidence to persevere on his journey. Thus, it was important that he escort Yosef as well.

This discussion of Yaakov and Yosef regarding escorting guests was thus related to the laws of Eglah Arufah, which pertains to properly escorting a departing traveller.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

When Yosef reveals to his brothers who he really was, the Pasuk says: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה ***"I am your brother Yoseph, whom you sold into Egypt."*** (45:4)



The swords were drawn! What a time to mention the dastardly deeds! This scenario had the potential for quite some confrontation!

What was Yosef's thought process in bringing up and reminding his brothers of the unsavoury deed that they carried out at this very special and emotional moment? Did he harbour thoughts of revenge?

Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv Broida (1824–1898), the **Alter of Kelm** says that quite the opposite. He was reminding the brothers now, at this pivotal moment in time, to let them know that at this time, he knows that they sold him, and they know that they sold him, and to now draw a line in the sand, and move on.

If he wouldn't have mentioned it now, they might have forever been thinking to themselves, "Does he remember? Is he going to take revenge one day? Does he still really hate us?

No, Yosef mentioned it now to get it over and done with, and 'put it to bed!' To let his brothers know that he knows what transpired, but he forgives them.

The **Maharal** of Prague [Gur Arye] says וּלְאָבִיו שָׁלַח כְּזֹאת עֲשָׂרָה חֲמֹרִים נֹשְׂאִים מִטּוּב מִצְרָיִם (45:23) that when Yosef sent his father Yaakov 10 asses laden with goods, there was a deeper meaning behind this.

Asses have very basic understanding and *seichel*. They only go and do what they are led to do.



Yosef was hinting to his father that the 10 asses correspond to his 10 brothers, whose actions were not of their own thought processes, but were put there by The Riboino Shel Olam.

This whole situation was Hashem's calculation, and therefore the brothers were not responsible for their actions – and Yosef bears no ill feelings towards them!

The Ohr Hachaim says That Yosef mentioned **אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרָיְמָה** because: They simply did not believe him when he claimed to be Yoseph. He stressed the words **your brother whom you have sold,** indicating that even at the time they had sold him ***he had not ceased feeling like a brother towards them***! He added the words "***whom you have sold to Egypt***" as proof that it was he, Joseph, for not even a prophet could have knowledge of that fact except he himself. **Yosef never lost his brotherly love!**

Tzom Asarah b'Teves by Harav Yosef Dov Pincus



People fast, but with not such a clear feeling and understanding: What is this fast all about, and what am I supposed to gain from it?

I had this feeling for many years. But this year, with *siyata d'Shmaya,* I gained an insight that I want to share with you.



There is something truly special about *Asarah b'Teves*. It says in ***Avudraham*** that even if it would fall on *Shabbos* we would fast. **The *Beis Yosef*** writes that he doesn't know what the source is for this *halachah*, but that is what *Avudraham* wrote.

Then I found an explanation in the ***Chasam Sofer***. I will tell you how I understand it.

There are two kinds of fasts. There are fasts over events that happened to us in the past, and there are fasts over things that will happen to us in the future.

For instance,*Tish'ah b'Av* is over a past event. The *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed. We don't fast on *Shabbos* for that. But over a future event we would fast even on *Shabbos*. Thus, one may make a *taanis chalom* even on*Shabbos*. If a person had a dream foretelling a disaster destined to take place, he may fast in order to annul the decree and thus avert the disaster. But for something that already happened, such as the destruction of The *Beis Hamikdash*, we don't fast on *Shabbos*.

And *Asarah b'Teves?* It's about the future. Because let's ask what actually happened on that day? Nebuchadnezzar came and placed Yerushalayim under siege. How did this impact the Jews of that time? Not much. Life went on, *korbanos* were still offered in The *Beis Hamikdash*, very little changed for them. But everyone realized that the siege will lead to a future disaster -The *Beis Hamikdash* will be destroyed. They will die of famine and plague and those who remain will fall by the sword. The end is coming.

This makes *Asarah b'Teves* special and unique because it is about what **will** happen. So we (would) fast even on *Shabbos*. The *Chasam Sofer* adds that since the future *churban* started on *Asarah b'Teves*, every year when this day comes it is a day of judgment in Heaven whether The *Beis Hamikdash* will be rebuilt that year.

What do we take out of this? That *Asarah b'Teves* is a day of accounting over the future. If I keep on living like I have been until now, where will that bring me? Will it advance me, or keep me where I am, or maybe even take me downhill? Perhaps I am under a siege, and if I don't break out, it's only a matter of time until things get very bad?

This is what *Asarah b'Teves* is all about. It's a day to take stock of the future. This fast day is so very important. Because whatever happened has already happened, but we must concern ourselves with what **will** happen. *Asarah b'Teves* is the day for that.

May we soon merit the building of The *Beis Hamikdash*. May we break out of all the sieges that surround us. May we be quickly *zocheh* to the *Ge'ulah Sheleimah*.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

The following vort was told by the **Chofetz Chaim** to **Reb Elchonon Wasserman**, and to the bachurim who had come to spend Rosh Hashana with him. It's a very powerful vort.

In this week's parsha, the Pasuk says that when Yaakov Avinu heard that Yosef was still alive, he said, **וַיֹּאמֶר֙ יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל רַ֥ב עֹוד־יֹוסֵ֖ף בְּנִ֣י חָ֑י אֵ֣לְכָ֔ה וְאֶרְאֶ֥נּוּ בְטֶ֖רֶם אָמֻֽות** "*I want to see him before I die.*" (45:28)

The Torah doesn't say anything unnecessary. Why does it mention the words – 'before I die'?

The Chofetz Chaim gave a very powerful answer. He said this to Reb Elchonon Wasserman and to the bachurim: Yaakov Avinu saw the

extraordinary challenges that Yosef Hatzaddik had faced in Mitzrayim, and how he remained steadfast, holding on to his faith and staying true to his values.

Therefore, he said, "Let me go and see him before I die." Because Yaakov knew that up there, he wouldn't be able to see Yosef. But, by withstanding such severe challenges, Yosef had reached the greatest of levels.

After saying this, the Chofetz Chaim added, "I thank you for coming to me this Rosh Hashana. I also had challenges and my own tests to overcome, but the challenges you are about to face, are far greater!" (Referring to WW 11) I know that up there in heaven, I won't be able to see you, so thank you for coming here now for YomTov."

Every person has challenges in life. Remember – They are opportunities to reach the highest levels!

Right in Front of Us

Prior to Yosef revealing himself to his brothers, what might have been going through their minds? They were being accused of being spies. Shimon was put in prison. Now, Yosef's cup was found in Binyamin's sack and it seems like he will never see his father again.

It's seemed almost hopeless. The reality though was that the salvation was right in front of them. What they thought was the source of their problems was really Yosef, their brother who loved them dearly.

The Izhbitzer explains that this is the nature of "tzaros". The salvation is right in front of us. Hashem may hide it from us, but it's there. All we need to do is ask Hashem to show it to us and not despair.

נִיצוֹצֵי שִׂמְחָה
Sparks of Simcha

Rabbinic Repairman

There is a perplexing statement made in the middle of this week's Haftorah: **לְעֵץ אֶחָד וְקָרַב וְהָיוּ לַאֲחָדִים בְּיָדֶךָּ** - אֹתָם אֶחָד אֶל־אֶחָד לְךָ

'Bring them close to each other, so that they become one stick, joined together in your hand.' (Yechezkel 37:17)

As the **Radak** quotes his father saying the two branches miraculously combined into one, why did the Almighty want the prophet to unify the wood together?

To fully appreciate the answer, we must first hear an incredible story shared in Rav Yechiel Spero's Touched By a Story (2:144)



The members of the two large Jewish sects had been at odds for a few weeks, and the mudslinging of certain individuals was causing strife and dissension between the two groups. Something needed to be done quickly to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control. No one was willing to get involved to mediate the dispute.

Although most members of each camp handled the disagreement in a rational way, there were some who acted totally irrationally, thus discouraging any and all peacemakers. Only one person was willing to get involved, and that was a man who dedicated his life to promoting peace among the Jewish people: **Rav Shlomo Halberstam**, the Bobover Rebbe.

When news of the Rebbe's impending involvement reached members of the two factions, they warned the Rebbe to stay far away. However Rav Shlomo deeply felt that something needed to be done and planned to meet secretly with the head of each group and then mediate between the two sides.

Thursday night the Rebbe spent much time discussing the issues at hand with one group and resolved to try to present their position to the other side. The meeting went well and was adjourned. It was an uneventful evening with the threats unrealized and thankfully avoided.

However, the night was not over. Long after nearly everyone had gone to sleep, the Rebbe went up to his bedroom when he was suddenly startled by a rock that shattered his window. Luckily no one else woke up from the noise. He immediately cleaned up the scattered shards and called a 24-hour emergency glass repair service.

"*Hello?*" The groggy voice answered. The Rebbe identified himself as Shlomo Halberstam who resided on the corner of 15th Avenue and 48th Street in Brooklyn. The repairman, Yossi Rose, instantly awake and alert, realized it was the Bobover Rebbe, or more probably someone impersonating him. Assuming it was the latter, especially with the word out that the Rebbe was acting as a mediator in the dispute, Yossi opted to hang up the phone.

A moment later the phone rang again. After listening to the Rebbe plead with him, Yossi agreed to come – mainly because the Rebbe promised that he would wait on the corner so Yossi would know that this was not a practical joke. Five minutes later, Yossi arrived. After spotting the Rebbe on the corner, Yossi, mortified that he had doubted the Rebbe, excused himself and apologized.

Yossi completed the job within the hour and prepared to leave. It was almost 4:00 in the morning and he wanted to get some sleep before he began his real workday.

"How much do I owe you?" The Rebbe went to a drawer for money to pay for the service.

"*Please, Rebbe, I don't want to take your money.*"

The Rebbe tried to insist but Yossi was adamant. "*All I want is that when, G-d willing, I will make a wedding, the Rebbe should attend.*"

The Rebbe apologized that he could not make that promise, explaining that he only attended weddings of either orphans or relatives. Otherwise he'd have to attend a wedding every night. Yossi understood but was thrilled when the Rebbe counter-offered to be present at a Sheva Berachos.

As the Rebbe walked him to the door, Yossi asked, "*Rebbe, what was the emergency? I could have fixed this window in the morning.*"

The Rebbe did not want to answer at first but finally agreed on the condition that Yossi would not reveal the secret to anyone.

"Just imagine if I waited until tomorrow to replace the window. The conflict would have escalated, and it would have become nearly impossible to repair the damage. Yossi, to prevent conflict is an emergency of the highest degree." - They averted disaster and established peace.

Reproduced from "Touched by a Story 2" by Rav Yechiel Spero with permission of the copyright holders, ArtScroll / Mesorah Publications, Ltd.

Rav Dovid Siegel (Yechezkel 37:16) beautifully explains that the two wood sticks miraculously combined to show our nation's connection at the End of Days will be so perfect that there will be no trace of any previous split. Never underestimate the profound power of courageously cultivating peace – just like the Bobover Rebbe.

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

Why Cry Now? Rabbi Frand on the Parashah 2 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן־אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל־צַוָּארָיו - *'Then he fell upon his brother Binyomin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.'* (Bereishis 45:14)



Shortly after the emotionally charged moment when Yosef reveals his identity to his brothers, he and Binyamin embrace, and they both begin to weep.

Rashi explains that they foresaw that the Temple that would eventually stand in Shiloh, which was in Yosef's portion of Eretz Yisrael, and the Batei Mikdash that would stand in Binyamin's portion, would all be destroyed, so they wept.

The question is, why cry over the Batei Mikdash now? - Emotions were obviously running pretty high after all that the shevatim had been through in 22 years of separation. I could understand that some spontaneous tears would spring to their eyes now, but that the tears should be for an event so far in the future?

Chazal note an extra word in the pasuk often cited as a conclusion to a eulogy, "בִּלַּע הַמָּוֶת לָנֶצַח, וּמָחָה ד' אֱלֹקִים דִּמְעָה מֵעַל כָּל פָּנִים - *[Hashem] will eliminate death forever, and my L-rd Hashem/ Elokim will erase tears from all faces*" (Yeshayahu 25:8).

What does the word כָּל — from all faces — add?

Chazal explain that when death is eliminated, not only will people cease to cry tears of sadness, but they will also stop crying tears of joy. Hashem will wipe away all tears, even tears of joy.



This is obviously supposed to be a consoling prophecy. It is definitely consoling to think of a time when people will no longer cry tears of sadness, notes **Rav Mordechai (Mottel) Pogremanski** of Telshe, but what is wrong with tears of joy? Why shouldn't people continue to cry tears of joy after death is eliminated?

If we think about it, tears of joy are a strange phenomenon. You are at the height of happiness, you are celebrating a special occasion, and suddenly you feel overcome with emotion, your eyes get moist, and before you can control yourself, you dissolve into tears. - Why do we cry out of joy?

Rav Mottel Pogremanski explains that we cry because we realize that the happiness cannot last. In the recesses of our souls, we realize that the joy is short-lived, and we cry for the time that we will no longer feel the intense happiness we are experiencing. Once death will be eliminated, there will no longer be a reason to cry tears of joy, explains Rav Mottel, because the happiness will not end.

Yosef and Binaymin were crying tears of joy over their reunion, explains Rav Mottel, but they realized that the happiness could not last forever. At some point the happiness would be marred by the destruction of the Temples.

Great Jewish History - Deadly Coronavirus Pandemic Infects World



A new strain of coronavirus was first detected in the city of Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Its spread resulted in a worldwide pandemic of an acute respiratory disease. The number of those infected with the virus topped 700 million worldwide, with a staggering death toll of over seven million people.

The global Jewish community was severely affected by the virus, as so many holy souls were taken from us in rapid succession, many yeshivos and shuls were shuttered, *simchos* were either cancelled or drastically limited in attendance, and mourning was observed in near isolation. On the economic front, many were plunged into uncertainty and unemployment.

Despite the tragedy and despair, the global Jewish community quickly adapted to the new reality; Torah was taught remotely, *chessed* organizations redoubled their efforts, and families were strengthened while in isolation.

A halachic precedent to the pandemic can be found in the late 1820s and early 1830s, as a cholera pandemic spread across Europe. **Rabbi Akiva Eiger** issued a ruling to the Jews of his city instructing them to minimize social contact and limit prayer gatherings to no more than fifteen people, as well as being meticulous about hygiene and health, and to avoid worry and fear.

Rabbi Eiger was later recognized by Frederick William III of Prussia for his outstanding efforts in protecting and caring for the people of his region during this trying time.



The Mighty Mans Arrows

Yehuda says: אֵיךְ אֶעֱלֶה אֶל אָבִי וְהַנַּעַר אֵינֶנּוּ אִתִּי – *'How will I go up to my father if the boy is not with me?'* 44:34

Some say an expression, "It's a shame the years of youth are given into the hands of the youth." - What's the kavana in these words?

I saw from **Rav Chaim Kaufman** זצוק"ל -the Baalei Musser take this statement a step further and explain a mussar vort on it. - They say that after 120 years, every person will face our loving, caring father Hakadosh Baruch Hu and they may say before, "How will I face my father Hashem after having wasted the days of my youth?" - אֵיךְ אֶעֱלֶה אֶל אָבִי... . וְהַנַּעַר אֵינֶנּוּ אִתִּי

The pasuk compares the days of our youth to "Arrows in the hands of the mighty one!" "Kechitzin b'yad gibar…"

What does youth have to do with arrows?

The answer, explains Rav Kaufman, is that just as by an arrow, as long as the arrow is in the archer's bow, he can still aim it in the direction that he pleases, yet, once the arrow leaves his "clutches" he can no longer choose direction. - The nimshal is that the days of youth are the "aiming" years, so to speak.

The years of youth are the years when one is planting the seeds of his entire future. Therefore, just as the shooter or the planter if he aims right, he will hit the target or the one who plants those seeds correctly will blossom a beautiful tree.

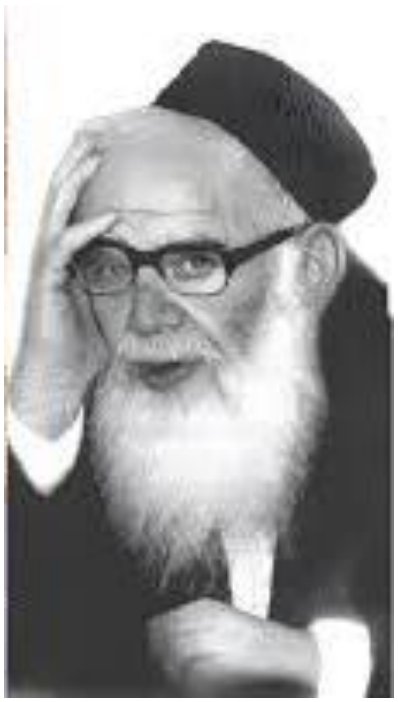
So too, if we use our youthful years wisely, we will have our life continue to fly in the right direction and blossom a most beautiful

individual. However, if we aimed wrong in the beginning or planted bad seeds it is a lot harder to change the results.

Of course, everyone can change and uproot the bad roots or try to shoot their arrows again, but as is well known, later in life it is simply a lot harder.

The younger a person is, the more he can use his power of youth to set himself on the right path. Each stage in life has its opportunities but everyone agrees that the formative years are so crucial and is a game changer.

Watch Your Words



The gift of life is only granted to those who appreciate it. Even Yaakov Avinu was punished for complaining about his travails. When Pharaoh asked Yaakov his age, he replied, "Few and harsh have been my years (Vayigash 47:9).

Chazal tell us that for each word of complaint uttered, he lost a year of life, 33 in total.

'The gift of life is for those appreciating it; those slighting it, or complaining about it, lose it.' ~ **R' Chaim Shmulevitz zt"l** — whose yahrzeit is 3rd of Teves.

Seeing the Whole Person

'Do not despise a person in their entirety. Even if you notice a flaw or negative trait, do not hold their whole being in contempt, for there are other good qualities within them.' ~ The Shinever Rov zt"l.

Yosef's Integrity

וְאַתָּה צֻוִּיתָה זֹּאת עֲשׂוּ קְחוּ־לָכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עֲגָלוֹת לְטַפְּכֶם וְלִנְשֵׁיכֶם וּנְשָׂאתֶם אֶת־אֲבִיכֶם וּבָאתֶם – *"And now you are commanded - 'Do this; Help yourselves to … wagons for your children*… " (45:19).

Rabeinu Bachye comments that well aware of Yosef's incredible humility and integrity, Paroh knew that without explicit permission from himself, Yosef would not take a thing for himself or for his family. That is why he found it necessary to **order** Yosef to take whatever he needed for his family.

Time to celebrate? Or time to daven?

Contrary to popular belief, January 1, the non-Jewish New Year, is an important date for the Jewish people as well. It is when all those tefillos that might not have been prayed with the proper intent on *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*, and were not accepted in Heaven, get a second chance.

Explains **R' Yaakov Friedman of Husiatyn *zt"l*** (**Oholei Yaakov**, in the name of the **Apter Rav**), *Dovid Hamelech* tells us: " **(תהלים פז-ו) ה' יִסְפֹּר בִּכְתֹוב עַמִּים** - *"Hashem will inscribe in the register of peoples..."* - Clearly, *Hashem* ascribes some significance to the registers of the gentiles - and by extension to their calendar as well. However, unlike the Jewish new year, when we congregate in shuls all over the world and pour out our hearts in serious contemplation, the gentiles of the world use their 'New Year' to conduct wild, often drunken, parties, to celebrate making it through another year.

The contrast is glaringly clear and it often can eliminate any and all prosecution that withheld a good judgment on *Rosh Hashana*. We must *daven* extra hard on their 'New Year' that we merit a sweet 'New Year' even if it didn't actually start on our 'New Year!'"

Ahavas Yisroel



Parshas Vayigash recounts the story of the reunification of Yosef with his brothers. Yosef told his brothers (45:4) **אני יוסף אחיכם אשר מכרתם אתי מצרימה** -"I am Yosef, your brother whom you sold to Mitzrayim."

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that Yosef considered them brothers, even when they sold him. As the Ohr HaChaim writes: "Yosef mentioned the word **אחיכם** 'Your brother' together with **אשר מכרתם**, 'whom you sold' to tell them that even when you sold me, my feelings of brotherhood never weakened."

Yosef addressed their concern that despite the fact that they sold him into slavery, he always loved them and would deal with them as a loving brother.

So, it was the opposite of what the brothers assumed. They thought Yosef was against them, but Yosef's loyalty to his family was always firm. -This highlights the importance of Ahavas Yisroel.

Regarding the midah of Ahavas Yisroel, Yosef serves as a role model for all of Klal Yisroel. Yosef did not take revenge on his brothers but instead tried to inspire and create a loving relationship. He assuaged their fears and told them that everything turned out well in the end.

Just as Yosef was careful when addressing his brothers feelings, every individual must be sensitive to others. This was the greatness of Yosef and is the epitome of Ahavas Yisroel.



Inspired by Time - Asarah B'Teves – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Asarah B'Teves has a unique stringency. If it were to fall on Shabbos, we would still observe the fast. This alone tells us that this day is not like the other fast days. What is the significance of this?

The Chasam Sofer, in his drashah for Zayin Adar, offers a remarkable insight.

When a parent's yahrtzeit falls on Shabbos, one may not fast. Shabbos is a day of oneg, of delight, and fasting would be an act of inuy. However, if a person has a disturbing dream and fears it may reflect a heavenly decree, he is permitted to fast even on Shabbos. - Why?

Because this fast is not an expression of mourning or pain. It is an act of teshuvah, meant to annul a gezeirah and bring kaparah. Since the fasting itself brings inner calm, spiritual relief, and closeness to Hashem, it is considered a form of oneg.

With this in mind, the Chasam Sofer explains the uniqueness of Asarah B'Teves.

Most fast days commemorate tragedies that have already occurred. They are days of sorrow and grief, meant to help us mourn what was lost. Such days are fundamentally incompatible with Shabbos, a day set aside for joy, serenity, and spiritual elevation. That is why they are pushed off when they coincide with Shabbos.

Asarah B'Teves is different. We are not fasting simply because Yerushalayim was besieged. The city endured many sieges throughout its history, and we do not fast on those dates. Rather, Asarah B'Teves marks the moment when the fate of Yerushalayim

began to be decided. From that day onward, the question of churban was hanging in the balance.- It was the opening of a window.

From Asarah B'Teves until the actual destruction, Klal Yisrael were still being given time. Time to awaken. Time to reflect. Time to do teshuvah and change the course of events. The fast, therefore, is not primarily about mourning the churban. It is about confronting the moment when everything was still reversible.

That is why its character is so severe, and at the same time so hopeful. It is a fast rooted not in despair, but in responsibility. Not in what was already lost, but in what might yet be saved. It is a day that demands honesty, inner work, and real change.

And for that reason, explains the Chasam Sofer, even if Asarah B'Teves were to fall on Shabbos, it would still be observed. Like the fast for a troubling dream, it is a fast meant to avert disaster and bring kaparah. Such a fast is not a contradiction to oneg Shabbos. On the contrary, the possibility of teshuvah, repair, and renewed closeness to Hashem is itself the deepest form of delight.

Chanukah Takeaway

Chanukah has just passed. We said Hallel and Al HaNisim; we lit the Chanukah lecht and celebrated the Yom Tov. Our pockets are filled with precious diamonds, precious mitzvos.

Yet, some people say, "What did I do already? It was nothing."

It is terrible to think that way. That means they don't recognize that every mitzvah is a precious diamond, something you never want to lose. And if you don't value diamonds, you won't seek more.

The Beis Yisrael of Gur zt"l told the following mashal:

A shikur entered a store and saw a good bottle of whiskey for sale. It was just the type of drink he wanted. "How much does it cost?" he asked the store owner.

"Two thousand dollars."

He immediately left the store in a fury. There was no way he would pay such an exorbitant price for a drink. But he very much wanted this drink, so he returned to the store and asked to hear the price again.

"Two thousand dollars," the store owner repeated.

Once again, he left the store in a rage. But after reconsidering, he decided to buy the drink, no matter what. Whatever the price, it was worth it. He sold his table and chairs, borrowed money, and bought the bottle.



After drinking, comes the vomiting, but he held himself back from vomiting. He said, "I paid two thousand dollars for this bottle. I am not going to vomit it up."

The Beis Yisrael zt"l told this story in reference to Chanukah. We gained so much on Chanukah. Value what you accomplished. Don't think it was nothing. Don't vomit it up!

Every mitzvah is a diamond, worth far more than we can imagine. Value it, and then you will seek to do more and more.

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky zt'l, asked his students what their New Year's Resolutions were.

The students were shocked: "Rebbe, this isn't the Jewish new year!"

He responded, "The entire country is using this as a time for self-reflection and self-improvement, and we won't?!

Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn

This message, delivered by the esteemed Maggid Rabbi Paysach Krohn, centres on themes of youth, legacy, spiritual vibrancy, and communal responsibility within the Jewish tradition. It is part of the worldwide Erev Shabbos Bracha, a program supported by Project Masorah, which aims to inspire and strengthen Jewish identity and transmission of heritage.

Rabbi Krohn explores the emotional and spiritual dilemma expressed by Yehudah, who questions how he can face his father without his youngest brother, Binyamin. This metaphor extends to broader concerns about aging, legacy, and the transmission of values across generations.

The Maggid offers several layered understandings of Yehudah's Statement:

Ageing and Regret: The difficulty of approaching the end of life ("after 120 years") without the youthful energy that once defined one's existence, symbolizing a life possibly not fully realized.

Spiritual Vibrancy: The importance of maintaining vibrancy or inner vitality until one's final moments, emphasizing daily growth, achievement, and spiritual striving.

Parental Responsibility: The anxiety over not having raised one's children according to one's ideals, reflecting a universal parental concern about imparting values and faith.

Communal Duty: Extending beyond personal family, there is a call to nurture the entire Jewish youth, many of whom may be drifting away from tradition.

Call to Action: Sustaining the Jewish Future

Rabbi Krohn stresses communal responsibility to engage with and support young people in the Jewish community, whether they are

relatives or neighbors, urging everyone to help inspire and strengthen Jewish identity.

The message is directed to all members of the community—men, women, and children—encouraging collective effort in fostering a robust, vibrant Jewish future.





Kibbud for a Grandfather by Rabbi Moshe Kupetz Zt"l

The discussion centers on whether there is a halachic obligation to honor a grandfather. The Shulchan Aruch states that one must honor a father-in-law, while the Rema cites an opinion that there is no obligation to honor a grandfather. However, the Rema disagrees and writes that a person is obligated to honor his grandfather, although the obligation toward one's father is greater.

The Rema bases this on the Medrash quoted by Rashi on the pasuk **"ויזבח זבחים לאלקי אביו יצחק"**. Yaakov Avinu referred specifically to Yitzchak and not to Avraham, teaching that a person is obligated to honor his father more than his grandfather. *Rashi says* **חייב אדם בכבוד אביו יותר מכבוד זקנו**. *Rashi quotes this Medrash on this pasuk* **חייב אדם בכבוד אביו יותר מכבוד זקנו לפיכך תלה ביצחק ולא באברהם**.

However, not all Rishonim agree that this pasuk proves such a principle. The Ramban suggests there may be other reasons why Yitzchak is mentioned rather than Avraham.

A challenge to the Rema comes from the Gemara in Makkos. One source states that a son may not serve as a go'el hadam against his father, while another source indicates that he may. The Gemara resolves the contradiction by distinguishing between a son and a grandson. A grandson may act as a go'el hadam against his grandfather.

The Beis Hillel asks: if a grandson can kill his grandfather as a go'el hadam, does that not show there is no obligation of kibbud toward a grandfather?

A talmid of the Kli Chemdah suggests that even a wicked father remains entitled to kibbud, whereas perhaps a wicked grandfather does not. Therefore, the son cannot act against his father, but a grandson may act against a grandfather who has become a rasha. The Kli Chemdah questions this distinction and explores several alternative explanations.

One possibility is that when a grandfather kills his son, this weakens the assumption of the family relationship, since Chazal teach that a father would not ordinarily kill his child. Another possibility is that even if a man is not truly one's father, he remains the husband of one's mother and is therefore still owed respect.

The Kli Chemdah also discusses whether the obligation to honor a grandfather continues after the grandfather's death. He suggests that perhaps the obligation toward a father continues even after death, whereas the obligation toward a grandfather may not. This could explain why Yaakov mentioned Yitzchak and not Avraham.

A Gemara in Sotah appears to indicate that a grandson is not obligated in kibbud toward a grandfather. Rav Acha bar Yaakov raised his grandson and later asked him for water. The grandson replied, "I am not your son." The Maharsha explains that although **"בני בנים הרי הם כבנים"**, that principle applies to pru u'rvu, not necessarily to kibbud av.

The Kli Chemdah suggests a possible distinction between a paternal grandson and a maternal grandson. Since a grandfather is obligated to teach Torah to his son's son, perhaps that educational responsibility creates a reciprocal obligation of respect. Such an obligation may not exist to the same degree with a daughter's son.

As a result, the entire question remains subject to discussion. While everyone agrees that honoring a father is obligatory, the precise status of honoring a grandfather is far less straightforward than many assume.

The Story of the Chazon Ish

The following story was publicized eight years after the passing of the Chazon Ish and was written by the man to whom it occurred.

As a seventeen-year-old boy in Hungary before the war, he left home to work in a small town. Over time he drifted away from Judaism and eventually concealed the fact that he was Jewish altogether. During the war he survived by posing as a non-Jew until he was discovered and sent to Auschwitz. Later he was transferred to Theresienstadt and survived the war.

In 1948 he moved to Eretz Yisrael but completely severed his connection to Torah and mitzvos. He worked on Shabbos, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur without any concern. - On the night following Yom Kippur 1953, after returning from work, he dreamed of his father, Reb Chaim Mordechai, who had perished in Auschwitz. His father appeared dressed in a shining white kittel and tallis and pleaded with him:

"Do teshuvah. Return to the way I raised you, or your time in this world will be cut short."

The dream repeated itself every night for an entire week.

The following Shabbos he entered a café in Rishon LeZion, ate and drank, and later returned home. As he was about to switch on the radio, he suddenly heard a voice behind him:

"Oy vavoy, you are sinning again."

He turned around and saw his father standing there exactly as he had appeared in the dream. His father warned him:

"Do not think this is a dream. I have come to tell you that a decree has already been issued in Heaven that your life will be shortened unless you repent."

Although frightened, he did not change.

The next evening, after returning from the cinema, he again found his father standing in his home wearing the kittel and tallis. This time his father cried and begged him to return to Torah, saying:

"This is my final warning."

The experience shook him deeply. The next morning he arranged for others to cover his work and travelled to Bnei Brak to see the Chazon Ish.

The moment he entered the Chazon Ish's home, before he had uttered a word, the Chazon Ish exclaimed:

"Oy vavoy! You work on Shabbos, on Rosh Hashanah and on Yom Kippur! Your father has no rest in the World Above, and a decree of kares has been issued against you."

The man stood frozen. After several moments the Chazon Ish continued:

"You once performed a great mitzvah. Because of that mitzvah, Heaven has granted you an extension. But I want to know what that mitzvah was."

The man replied that he had always been charitable and had never harmed anyone. The Chazon Ish answered:

"That is not enough. Many people give charity. What special mitzvah did you perform?"

Suddenly he remembered an incident from his youth. At age fourteen, a Jew had died in a remote village and there was nobody available to arrange a proper Jewish burial. His father sent him on a dangerous mission to ensure the deceased received kevuras Yisrael. Despite the risks, he carried out the task properly.

When the Chazon Ish heard this, he nodded silently.

The man left the Chazon Ish's home determined to return completely to Torah and mitzvos. From that day forward he lived as an observant Jew and saw great success in his life.

The Steipler later commented that this was an extraordinary story. He explained that the father had evidently come from the World of Truth to the Chazon Ish and pleaded on behalf of his son, which is how the Chazon Ish knew everything before a word was spoken.

The story serves as a powerful illustration of the enduring bond between parent and child and the profound significance of kibbud av.

R' Meir'l of Premishlan ZT"L would say:

וְיָשַׁבְתָּ בְּאֶרֶץ־גֹּשֶׁן וְהָיִיתָ קָרוֹב אֵלַי - ***"Yosef told his father and brothers, 'You shall dwell in Goshen - and be close to me". (45:10) Sometimes physical distance - away from all the envy and bickering - allows a family to stay together!"***

In Avos D'Rebbi Nosson it is written:

"Yaakov believed his sons when they showed him Yosef's coat with blood on it, but later when they told him Yosef was alive, he did not believe. This is the fate of a liar; he is disbelieved even when he is telling the truth!"



מהרו ועלו אל אבי ואמרתם אליו כה אמר בנך יוסף וכו' (מה-ט)

During all the years Yosef was flourishing in Egypt; why didn't he dispatch a message to his father to inform him that he was still alive?

Moreover, when Yosef met his brothers for the first time in years, and they bowed down to him, why did he not reveal himself then and there, letting them know in no uncertain terms after all this time, that he was right and the dreams did come true? Why did he insist on waiting until much later?

Says **R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev ZT"L**, Yosef chose to have pity on his brothers and to hold himself back from the thrill of triumph. For that reason, at the critical moment, when the dreams were being fulfilled and the brothers were bowing down to Yosef, he concealed his identity from them so as not to claim his victory and thereby greatly embarrass his brothers. - That was something which Yosef wished to avoid at all cost.

In the minds of his brothers, they were bowing down to some Egyptian minister. Thus, Yosef didn't send a message to his father revealing that he was alive. Certainly the news would have reached the ears of the brothers, and imagine their embarrassment in front of their father when he learned the truth about what had happened and how his sons had conspired to deceive him and protect themselves.

Yosef preferred to remain anonymous thus protecting the feelings of his brothers. The benefit of such a policy is that it doesn't offer any encouragement to the all-too-human Yetzer - ambition, that wants to always conquer another, leaving it maimed and demoralized as a result.

ואת העם העביר אתו לערים מקצה גבול מצרים ועד קצהו וגו' (מז-כא)

The *Torah* relates how Yosef, acting as regent to the king of Egypt, supplied food for the Egyptians all throughout the years of famine. Among the details that are recounted, we find that Yosef agreed to accept land from the people in exchange for food. All the Egyptians were, therefore, forced to abandon their land and relocate to other areas in the land of Egypt.

Rashi comments that this was done in order to protect the honor of the *Bnei Yaakov* - the sons of Yaakov, so that the Egyptians would not be able to mock them by calling them foreigners, seeing as they themselves were living in foreign areas.

R' Yissocher Dov Loriner ZT''L notes that we can learn from here the shrewd righteousness of *Yosef Hatzaddik*. In addition to being concerned with his brothers' welfare and supplying them with the necessary provisions, he was also concerned with their honor. He anticipated the possibility that the Egyptians would look down upon them and acted to prevent that.

Yosef's actions demonstrated that he harbored no ill thoughts of revenge or bore his brothers any ill will whatsoever. Rather, he was concerned with all the small details of their welfare and acted **לשם שמים**.

R' Shneur Zalman of Liadi ZT"L (Ba'al Hatanya) would say:

"Only a person with a great mind is big enough to harbor opinions that are opposed to his own. A person with a small mind has no room for dissenting opinions. Therefore, if you see someone who is unable to tolerate other people's advice and opinions, it is pretty clear that his intellect is limited - he definitely does not have a great mind."

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

אני יוסף העוד אבי חי ולא יכלו אחיו לענות אתו כי נבהלו מפניו וגו' (מה-ג)

The story is told that the famous **Maggid, R' Moshe Yitzchok of Kelm ZT"L**, was once invited to speak in the town of Wasville, and when he arrived, the local rabbi complained bitterly to him that the townspeople were extremely disobedient and careless regarding religious observance. Various disputes had been brought before him, but although he excelled at reaching equitable rulings and the litigants had promised to abide by his decisions, they never kept their word.

When the community gathered in the shul on shabbos to hear the sermon of the famous maggid, R' Moshe Yitzchok walked deliberately from the back of the beis medrash, ascended the steps of the pulpit and abruptly stopped. The bewildered people could only look on as he appeared to be engaged in an animated conversation with an invisible being.

The hand gestures and word-mouthing continued for another few moments and then the maggid suddenly shouted, "What do you want from me - I'm in Wasville!" Finally, he reached the top of the pulpit and was ready to begin.

Of course, after an outburst like that, the Kelmer maggid couldn't just launch into his prepared sermon and looking at the expressions of curiosity on the faces of the townspeople, he began to speak. "Let me explain to you what happened," he started. "When I set out to come here and sermonize, the satan confronted me and declared, 'You have no right to enter Wasville. The town is totally under my domain.' He refused to let me continue on my way until I promised him that I would not give any kind of sermon here in town."

The maggid looked out at the uncomprehending people. "When I began walking up here, satan appeared again and protested, 'Hey, you cannot preach here. Remember, you guaranteed me that you

wouldn't.' We argued back and forth in silence for a number of minutes, until I finally got the best of him by declaring, 'But I am in Wasville, and inasmuch as it is local practice not to keep one's promises, I am exempt from doing so here!'"

He let that line sink in before beginning his speech and the people were able to realize the wisdom of his words.

וינשק לכל אחיו ויבך עליהם ואחרי כן דברו אחיו אתו וגו' (מה-טו)

It is apparent that Yosef Hatzaddik cried a lot. We find in Parshas Miketz **"ויסב מעליהם ויבך" (מב-כד)** - And he turned from them and he cried. **"ויכמרו רחמיו על אחיו ויבקש לבכות ויבא החדרה ויבך שמה"** - His compassion for his brother had been stirred and he wanted to weep; and he went into his room and he wept.

In this week's Parshah, too, we find a number of occurrences where Yosef cried: **"ויתן את קולו בבכי"** - He gave forth his voice and cried, ... **"וינשק לכל אחיו .... ויפל על צוארי בנימין אחיו ויבך"** - He fell on his Brother Binyomin's shoulder and cried.....And he kissed his brothers and wept upon them.

R' Zalman Sorotzkin ZT"L embraces this theme: Whoever suffers much in his lifetime tends to cry easily even in times of peace and prominence. Yosef's brothers never experienced suffering and therefore never cried even when events called for this appropriate reaction.On the other hand, Yosef Hatzaddik's ability to cry, even for others, made him deserving of greatness.

R' Avraham Twerski would say:

"There is something so unique that it has never existed in the past and will never be here again: Today. - Seize the day!"