TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



וישב

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

וישב

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")

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זְקֻנִים הוּא לוֹ וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים
"***Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his sons since he was a child of his old age, and he made him a fine woolen tunic.***" (37:3)

The Gemara (Shabbat 10a) teaches: "One should never single out one of his children for favouritism, for as a result of the two selaim of silk that Yaakov (Yisrael) gave Yosef, the brothers became jealous and one thing led to another until eventually they were exiled to Egypt."

Commentaries ask: Was not the exile to Egypt already foretold in a prophecy to Avraham? How then can Yaakov's favouritism be blamed for causing the exile?

R' Eliyahu z"l (1720-1797; the Vilna Gaon) explains: Yaakov's favouritism was not the ultimate cause of the exile. However, we are

taught, "G-d brings about good through good and bad through bad." Thus, from the fact that Yaakov's favouritism was used by G-d as a catalyst or a tool to bring about the exile, we learn that favouritism is bad. (Quoted in Perushei Ha'GRA: Chad Gadya p.287)

וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלֻמָּתִי וְגַם־נִצָּבָה "***My sheaf arose and remained standing . . .***" (37:7)

Commentaries say that many people tried to store produce during the seven years of famine that are described in next week's parashah; however, their stores all spoiled. Only the grain that was stored by Yosef in Egypt remained.

R' Baruch of Kosov z"l (18th century chassidic rebbe) writes that this is alluded to in our verse: "My sheaf arose and remained standing." This is what caused Yosef's brothers to eventually bow down to him, as the verse continues, וְהִנֵּה תְסֻבֶּינָה אֲלֻמֹּתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ לַאֲלֻמָּתִי "***Your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.***" (**Yesod Ha'Torah**)

וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְּמִים אֲלֻמִּים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלֻמָּתִי וְגַם־נִצָּבָה וְהִנֵּה תְסֻבֶּינָה אֲלֻמֹּתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ לַאֲלֻמָּתִי ***"Behold! We were binding sheaves in the middle of the field, when, behold! My sheaf arose and remained standing. Then behold! Your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf." (37:7)***

וַיַּחֲלֹם עוֹד חֲלוֹם אַחֵר וַיְסַפֵּר אֹתוֹ לְאֶחָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה חָלַמְתִּי חֲלוֹם עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְאַחַד עָשָׂר כּוֹכָבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לִי "***He said, 'Look, I dreamt another dream! Behold! The sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me'.***" (37:9)

R' Yitzchak David Grossman shlita (Chief Rabbi of Migdal Ha'emek, Israel; popularly known as "The Disco Rabbi" and "The Prisoner's Rabbi" because of his far-reaching outreach work) observes: The progression of Yosef's dreams–the first, about vegetation, a sheaf

of wheat, and the second about a living thing, himself–shows that he was a growth-oriented person.

In contrast, Pharaoh also has two dreams (in next week's Parashah), but, in his case, the first was about living things, cows, while the second was about a lower life form, wheat. (**Ohr Ha'Shabbat**)



וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו חֲלוֹם חָלַמְנוּ וּפֹתֵר אֵין אֹתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף הֲלוֹא לֵאלקִים פִּתְרֹנִים סַפְּרוּ־נָא לִי "***They [the butler and the baker] said to him, `We dreamt a dream, but there is no interpreter for it.' So Yosef said to them, `Do not interpretations belong to G-d? Relate it to me, if you please'.***" (40:8)

Why did Yosef get involved?

R' Hanoch Henach of Alesk z"l (died 1884) explains:

We read in Tehilim (105:2), **שִׁירוּ לוֹ זַמְּרוּ־לוֹ שִׂיחוּ בְּכָל־נִפְלְאֹתָיו** "…***Speak His wonders***." Accordingly, Yosef wanted to bring honor to Hashem's Name by creating opportunities for the Egyptians to become aware of His wonders. And his plan succeeded, for Pharaoh said (in next week's parashah — 41:39), "Since G-d has informed you of all this, there can be no one so discerning and wise as you." (**Lev Sameach**)



וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־דִּבָּתָם רָעָה אֶל־אֲבִיהֶם "***Yosef would bring evil reports about them to their father.***" *(37:2)*

One of these reports, according to the midrash, was that they ate **אבר מן החי** / flesh of living animals. Is this really conceivable? And, if they would commit such a despicable act, would they be foolish enough to do it in front of Yosef? On the other hand, if Yosef's brothers did not eat **אבר מן החי**, was Yosef lying?

R' Avraham Abusch Gurnovsky z"l (1847-1912; rabbi on the Upper West Side of Manhattan beginning in 1869) explains: Why is it the

lot of the Jewish nation to be pursued and persecuted for most of its history?



The answer is that the Jewish nation has as a mission to be a living example to the world of what it means to place one's faith in Hashem. The more that a Jew suffers, but nevertheless adheres to his emunah and bitachon / faith and trust, the stronger is the message conveyed to the rest of the world that the Jew relies on G-d alone.

Yosef believed that his brothers, in particular Shimon and Levi, were not living by the above ideal. After all, Shimon and Levi had destroyed the city of Shechem to avenge their sister's honor (as related in last week's parashah). Yosef argued: "*Hashem will avenge our injuries eventually. Our role is to be patient.*"

What causes the sin of **אבר מן החי?**

It is one's inability to be patient and to wait until the animal is ready to be eaten (that is, until it is dead). Yosef's brothers did not literally eat aiver min hachai; rather, in Yosef's view, they had the same character flaw that causes a person to eat such forbidden meat. –That is what Yosef reported to his father. (**Even Yisrael** p. 55)

"One can train oneself to be occupied with faith. One should get used to saying at every opportunity, "Thank G-d," "im yirtza Hashem - If G-d wills," and so on." ~ R' Eliyahu Dessler zt"l.

וַיַּעַבְרוּ֙ אֲנָשִׁ֣ים מִדְיָנִ֔ים סֹחֲרִ֖ים וַיִּמְשְׁכ֣וּ וַיַּעֲל֗וּ אֶת־יוֹסֵף֙ מִן־הַבּ֣וֹר וַיִּמְכְּרוּ֙ אֶת־יוֹסֵ֔ף לַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִ֖ים בְּעֶשְׂרִ֣ים כָּ֑סֶף "***Midianite men, traders, passed by; they drew Yosef up and lifted him out of the pit and sold Yosef to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.***" (37:28)

Targum Yonatan ben Uziel, the Aramaic translation dating to the times of the Mishnah, states: **וְעָבְרוּ גַּבְרֵי מִדְיָנָאֵי מָרֵי פִּרַקְמַטְיָא וְנָגִידוּ וְאַסִיקוּ יַת יוֹסֵף מִן גוּבָא וְזַבִּינוּ יַת יוֹסֵף לַעֲרָבָאִין בְּעֶשְׂרִין מָעִין דְּכַסַף וְזַבְּנוּ מִנֵּהוֹן סַנְדָּלִין וְאַיְתִיוּ יַת יוֹסֵף לְמִצְרָיִם** "*They sold Yosef to Arabs for twenty pieces of silver and bought shoes with the money.*"

Similarly, we read in this week's haftarah (Amos 2:6), **כֹּה אָמַר ה' עַל־ שְׁלֹשָׁה֙ פִּשְׁעֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָ֖ה לֹ֣א אֲשִׁיבֶ֑נּוּ עַל־מִכְרָ֤ם בַּכֶּ֙סֶף֙ צַדִּ֔יק וְאֶבְי֖וֹן בַּעֲב֥וּר נַעֲלָֽיִם** "So said Hashem, `*For three rebellious sins of Israel — but should I not exact retribution for the fourth — for their having sold a righteous man for silver, and a destitute one for the sake of a pair of shoes?*'"



R' Shlomo Wolbe z"l (died 2005) notes that the Torah does not criticize the Brothers for their hostile attitude toward Yosef. After all, they considered Yosef to be a rodef / pursuer in that they believed Yosef wanted Yaakov to disown the brothers of their spiritual inheritance as Avraham had disowned Yishmael and Yitzchak had done to Esav. - In contrast, the Torah does criticize the brothers for selling Yosef. - Why?

Targum Yonatan is teaching it was because they bought shoes. They derived personal benefit from the deed, thus demonstrating that their motives were not as pure as they themselves believed. (**Shiurei Chumash Mi'pi Maran Ha'mashgiach R' Shlomo Wolbe**)

וַיַּ֣רְא אֲדֹנָ֔יו כִּ֥י ה' אִתּ֖וֹ וְכֹ֣ל אֲשֶׁר־הֽוּא עֹשֶׂ֑ה ה' מַצְלִ֖יחַ בְּיָדֽוֹ "***His master perceived that Hashem was with him*** . . ." (39:3)

Rashi explains that the Name of G-d was constantly on Yosef's lips.

R' Yeshayah Halevi Horowitz z"l (the Shelah Hakadosh; died 1630) writes: An aspect of implanting within oneself faith in G-d is to always say, even when one plans to take an action in the very near future, "**אִם יִרְצֶה הַשֵּׁם**" / "If G-d wills it."

This is alluded to in the verse (Mishlei 19:21), **רַבּ֣וֹת מַחֲשָׁבוֹת֮ בְּלֶב־אִ֪ישׁ וַעֲצַ֣ת ה' הִ֣יא תָקֽוּם** "The counsel of Hashem – only `**הִיא** ' / it will prevail." "**הִיא**" (heh-yud-aleph) contains the initial letters of " **אִם יִרְצֶה הַשֵּׁם**." If one says, "G-d willing," then his (man's) plan will succeed.

R' Horowitz continues: Before one begins a business transaction, he should say, "*I place my trust in G-d, and I hope that through this business transaction He will provide my sustenance*." After all, G-d does not cause money to rain from the heavens. Rather, the way He sustains us is by sending us business deals from which to profit. If one does make a profit, he must say, "I profited with G-d's help."

Likewise, before a person takes any action he should say, "I am about to take such-and-such action with G-d's permission and for the glory of His Name." (**Shnei Luchot Ha'brit: Sha'ar Ha'otiot**)

This Week in History, Halachah, and Minhag

23 Kislev is the beginning of the last quarter of the month, when some have the custom not to hold weddings (Likkutei Maharich). Some who hold this custom in other months make exceptions in the months of Kislev, Adar, and Elul. (Luach Davar B'ito p.383)

Beginning on this day in 5109 (1348), the supposed confession by a Jew that he had poisoned wells, thus starting the Black Death that

killed millions, led to the massacre of large numbers of Jews across Europe. (Luach Davar B'ito p.384)

24 Kislev is the day when the judgments that were sealed on Yom Kippur become final, according to Kabbalists. (Luach Davar B'ito p.385)

It is a proper habit to prepare the candles or oil and wicks before nightfall in anticipation of lighting the Chanukah menorah. In a year following the year after the shemittah, one should note that it is a matter of dispute whether one may use oil made from olives of shemittah for the mitzvah of Chanukah. (Halichot Shlomo p.287; Nitei Gavriel 18:13)

On this date, the foundation of the Second Temple began to be laid by the returnees from the Babylonian exile. (Luach Davar B'ito p.384)

25 Kislev 5692 (1931): **R' Chaim Hager z"l, the Otinia Rebbe**, died shortly after lighting Chanukah candles. This was remarkable because he had often said, "How one can die without having recited the blessing of Shehecheyanu over his good fortune to enter the World-to-Come? I will find a solution." (Luach Davar B'ito p.385)

28 Kislev: The 40 days of the Flood rains ended on this day. However, says the Midrash Tanchuma (Noach 11), for more than 1,200 years afterward, it would always rain for the 40 days ending on this date.

When King Shlomo built the Bet Hamikdash, he prayed for these rains to stop falling regularly, and they did. [Although G-d had sworn not to bring another flood, the memory of the flood remained in, and impacted, nature. (Etz Yosef)]

"A person who worries about spiritual matters no longer worries about material matters." ~ The Chofetz Chaim zt"l.

בְּעוֹד שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים יִשָּׂא פַרְעֹה אֶת־רֹאשֶׁךָ וַהֲשִׁיבְךָ עַל־כַּנֶּךָ וְנָתַתָּ כוֹס־פַּרְעֹה בְּיָדוֹ כַּמִּשְׁפָּט הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר הָיִיתָ מַשְׁקֵהוּ. כִּי אִם־זְכַרְתַּנִי אִתְּךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר יִיטַב לָךְ וְעָשִׂיתָ־נָּא עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד וְהִזְכַּרְתַּנִי אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְהוֹצֵאתַנִי מִן־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה "***In another three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head and will restore you to your post, and you will place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as was the former practice when you were his cupbearer. If only you would think of me with yourself when he benefits you, and you will do me a kindness, if you please, and mention me to Pharaoh, then you would get me out of this building.***" (40:13-14)



Why did Yosef add the words, כַּמִּשְׁפָּט הָרִאשׁוֹן "as was the former practice"? Also, what did he mean by the words, "כִּי אִם־זְכַרְתַּנִי" (commonly translated, "If only you would think of me").

R' Noach Rabinowitz z"l (Lithuania; late 19th century) explains: If someone was jailed and then obtained an early release without any conditions or restrictions, it typically is because the authorities have discovered that he is innocent and was, in fact, falsely imprisoned. However, if someone really is guilty – as was Pharaoh's butler – and he not only is released from prison but also is returned to his royal post, there must be something going on behind the scenes.

This is what Yosef meant: You will regain the same job that you had formerly, even though you deserve to be punished for your crime. Why? Only so that you will remember me. - It is for that purpose alone that Hashem is returning you to the palace. (**Toldot Noach**)





וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נַכֶּנּוּ נָפֶשׁ... הַשְׁלִיכוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־הַבּוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בַּמִּדְבָּר "***And Reuven heard, and he saved him [Yosef] from their hand; he said, 'Let us not strike him mortally . . . Throw him into the pit in the wilderness . . .'.***" (37:21-22)

The gemara (Shabbat 24a) states that this pit was home to snakes and scorpions. The halachah is that if a man falls into a pit full of snakes and scorpions, he is deemed dead, and his widow may remarry. Yet, the Torah refers to Reuven's act as saving Yosef!

In contrast, Yehuda convinced his brothers to remove Yosef from the pit and to sell him into slavery. Yet, the gemara (Sanhedrin 6a) says that whoever praises Yehuda for this angers Hashem. Why?

R' Chaim of Volozhin z"l (1749-1821) explained: Reuven caused Yosef to be lowered into a pit full of snakes and scorpions, but the pit was in Eretz Yisrael. Yehuda saved Yosef's physical life, but he caused Yosef to be taken out of Eretz Yisrael.

It is far better, said R' Chaim, to remain in Eretz Yisrael surrounded by snakes and scorpions than to live outside of Eretz Yisrael.

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זְקֻנִים הוּא לוֹ וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים "***Now Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his sons since he was a child of his old age, and he made him a fine woolen tunic.***" (37:3)

Rabbeinu Machir z"l Hy"d (14th century) writes: פַּסִּים is an acronym for the four individuals or groups that persecuted Yosef: Potiphar, the socharim, the Yishmaelim, and the Midyanim. (**Avkat Rocheil**)

וְלֹא־זָכַר שַׂר־הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ "***The Chamberlain of the Cupbearers did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him.***" (40:23)

Rashi z"l explains: וְלֹא־זָכַר שַׂר־הַמַּשְׁקִים: בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם "***He did not remember him" – on that day,*** וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ: לְאַחַר מִכָּאן "***And he forgot him" – afterwards.***



Rashi continues: Because Yosef placed his trust in the Sar Ha'mashkim, he was doomed to remain in prison for two additional years. Thus it is said (Tehilim 40:5) אַשְׁרֵי הַגֶּבֶר אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם ה' מִבְטַחוֹ וְלֹא־פָנָה אֶל־רְהָבִים וְשָׂטֵי כָזָב - "***Happy is the man who makes Hashem his trust and does not turn to the arrogant,***" i.e., he does not trust in the Egyptians, who are called arrogant (Yeshayah 30:7). [Until here from Rashi]

Many commentaries have wondered: While it is true that a person is required to have Bitachon / trust in Hashem, a person also is expected to engage in Hishtadlut / human effort. If so, what did Yosef do wrong when he asked the Sar Ha'mashkim to remember him?

R' Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik z"l (Belarus; 1820-1897) answers: A Jew's primary obligation is to have Bitachon. Hishtadlut is permitted only because not every person is capable of placing his complete trust in Hashem. By working or making other efforts to provide for his needs, a person creates circumstances in which he can trust in Hashem to do the rest. [Obviously, this is not ideal, for it implies a belief that Hashem needs a person's help.] It follows

that Hishtadlut is not for everyone, nor is there a uniform level of Hishtadlut that is appropriate for all people.

Yosef, continues R' Soloveitchik, exceeded the level of Bitachon that was appropriate for someone on his spiritual level. The verses reveal that Yosef understood that his entire encounter with the Sar Ha'mashkim was the beginning of his redemption; that is why he asked the Sar Ha'mashkim's help as part and parcel of interpreting his dream (see verses 13-14). But he should not have done so. Since he recognized that the process of his redemption had started, he should have placed his complete trust in Hashem and not asked the Sar Ha'mashkim's help.

R' Soloveitchik concludes: This explains the seemingly incongruous wording of the Midrash that Rashi is quoting. Why does the Midrash cite a verse about someone who does have Bitachon? Instead, it should have cited a verse about someone who does not have Bitachon (e.g., Yirmiyah 17:5). However, the Midrash is teaching that the reason Yosef is faulted is because he was, in general, a person with a very high level of Bitachon. That is why, for him, Hishtadlut was wrong. (**Bet Ha'Levi: Parashat Mikeitz**)

R' Yaakov Weinberg z"l (1923-1999; Rosh Hayeshiva of Yeshiva Ner Israel in Baltimore, Maryland) questions the premise of the Bet Ha'Levi's explanation: For a person in Yosef's situation to get out of prison would have required a miracle. And our Sages teach that a person may not rely on a miracle occurring. They do not say that this rule applies differently depending on a person's spiritual level. Thus, Yosef seemingly was obligated to make his own efforts to get out of prison.

Rather, R' Weinberg explains, the reason Yosef was punished was that [as the Bet Ha'Levi says] he saw, or should have seen, that his redemption had already begun. After all, Yosef had been in the dungeon for ten years. No one who cared about him had any idea where he was.

In short, he had no hope of being saved. Suddenly, the Sar Ha'mashkim showed up in the same prison, had a dream that needed interpreting, and Yosef was able to interpret it. This could only mean that Hashem was "engineering" Yosef's salvation. Given the clear signs that his salvation was already underway, there was no reason for Yosef to do anything. (Heard from **R' Shlomo Naiman shlita**, 8 Kislev 5778)

כִּי־גֻנֹּב גֻּנַּבְתִּי מֵאֶרֶץ הָעִבְרִים וְגַם־פֹּה לֹא־עָשִׂיתִי מְאוּמָה כִּי־שָׂמוּ אֹתִי בַּבּוֹר "***For indeed I was kidnaped from the land of the Hebrews*** . . ." (40:15)

R' Moshe Zuriel shlita (former mashgiach ruchani of Yeshivat Sha'alvim) writes: At first glance, the sin of Yosef's brothers was kidnaping. However, some kabbalists say that the true severity of their sin was due to the fact that they deprived a tzaddik of the opportunity to live in Eretz Yisrael.

R' Zuriel continues: **The Zohar Chadash** teaches that the reason Bnei Yisrael were in exile in Egypt for 210 years was that Yosef's 10 brothers — Binyamin did not participate — forced Yosef to be separated from his family for 22 years (10 x 22 = 220). From this, Hashem subtracted 10 years as compensation for the pain that the 10 brothers felt as a result of dying outside of Eretz Yisrael, leaving a "sentence" of 210 years. (**Drishat Zion**)

וַיָּשָׁב אֶל־אֶחָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הַיֶּלֶד אֵינֶנּוּ וַאֲנִי אָנָה אֲנִי־בָא "***Returning to his brothers, he [Reuven] said, 'The boy [Yosef] is gone! And I — where can I go?***'" (37:30)

R' Avraham ben Ha'Rambam z"l (Egypt; 1186-1237) asks: Since Reuven did not participate in his brothers' sale of Yosef and did not approve of it, why did he never tell their father Yaakov the truth that Yosef was alive?

R' Avraham offers three answers:

(1) Reuven had pity on his brothers (who had sold Yosef).

(2) Reuven reasoned that it was better that Yaakov write Yosef off for dead since there was no hope of ever seeing him again in any event.

(3) Reuven kept the secret from Yaakov for the same reason that Yosef himself never wrote a letter home to his father Yaakov even after he (Yosef) rose to prominence and could have contacted Yaakov: to see how Divine Providence would cause matters to play out. (**Lekket Mi'Peirush Rabbeinu Avraham Al Ha'Torah**)

R' Yosef Bechor Shor z"l (Orleans, France; 12th century) offers a different explanation for why Yosef never wrote home. It seems likely, he writes, that Yosef's brothers made him swear when they sold him that he would never come home or reveal himself to their father, would never inform their father that he was alive, and would never reveal his true identity to the Egyptians. (**Bechor Shor Al Ha'Torah**)



וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־דִּבָּתָם רָעָה אֶל־אֲבִיהֶם. וַיַּחֲלֹם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם ***"Yosef would bring evil reports about them to their father... Yosef dreamt a dream .."*** **(37:2,5)**

R' Noach Weinberg z"l (1930-2009; founder and Rosh Yeshiva of Aish Ha'Torah) asks: Why did Yosef merit to become the leader of the Jewish People, as foretold by his dreams? Up to this point, the only thing we know about Yosef is that he brought evil reports about his brothers to their father!

R' Weinberg answers: Commentaries explain that Yosef's reports about his brothers were based on misunderstandings; in fact, Yosef's brothers were not guilty of the sins that he accused them of. Yosef was punished for accusing his brothers falsely, including by being sold as a slave and by being falsely accused of sin later in our Parashah. At the same time, Yosef was deserving of reward for

reporting his brothers' apparent sins to their father, because he did it solely for their own good. He cared about them, and he acted on the caring, and that makes a person worthy of leadership.

וַיִּמְצָאֵהוּ אִישׁ וְהִנֵּה תֹעֶה בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּשְׁאָלֵהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ ***"A man discovered him and behold! — he was wandering aimlessly in the field; the man asked him, saying, 'What do you seek?'"*** **(37:15)**

Rashi z"l writes: This "man" was the angel Gavriel.

R' Menachem Mendel Morgenstern z"l (the Kotzker Rebbe; died 1859) teaches: The angel taught Yosef to always remind himself what he is seeking.

R' Yitzchak Meir Rotenberg-Alter z"l (1799-1866; first Gerrer Rebbe) elaborates: Surely, it was no small matter for Yosef to make the move from Yaakov Avinu's Bet Midrash to immorality-filled Egypt! The angel prepared Yosef by telling him that, if he would always remember the goal that is part of his essence, he would eventually find his way back. (**Chiddushei Ha'Rim**)

R' Yirmiyah Katz shlita (Rosh Kollel in New York; best known as a Halachic authority on the construction of Mikvaot) explains further: Here, the Torah is giving advice to each Jew, so that he should not become lost in the material world. - One must always ask himself, "What am I seeking?" "Why did I come into this world?"

This introspection will save a person from wandering away. Without this introspection, on the other hand, a person can easily wile away all of his days in nonsense. (***Tiferet L'Moshe: Yahadut***)

Every heart we encounter is fighting battles we may never hear about. Be the kindness that makes the weight they carry feel a little less heavy. ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rebbe Nachman

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו חֲלוֹם חָלַמְנוּ וּפֹתֵר אֵין אֹתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף הֲלוֹא לֵאלקִים פִּתְרֹנִים סַפְּרוּ־נָא לִי "***They said to him, 'We dreamt a dream, but there is no interpreter for it.' So Yosef said to them, 'Do not interpretations belong to G-d? Please relate it to me***'." (40:8)

Why did Yosef get involved? **R' Hanoch Henach of Alesk z"l** (chassidic rebbe; died 1884) explains: We read in Tehilim (105:2), שִׂיחוּ בְּכָל־נִפְלְאֹתָיו -"***Speak His wonders***." Yosef wanted to bring honour to Hashem's Name by creating opportunities for the Egyptians to become aware of His wonders. And his plan succeeded, for Pharaoh said –41:39), וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל־יוֹסֵף אַחֲרֵי הוֹדִיעַ אֱלקִים אוֹתְךָ אֶת־כָּל־זֹאת אֵין־נָבוֹן וְחָכָם כָּמוֹךָ "Since G-d has informed you of all this, there can be no one so discerning and wise as you." (**Lev Sameach**)

וַיִּתֵּן שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר בְּיַד־יוֹסֵף אֵת כָּל־הָאֲסִירִם אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עֹשִׂים שָׁם הוּא הָיָה עֹשֶׂה אֵין שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר רֹאֶה אֶת־כָּל־מְאוּמָה בְּיָדוֹ בַּאֲשֶׁר ה' אִתּוֹ "***The prison warden placed all the prison's inmates in Yosef's custody, and everything that was done there, he would do. The prison warden did not observe anything that was in his charge since Hashem was with him***. . ." (39:22-23)

R' Moshe Cheifetz z"l (Italy; 1664-1711) explains: Prisoners on death row can be particularly difficult to manage, since they have nothing to lose. Therefore, the prison warden, who is usually held accountable for whatever happens in a prison, will attempt to shift responsibility onto someone else's shoulders.

Here, the prison warden made Yosef responsible for whatever would transpire in the prison, which is the meaning of "everything that was done there, he would do"–i.e., he would be held accountable as if he had done it. But, Yosef was successful in managing the prisoners; hence, "***The prison warden did not observe anything***. . ." (**Melechet Machshevet**)

וַיְהִי ה׳ אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרִי ***"Hashem was with Yosef, and he became a successful man; and he remained in the house of his Egyptian master." (39:2)***

אֵין שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר רֹאֶה אֶת־כָּל־מְאוּמָה בְּיָדוֹ בַּאֲשֶׁר ה׳ אִתּוֹ וַאֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה ה׳ מַצְלִיחַ ***"The prison warden did not scrutinize anything that was in his charge inasmuch as Hashem was with him; and whatever he did Hashem made successful." (39:23)***

R' Yerachmiel Shulman z"l Hy"d (Menahel Ruchani of the Bet Yosef-Novardok Yeshiva in Pinsk, Poland; killed in the Holocaust) writes: The Torah does not say about any of Yaakov's sons, except Yosef, that Hashem was with him.

Although our Sages teach that "Hashem is with us in our troubles," we do not sense that because we typically are not conscious of the extent of our troubles, so we do not see how Hashem saves us from them. Only someone like Yosef, who was first enslaved and then thrown into prison, can appreciate that Hashem is with him.



וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נַכֶּנּוּ נָפֶשׁ ***"Reuven heard, and he rescued him [Yosef] from their hand…" (37:21)***

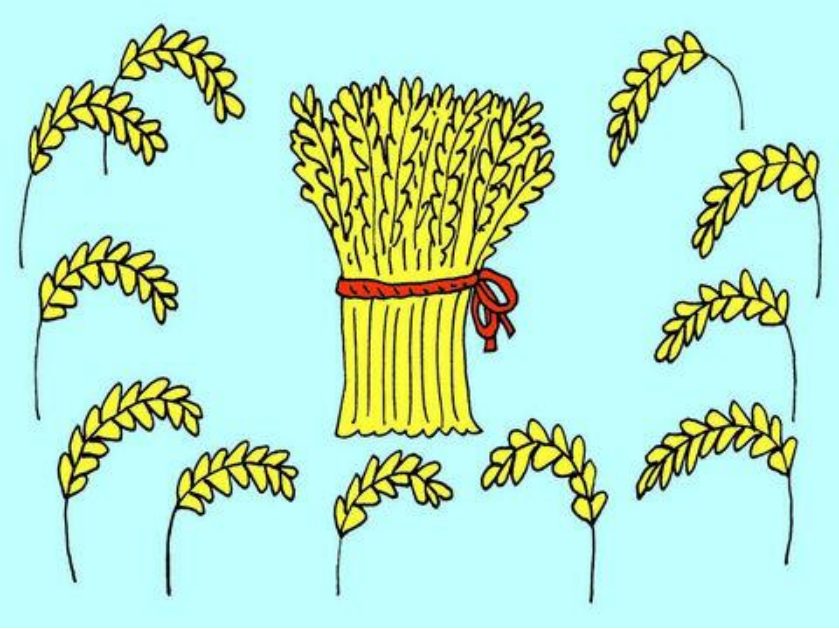
Did Reuven really save Yosef? He proposed throwing Yosef into a pit full of snakes and scorpions! Also, the gemara (Sanhedrin 6a) says that one is prohibited from praising Yehuda for saving Yosef from the pit. Why? Wasn't Yehuda's act greater than Reuven's?

R' Y. Stern z"l of Paris explains: True, Reuven's act might have led to Yosef's death, but only his physical death. In contrast, by proposing that Yosef be sold to Egypt as a slave, Yehuda condemned Yosef to a spiritual death (i.e., a lesser person than Yosef would have been swept up by the idolatry and immorality of Egypt). (**Iturei Torah**)



וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְּמִים אֲלֻמִּים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלֻמָּתִי וְגַם־נִצָּבָה וְהִנֵּה תְסֻבֶּינָה אֲלֻמֹּתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ לַאֲלֻמָּתִי. וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֶחָיו הֲמָלֹךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ

"`Behold! — we were binding sheaves in the middle of the field, when, behold! — my sheaf arose and it remained standing; then behold! — your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.' "His brothers said to him, `Would you then reign over us?'" (37:7-8)



Commentaries explain that Yosef erred in thinking that he would rule over his brothers forever, as he said, "My sheaf arose, and it remained standing." Thus, the brothers retorted: "Would you then reign over us? Our tradition is that Yehuda (ancestor of King David), not you, will be the progenitor of royalty."

R' Shimshon David Pinkus z"l (rabbi of Ofakim, Israel; died 2000) asks: Was Yosef's dream wrong? Surely, as a prophecy, it had to be true! He explains:

When ten tribes split from the Kingdom of Yehuda after King Shlomo died, their first king was Yerovam, a descendant of Yosef. The prophet told Yerovam (Melachim I 11:38), "*It shall be if you obey all that I will command you and walk in My ways, and you do that which is upright in My eyes . . . I shall build an enduring dynasty for you, just as I built for David, and I shall give Israel to you.*"

These verses seem to state clearly that a descendant of Yosef would have an enduring rule. How can this be?

Commentaries explain that Yerovam was meant to have found a dynasty of prime ministers, not kings. These prime ministers would

be subservient to a king, who would be from the tribe of Yehuda, but they would rule their other brethren. Had Yerovam remained righteous, Yosef's dream ("it remained standing") would have been fulfilled through him.

In the end, though, Yosef's dream did not come true. Why? Because man has free will. Yosef was shown what was meant to be, but he could not be shown how the story would end, for that would have negated Yerovam's ability to exercise his free will. (**Tifferet Torah**)



וְהִנֵּה אֹרַחַת יִשְׁמְעֵאלִים בָּאָה מִגִּלְעָד...וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל־אֶחָיו מַה־בֶּצַע כִּי נַהֲרֹג אֶת־אָחִינוּ וְכִסִּינוּ אֶת־דָּמוֹ **"*Behold! A caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead… Yehuda said to his brothers, 'What gain will there be if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?*"**(37:25-26)

The work, **Melo Ha'omer**, explains Yehuda's response to seeing the Ishmaelites as follows:

According to the midrash, one of the reasons that Yosef's brothers wanted to kill him was to prevent the birth of Yosef's descendant, Yerovam ben Nevat, one of the most destructive personalities in Jewish history. However, when Yehuda saw the Ishmaelites, he remembered how Hashem had once spared Yishmael's life because at that moment Yishmael was not deserving of death. Though the angels argued that Yishmael should die because he would father the Arabs, who would oppress the Jews, Hashem spared Yishmael because he, personally, was not wicked at that moment. (See Rashi to Bereishit 21:17)

Similarly, Yehuda reasoned, Yosef may be the ancestor of Yerovam, but Yosef is not deserving of death now. Accordingly, Yehuda saved Yosef from death. (**Ma'ayanah Shel Torah**)



וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נַכֶּנּוּ נָפֶשׁ... הַשְׁלִיכוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־הַבּוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בַּמִּדְבָּר וְיָד אַל־תִּשְׁלְחוּ־בוֹ לְמַעַן הַצִּיל אֹתוֹ מִיָּדָם לַהֲשִׁיבוֹ אֶל־אָבִיו

"And Reuven heard, and he saved him [Yosef] from their hand; he said, 'Let us not strike him mortally . . . Throw him into the pit in the wilderness but lay no hand on him' – intending to rescue him from their hand, to return him to their father." (37:21-22)





The midrash says (commenting on Shir Hashirim 7:14): "'The dudaim/ jasmine flowers yield fragrance' – this refers to Reuven, who saved Yosef; 'and at our door are treats' – this refers to the light of Chanukah."

What is the connection between Reuven's saving Yosef and Chanukah?

R' Yissachar Shlomo Teichtel z"l Hy"d (Slovakia; killed in 1945) explains: Numerous commentaries discuss the following famous question, known as the "Bet Yosef's question": If the Maccabees found a jug with enough oil to last for one day and the oil lasted for eight days, the miracle itself was seven days long. Why then is Chanukah celebrated for eight days?

One answer that is given (by **R' David Halevi z"l, the "Taz"**) is that miracles always involve making something-out-of-something, not something-out-of-nothing. For example, we read in Melachim II (chapter 4) that the prophet Elisha caused a small amount of oil to fill dozens of jugs. He did not cause a miracle involving flour, bread or some other commodity because the widow did not have any of those things. However, because she had a few drops of oil, he could cause the oil to "multiply" miraculously.

Similarly, writes the Taz, in order for the oil to "multiply" and last for eight days, there had to be a drop left at the end of the first day. This means, in turn, that less than one day's supply of oil was consumed during the first day that the menorah burned. Thus, the miracle did last more than seven days.

Of course, continues R' Teichtel, Hashem is capable of bringing about a miracle that involves something-out-of-nothing. However, the Taz's point is that to whatever extent a miracle can be made to appear more natural, Hashem prefers that.

How do we know this? R' Teichtel answers: The gemara says that the pit into which Yosef was thrown was home to snakes and scorpions. How then was Reuven saving Yosef by throwing him into this pit?

The answer is that Reuven was counting on Hashem to save Yosef. But, if Reuven was counting on Hashem, why did he make any effort to save Yosef? Let Hashem do it! - The answer is that Reuven knew that Hashem prefers that miracles be lessened.

Now we see the connection between Reuven's saving Yosef and Chanukah. Why do we observe Chanukah for eight days, not seven? Because, as Reuven taught us, Hashem prefers that miracles be lessened, and from this we know that some oil was left over after the first day. (**She'eilot U'teshuvot Mishneh Sachir: Orach Chaim, Mahadura Tinyana No. 24**)

וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֶחָיו הֲמָלֹךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ אִם־מָשׁוֹל תִּמְשֹׁל בָּנוּ "***His brothers said to him, 'Would you then reign over us? Would you then dominate us?***" (37:8)





R' Eliyahu David Teomim-Rabinowitz z"l (1843-1905; Mir, Ponovezh, and Yerushalayim; known by his initials as "**the Aderet**") asks: How did Yosef's dream regarding sheaves of wheat imply that he expected to rule over his brothers? He explains:

The midrash records that Yosef dreamed that his bundle of wheat was fresh, while his brothers' bundles were spoiled. Thus, Yosef's dream was quite similar to Pharaoh's dream in next week's parashah, which also featured healthy wheat and sickly wheat.

The Torah records in parashas **מקץ** that Pharaoh was not satisfied with the interpretations that his advisors offered for his dreams. - The midrash relates that Pharaoh's advisors offered him interpretations that were personal ("*You will father seven daughters and they will die*"), while Pharaoh believed that a king's dreams must relate to affairs of the state.

Similarly, here, Yosef's brothers reasoned that the only reason Yosef would dream that he had healthy wheat and everyone else had spoiled wheat was because he considered himself to be their monarch. (**Sefer Parshiyot**)

וַיִּקְרַע יַעֲקֹב שִׂמְלֹתָיו וַיָּשֶׂם שַׂק בְּמָתְנָיו וַיִּתְאַבֵּל עַל־בְּנוֹ יָמִים רַבִּים ***"Yaakov tore his garments and placed sackcloth on his loins; he mourned for his son many days." (37:34)***

R' Moshe Rosenstein z"l (1881-1940; Lomza Yeshiva) writes: "Aveilut"–whether on a personal level or national level–is an Avodah service performed in a person's heart, digesting that which is bad and bitter and turning it into something good and sweet.

He explains: At first glance, Aveilut makes no sense; the past is the past and cannot be undone. Nevertheless, just as our Sages instituted seven days of Simcha/ joy for a bride and groom, they instituted seven days of Aveilut for one whose close relative passed away. - These two week-long observances share a common purpose:

The Avodah of the seven days of Simcha is to attain Emunah and see Hashem through His kindness. Likewise, the Avodah of Aveilut is to attain Emunah and see Hashem through His Attribute of Justice. Both are Mitzvot and, ultimately, both result in the happiness that comes from feeling a relationship with Hashem.

R' Rosenstein continues: Aveilut is not synonymous with sadness, nor is it meant to be pushed away with humour or artificial expressions of happiness. That is a temporary solution at best. Rather, Aveilut should be viewed like a fever in the body. A very high fever needs to be treated, but a moderate fever is good for the body; it is part of the immune system's fight against infection.

Likewise, Aveilut is designed to fight the depression that could result from a tragic loss, giving the mourner a framework to process their loss and attain a state of Simcha. (***Ahavat Meisharim* No.41**)

***"The only way to truly conquer Taa'vah is through Limud Hatorah." ~* R' Tzvi Pesach Frank.**

וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כְּתֹנֶת יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁחֲטוּ שְׂעִיר עִזִּים וַיִּטְבְּלוּ אֶת־הַכְּתֹנֶת בַּדָּם **"They took Yosef's tunic, slaughtered a young goat, and dipped the tunic in the blood."** *(37:31)*



R' Elchanan Wasserman z"l (rosh yeshiva in Baranovitch, Poland; martyred in the Holocaust) writes: It is a very wondrous phenomenon that, for thousands of years, Jews have been the victims of blood libels. There is no nation that is more careful not to eat blood than are the Jews. Does not the Gemara teach that a lie cannot gain a foothold if it does not have some small basis in fact? How, then, have blood libels been propagated successfully?

He answers: Obviously, this is a punishment for the Jewish People for some sin. "If I were not unworthy [of reaching such a conclusion]," R' Wasserman writes, "I would say that it is a punishment for the sin of dipping Yosef's tunic in blood." ("And if I have erred, may Hashem forgive me".) (**Kovetz Ma'amarim**)

וַיְהִי ה' אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרִי **"Hashem was with Yosef, and he became a successful man, and he remained in the house of his Egyptian master." (39:2)**

The Gemara (Megillah 10b) teaches that the word "וַיְהִי" introduces a sorrowful event that causes a person to cry "Vy!"–like "Woe!" in English or the Yiddish expression, "Oy vey!" What was the sorrowful event here? asks **R' Peretz Steinberg shlita** (rabbi in Queen, N.Y.).

R' Steinberg answers: The sorrowful event was precisely that Yosef "remained in the house of his Egyptian master." - Since "Hashem was

with Yosef, and he became a successful man," imagine what he could have accomplished had he not been a slave in the house of an Egyptian master!

So great was the whole world's loss from Yosef's being a slave! Surely it is appropriate to cry out, "Vy!" (***Pri Etz Chaim***)

Near the end of this week's parashah, we find Yosef telling Pharaoh's Cupbearer (40:15), **כִּי־גֻנֹּב גֻּנַּבְתִּי מֵאֶרֶץ הָעִבְרִים וְגַם־פֹּה לֹא־עָשִׂיתִי מְאוּמָה כִּי־שָׂמוּ אֹתִי בַּבּוֹר** "***For indeed I was kidnaped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing for them to have put me in the pit.***"



Why, asks **R' Yehonatan Eyebschutz z"l** (1690-1764; Central European rabbi and rosh yeshiva and prolific author), did Yosef mention to the cupbearer that he had been kidnaped from the land of the Hebrews (i.e., Eretz Yisrael)?

R' Eyebschutz explains: The pious men of old would, from time-to-time, leave society and live in caves or other lonely places in order to meditate on spiritual matters and distance themselves from sin. Thus we read, for example, that the prophet cried (Yirmiyah 9:1), "*If only someone would give me a travelers' lodge in the wilderness.*" Likewise, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai spent years in a cave. Was that the only place he could find to hide from the Romans? - Rather, he hid in a cave by choice, and he therefore rose to greatness.

R' Eyebschutz continues: Yosef should have wanted to remain in prison, where he was removed from society, serving Hashem in

poverty and privation. Indeed, we read about Yosef's imprisonment (in our parashah – 39:21) וַיְהִי ה' אֶת־יוֹסֵף -"***Hashem was with Yosef.***" In contrast, when Yosef circulated in society, his physical beauty led him and others to temptation [as related in our parashah and in Rashi to Bereishit 49:22].

Why, then, did Yosef want to leave prison?

Because, he explained to the cupbearer, his true place was in Eretz Yisrael. That is where a person can achieve true spiritual growth. As long as Yosef remained in prison, he had no hope of ever returning to the Holy Land. - [As it turned out, Hashem had other plans for Yosef.] (**Ya'arot Devash Vol. I, No. 14**)

וַיְקַנְאוּ־בוֹ אֶחָיו וְאָבִיו שָׁמַר אֶת־הַדָּבָר "***So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind (literally, `guarded the matter'***)." (37:11)

Rashi z"l explains: הָיָה מַמְתִּין וּמְצַפֶּה מָתַי יָבֹא "***He awaited and looked forward to the time when this would come to pass.***"



It is said in the name of **R' Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov z"l** (founder of the chassidic movement; died 1760) that it is in the same sense that King Shlomo wrote (Kohelet 8:5), שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יֵדַע דָּבָר רָע - "***One who 'guards' a mitzvah will know no evil.***" This means that a person who is constantly looking for and anticipating opportunities to perform mitzvot will experience protection from evil.

At a minimum, the Ba'al Shem Tov teaches, a person should not let a single day to pass without performing some mitzvah. (**Tzava'at Ha'Rivash**)

R' Shalom Schwadron z"l (1912-1997; the Maggid of Yerushalayim) related that he learned from the following story how one can turn even his mundane daily activities into mitzvot:

One day, R' Schwadron was walking with **R' Elya Lopian z"l** (1872-1970; one of the elders of the mussar movement) when they saw a Jewish worker patching potholes in the street. R' Lopian said to R' Schwadron, "Look at this Jew who is engaged full-time in the performance of a mitzvah, specifically, the mitzvah of building Eretz Yisrael. Only one thing is missing; he does not intend to do his work for the sake of performing a mitzvah, but only to earn a living."

Similarly, said R' Schwardron, **R' Yehuda Leib Chasman z"l** (mashgiach ruchani of the Chevron Yeshiva; died 1936) writes about a night watchman who roams the city looking out for fires and other potential disasters. The night watchman could turn his entire night into one long mitzvah, if only his primary intent were to perform chessed for the townsfolk, while the thought of receiving a salary was secondary. - Unfortunately, most night watchmen think only of their wages and lose out entirely on the mitzvah they could be performing. (**Kol Chotzeiv**)



וְלֹא־זָכַר שַׂר־הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ "***Yet the Officer of the Cupbearers did not remember Yosef, but he forgot him***." (40:23)

Our Sages say that Yosef was punished for placing his reliance on the cupbearer to bring about his rescue.

Many commentaries ask: Is not a person obligated to make an effort ("hishtadlut") to care for himself and not sit back and wait for miracles?

R' Baruch Sorotzkin z"l (1917-1979; rosh yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland) answers: The obligation of hishtadlut ends at the moment that a ray of salvation appears on the horizon. As soon

as one sees that G-d "remembers" him, one should cease his efforts and rely on G-d.

Here, Yosef should have recognized that his entire encounter with the Egyptians and their dreams was for the purpose of causing his rescue; therefore, he should not have asked the Egyptian to rescue him. (**Ha'binah Ve'ha'berachah**)

An Astonishing Midrash

מַה־בֶּצַע כִּי נַהֲרֹג אֶת־אָחִינוּ וְכִסִּינוּ אֶת־דָּמוֹ "***What gain/betza shall we have if we kill our brother?***" (37:26) – from here we see that Yosef's brothers prayed daily.



The word בֶּצַע- spelled bet-tzaddi-ayin – is the acronym of **בוקר צהריים ערב** -"morning, afternoon, evening." These are, of course, the three times for prayer. Yehuda said to his brothers in the above verse: "What gain will we have if kill our brother? – our prayers will no longer be accepted!"

Why? Because the prophet Yeshayah states (1:15), "*When you spread your hands [in prayer], I will hide My eyes from you; even if you intensify your prayer, I will not listen – your hands are full of blood.*"- From here we learn that a murderer's prayers are not heard.

Besides alluding to the three prayer times, the three letters of "**בצע**" allude to the three prayers in another way: the letter "**ב**" is the second letter of Avraham's name, the letter "**צ**" is the second

letter of Yitzchak's name, and the letter "**ע**" is the second letter of Yaakov's name. These men were the innovators of the morning, afternoon and evening prayers, respectively. (**Binat Nevonim**)

וַיְהִי֙ בָּעֵ֣ת הַהִ֔וא וַיֵּ֥רֶד יְהוּדָ֖ה מֵאֵ֣ת אֶחָ֑יו ***"It was at that time that Yehuda went down from his brothers…"*** (38:1)



Rashi says **לְלַמֵּד שֶׁהוֹרִידוּהוּ אֶחָיו מִגְּדֻלָּתוֹ כְּשֶׁרָאוּ בְצָרַת אֲבִיהֶם** that Yehuda's brothers lowered Yehuda from his previous stature because he failed to use his influence to save Yosef.

R' Moshe Bezalel Alter z"l (son of the Sefat Emet) commented: That is why Yehuda immediately got married, for the halachah accords a bridegroom the status of royalty. (**Otzrot Tzaddikei U'geonei Ha'dorot**)

His Daily Bread by Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn



Reb Reuven, the brother of the legendary **R' Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz** (1886-1948), was a grocer in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. On the day of the funeral of R' Shraga Feivel, thousands of people gathered at Mesivta Torah Vodaath on South Third Street to pay their final respects to the man who was an architect of Torah in America. On the way to his brother's funeral, Reb Reuven was

walking to the Mesivta when he suddenly went into a grocery along the way.

The people who were walking alongside Reb Reuven were taken aback. What could be so important to divert his attention from the matter at hand? In respect of Reb Reuven's piety, no one said anything. When he was asked about it during the shivah, the answer he gave symbolized the special nature of the Mendelowitz family.

There was a poverty-stricken man who came to Reb Reuven's grocery every morning for bread and milk for his family. Reb Reuven never charged him but to preserve the man's dignity he wrote the amount due on a balance sheet that he knew – and the poor man knew – would never be claimed. It was an unspoken pact between them.

"During the shivah my store will be closed," explained Reb Reuven, "and this man will have to go to the other grocer for his family's bread and milk. I wanted to be sure that the grocer wouldn't charge him so I went in to assure him that I would cover the cost!"

If that's what the grocers of that generation were, one can only imagine how extraordinary the Torah leaders were. (**Reflections of the Maggid**)

A Miracle to "Tank" Hashem for by Rabbi David Bibi

I heard a story told by Rabbi Baruch Rosenblum who heard it from a commander within Gaza.

The commander called the Rabbi and said, "I must share a miracle with you. I walked into our situation room in the morning where the strategy for the day is planned and an entire group of officers was seated at the table with ashen faces. They had just seen a video taken by a drone which showed three Namer troop transport tanks hit and destroyed by RPGs."



Israeli Namer tank

Each Namer tank holds 12 soldiers so to the group sitting there it meant that 36 Israeli soldiers had just perished, Lo Aleynu! How could this have happened? How could three tanks be hit and destroyed at the same time? How do they share this information with the families? How do they share the information with Jerusalem?

And as they are sitting there, one of the officers gets a call and it is from one of the Namer commanders. He asks the caller how is it possible? How are you calling me? We just saw the tanks hit and blown up.

So, the commander explains. The tanks rotator belt detached, and we realized that we were sitting ducks, so we quickly abandoned the tank. Without us noticing, those in the tank behind us saw us abandon the tank and assuming there was something wrong did the same. Seeing both tanks empty, those in the third tank reached the same conclusion and quickly ran for cover. As soon as they made it to safety, all three tanks were hit.

The officer went on to explain to that Rabbi, "This is the impact of the prayers, the acts of kindness, the commitment to do mitzvos from everyone around us. The soldiers realized that their lives were saved in what they saw as an open miracle, and they realized that the miracles are on account of everything that everyone is doing with them in mind.

B'H, we should continue in our jobs to back up each soldier with whatever they need to be successful and with the angels we create through the mitzvos we do.

War & Terror: Eitzos of HaGaon HaRav Landau



In a rare letter published on Friday, HaGaon HaRav Dov Landau wrote eitzos regarding what to be mechazeik in light of the difficult situation in Eretz Yisrael and the world.

"***We don't know the cheshbonos of Shamayim but every chizzuk in Bein Adam L'Chaveiro is pleasing to Hashem***," HaRav Landau wrote.

"***And especially the virtue of being mevateir to others. Each person in every situation should grasp the midah of vitur which awakens Rachamei Shamayim, and even more so when a person is mevateir on something that he believes is justifiably his***."

"One should also be careful in hilchos Shabbos which pose many obstacles, even malachos d'Oyraisa, and try to to learn halachos regarding common issues and consult a Talmid Chacham on little-known details."

HaRav Landau ended his letter with brachos that Hashem should save Klal Yisrael from all tzaros. (YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)





Why is it that we find Mattisyohu and other tzadikim in the older generations carried swords and today a Rosh Yeshiva would never think about owning a weapon?

The truth is that not only roshei yeshiva but even bums shouldn't carry weapons today. Because it's not necessary. Unless you're going to go at night through Bedford Stuyvesant, or take a walk through Harlem; but then a sword wouldn't help you anyway. You'd have to have a shotgun. Or an armored car. Because they also have shotguns, so what will your shotgun help you?

Besides, Mattisyohu wasn't in the habit of carrying a sword. Only that he knew what was going to happen that day so he put a sword under his cloak. But in general it doesn't pay to carry weapons today at all.

If you're a man of peace and you're not armed, you're more likely to survive. Once you pull a knife, then you cannot tell what the other party might do. He'll get desperate and who knows what he'll do!

That's also why I don't approve of learning karate for self-defence purposes. What good is it if you know the ways and means of tackling an opponent if the opponent will be standing behind a door ready to jump you as you pass by?

And these bums won't play by the rules of karate. They hurl knives. Some of them have learned how to hurl knives from a distance. And the knife reaches the victim with the point first. They hurl knives and they shoot guns. So what is it going to help if you learn karate? Karate won't help against the bullet.

So the best karate is to stay home. Don't go out at night. And if you're stuck and you're confronted by bums, the best self-defence is to just keep quiet and empty out your pockets and give them everything. That's the best karate.

I always say over the Chinese proverb, "***The biggest hero is the one who survives***." The one who runs away, that's the hero.



Is it important to make birthday parties for children?

It's unimportant. I'm not going to say you should not make birthday parties, but I certainly will say that it's unimportant.

Make Chanukah parties for children. Make chamishah asar beshvat parties for children. Make Purim parties for children. Besides the big party that you make for everybody else on these days, you could make a little party for children too. If you want, it's a good idea to make Rosh Chodesh parties for children. But birthday parties? I won't say it's a good thing to make it.

I'm not going to discourage it because I don't want to make people unhappy, but I won't say it's a good thing. Certainly, it's not necessarily a good thing.



When a person works in a dangerous neighborhood, is it advisable to apply for a license for a gun?

Now that's a question that's not so easy to answer because many times you can get by with a substitute for a gun. Like what you say in Elokai Netzor every day: **וְנַפְשִׁי כֶּעָפָר לַכֹּל תִּהְיֶה** – '***And my soul should be like dust to everybody***.'

If somebody, a goy, is fresh and insults you, become an anav. It pays to be an anav – you'll live longer if you're humble and keep your mouth closed. But when you have a gun in your pocket, you might forget yourself and answer back something rash. And then, it's not so certain that he doesn't have a gun. And he might know how to use it better than you.

I was once walking in the street and I visited a friend of mine and he saw that I carried a stick, a heavy stick, on me. It was many years ago, about thirty years ago and it was a dangerous neighborhood so I was holding a stick. And this friend told me, "Don't do that! It's dangerous to carry a stick."

It's dangerous to carry a stick, because first of all they could take the stick away and hit you with it. That's number one. Secondly, with a stick, you become reckless. Without a stick, you'll stay home. You're safer off. And it's better always to avoid trouble.

I told you this many times. The Chinese say, "Who is a hero? The one who knows how to run away." That's a hero – if you know how to run away you're the hero. So therefore, I won't answer the question. It's always better to avoid any possibility of danger, but carrying a gun sometimes makes you reckless and you go into places where ordinarily you wouldn't go.



אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף ***These are the chronicles of Yaakov: Yosef***. (37:2)

While the word toldos is usually translated as offspring, in this pasuk it means chronicles, since the only offspring of Yaakov Avinu that the pasuk mentions is Yosef.

Rashi explains why the Torah applies the term toldos to Yosef more so than to any of his brothers.

First, Yaakov worked for Lavan in order to get Rachel Imeinu, Yosef's mother, as his wife. Second, Yosef's countenance closely resembled that of Yaakov. Third, whatever happened to Yaakov (so to speak), happened to Yosef: Yaakov was hated by his brother; so, too, was Yosef (obviously for different reasons); Yaakov's brother sought to end his life; it was not much different with Yosef.

The Torah is not a story book, and it does not waste space retelling various occurrences, regardless of their relationship to the present. Thus, Rashi recalls Yaakov's past and its similarity to that of Yosef, to teach us why Yosef is that toladah, offspring, of Yaakov who carried on his father's tradition, his legacy.

While this explains why Rashi draws a parallel between Yaakov and Yosef, it does not clarify why, if father and son have similar life experiences, it indicates that this son – to the exclusion of his brothers – is his father's spiritual successor.

Since when do occurrences in one's life play such critical significance that resemblances in life's experiences between father and son create an everlasting bond?



Horav Baruch Dov Povarsky, Shlita, quotes **Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl**, who asks why Hashem created the dynamics of the world (Hashem is the dynamics of the world), such that people have individual experiences, varied cultures and lifestyles: some are wealthy; others are poor; some are blessed with good health, while others suffer from varied illnesses.

He explains that individuals are on different spiritual planes, thus requiring that each individual be "outfitted" with his unique "baggage" to sustain him spiritually and to enable him to navigate through life, so that he is able to serve Hashem to the best of his abilities.

Obviously, one who is born with incredible acumen will be expected to excel in his Torah erudition. One who is challenged physically will have aspects of his spiritual accoutrements in excess, to help him to overcome his challenges. - There is a balance, with Hashem complementing each individual with attributes, experiences, and even handicaps, which help him achieve his goal as set by Heaven.

The Rosh Yeshivah applies this idea to explain Chazal's statement (Pirkei Avos 4:9), "He who fulfills the Torah amid poverty will one day fulfill the Torah amid wealth."

In his Ruach Chaim commentary, **Horav Chaim Volozhiner, zl**, posits that becoming wealthy is not a reward for one who serves Hashem, despite the fact that he is living in abject poverty; rather, each of us is to fulfill the Torah amid the various challenges that are "thrown" at us.

An individual who triumphs over a lesser challenge is soon "elevated" to another status, in which the challenges are consistent in tune with his newly-elevated status. As he progresses from challenge to challenge, they increase in difficulty. Therefore, the Tanna teaches us that once one has successfully served Hashem despite the challenge of poverty, Hashem will elevate/intensify his challenge, so that he will be able to serve Him despite the challenge of wealth (which is considered a greater challenge).

It is easier to serve Hashem when one has nothing, than to contend with the inclination to hoard one's wealth and not spend his money wisely to the benefit of others.

Returning to the original question, we now understand that life's experiences are not random, disconnected occurrences that "just happen." Everything has a purpose and a reason. It is all commensurate with one's spiritual level.

Every person undergoes circumstances that enable him to achieve greater spiritual ascendancy. Therefore, when two people's life experiences are the same, when the challenges that they confront resemble one another, it indicates that they resemble one another spiritually as well.

Thus, if Yosef looked like Yaakov and his life's experiences were similar to Yaakov's, then we must view them as having much more than an external, physical resemblance. They are one and the same. Yosef and Yaakov had much more than a physical kinship; their challenges also paralleled one another, catalyzing their physical conformity.

Yaakov did not have the same type of relationship with his other sons, because they were not spiritually like him.

וַיָּשָׁב רְאוּבֵן אֶל־הַבּוֹר **'Reuven returned to the pit.'** (37:29)

Where was Reuven (that he had to "return")?

Rabbi Eliezer (Midrash) says, "*Reuven was occupied with fasting; he was dressed in sackcloth as penitence for changing the placement of his father's bed. Hashem (in accepting Reuven's repentance) said to him, 'From the beginning of time, there has not been anyone who had transgressed and repented. You are the first one. As reward, your descendant will stand and declare/exhort the people to return/repent.'*" This is a reference to the Navi Hoshea, a descendant of Reuven, who proclaimed, Shuvu Yisrael ad Hashem Elokecha, "Return Yisrael to Hashem, your G-d."

This Midrash begs elucidation. Was Reuven the first to repent? What about Kayin, who repented? Furthermore, Chazal teach that Adam HaRishon also repented. Why is Reuven singled out as the first penitent when, in fact, two others preceded him?



The commentators, each in his own inimitable manner, distinguish between the varied approaches to teshuvah manifest by Adam, Kayin and Reuven.

The Brisker Rav, zl, offers a novel understanding of Reuven's teshuvah. Reuven was about to perform the mitzvah of hatzolas nefashos, saving his brother's life. This was no ordinary mitzvah (not that any mitzvah may be called "ordinary"). Saving a life is saving a world; he was saving all future generations that would descend from Yosef. Reuven wanted to be sure that this mitzvah was executed b'shleimus, complete perfection.

People often perform mitzvos assuming that they are doing something special, wonderful and great, when, in fact, the end result of this mitzvah is far from laudatory. Thus, to ensure that there would be no errors, Reuven wanted to purge himself of any vestige of sin.

This form of teshuvah is unlike any teshuvah previously performed. This was not teshuvah to expunge a previous sin; rather, this was teshuvah prior to a mitzvah, for the express purpose of perfecting the upcoming mitzvah.

This is the meaning of Hashem's declaration to Reuven, **אתה פתחת בתשובה תחילה**, "*You 'opened' with repentance 'first.'* - Prior to you, no one had thought of repenting before carrying out a mitzvah. You taught the world that if one wants to perfect the performance of a mitzvah, he must first be pristine, cleansed of sin. This can only be done through prophylactic teshuvah.

This is the meaning of Hoshea's proclamation **שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד ה׳ אֱלֹקֶיךָ**, "*Before you go approach Hashem, ie; perform a mitzvah, repent, so that your mitzvah will be complete and perfect.*"

Pouring wine from a filthy pitcher is clearly not the same as pouring from a pitcher that is pristine of all dirt. Should mitzvah performance be any different?

"If a traveller on a ship sailing west regrets having made the trip and turns himself toward the east while remaining on board, he has obviously accomplished nothing.

The same is true of a person who tries to mend one of his ways while remaining in the company of those who do the offense." ~ R' Yosef Yozel Hurwitz zt"l.

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם *Reuven heard, and he received him from their hand*. (37:21)

Reuven had much to gain if Yosef were to be out of the picture. He was the firstborn. Yosef was a threat to his position, since he, too, was a firstborn.

The shevatim rendered a halachic decision, finding Yosef guilty of being a redifah, a pursuer, who was bent on destroying them. Reuven attempted to dissuade them for one purpose: so that he could return later and release Yosef from the pit, thereby saving his life.

Horav Zalman Sorotzkin, zl, observes the incredible level of atzilus, nobility, that was manifest by Reuven's actions. As far as the shevatim were concerned, either Yosef or Reuven would be the bechor, the aristocrat of the shevatim. Reuven was the only one who would benefit from Yosef's "displacement," since he had previously been considered to be the bechor, but, due to his impulsivity, he had lost that status to Yosef. Nonetheless, Reuven took a position with regard to Yosef.

He may no longer have been the bechor, which meant that the firstborn fringe benefits were no longer his. He did not care. As far as he was concerned, however, he was the bechor in assuming responsibility. He knew that a stand had to be taken, and, as the bechor, he should be the responsible party, the one to assume that stand. He may no longer have had firstborn rights, but he still retained firstborn responsibilities, which he could now execute. He could overrule his brothers.

All too often we spend most of our time seeking excuses to validate our lack of participation with regard to helping others. Reuven teaches us that small people avoid responsibility. A true leader does what must be done; he assumes responsibility, no matter the consequences.

אֵין שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר רֹאֶה אֶת־כָּל־מְאוּמָה בְּיָדוֹ בַּאֲשֶׁר ה' אִתּוֹ 'The prison warden did not scrutinize anything that was in his charge inasmuch as Hashem was with him.' (39:23)

Prison is not a happy place. It is usually reserved for the dregs of society. Many are there because they were unable to defend themselves against the prevailing circumstantial evidence. Others just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. - Yosef was accused of a crime which he did not commit, but, in Egypt, as in most countries, this does not prevent the ruling class from disposing one into a system where he is lost – often forever.

Yosef was admired and revered by the warden, as well as by the prisoners. They saw that something was special about him. Hashem was with him; thus, Yosef succeeded at whatever task he undertook. All of this was the result of the Egyptians' recognition that Yosef was not alone.

Horav Shlomo Wolbe, zl, makes an insightful observation from this statement. It is possible for Hashem to be with a person even when that person finds himself in an environment that is not conducive to spiritual refinement and growth. Even if one finds himself in an environment that is secular in nature, antagonistic to religious belief or hedonistic in action, he must never forget that he is never alone. - Yes – even within the confines of spiritual filth in which he finds himself, Hashem is present with him.

Yosef was a slave in a forlorn dungeon, surrounded by Egypt's lowest of the low, pagans who had descended to the depths of immorality, who had fallen to the nadir of depravity; yet, the Torah informs us that Hashem was with him.

Thus, says the Mashgiach, one can seek excuses to justify slacking off in his commitment to Torah and mitzvos. He cannot say, "*Well, I am alone; Hashem has forsaken me.*" This is not true; Hashem can be found anywhere.

"***Where is G-d found?***" asked **Horav Menachem Mendel, zl, m'Kotzk**. His reply is classic: "***Wherever He is given entry***!"

The Berditchever, zl, was wont to say, "***One can say he is for Hashem; one can say he is not for Hashem; but one can never say that he is without Hashem***!"

Hashem never forsakes us. He is right there, waiting to be invited in. How does Hashem enter? Through emunah, faith. When we believe in Hashem, we have already allowed Him into our lives.

Rav Wolbe states (Ali Shur), "***Emunah is a reality; it is not a concept***."

When we were kids we all sang the popular song, "***Hashem is here, Hashem is there; Hashem is truly everywhere***." We must take the juvenile entrancement of Hashem is here and transform it into the mature reality of emunah, of believing that Hashem is here. Sadly, many sang this wonderful melody as children, but – with regard to the reality of the words – remained mere children! - Emunah is not blind faith. It is reality. It is clarity. It is feeling. A living connection exists between us and Hashem.

The *maamin*, believer, firmly believes unequivocally that Hashem is here, there and everywhere. To him, emunah is palpable, but, as the Kotzker said, we must allow Him in. If we do not "see" Him, we can hardly invite Him into our lives. The individual who is afflicted with spiritual blindness, or even weakened by spiritual myopia, does not see Hashem. If he does not see Him in every place, he will sadly not see him in any place.

Rav Wolbe once attended a seminar in Sweden. During the lecture, the speaker mentioned that "the very atmosphere of Sweden is treif." Rav Wolbe took umbrage with this statement and wanted to vehemently protest, because it implied that Hashem was not in Sweden! How can one make such a pejorative statement? **מְלֹא כָל־ הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ**, "***His glory fills the entire world***" (Yeshayah 6:3).

Hashem can be found in the most far-flung, desolate places. Our problem is that we do not look for Him. If we make the effort, we will see Him beyond a shadow of a doubt – everywhere.

The surroundings in which we find ourselves do not always support our service to Hashem. In the course of our daily endeavor, either in the pursuit of our daily bread or in the spiritual work that we do, we might find ourselves in areas that are quite distant from the spiritual utopia in which many of us had the good fortune to grow up.

Does that mean that we are alone, that Hashem is not with us at every step? No! We are never alone. We just have to open our eyes and see how everything around us "seems" to be working with us. If we believe, we will see. Without emunah, we have no eyesight. We must remember that life will not always be a rose garden.

As we encounter life's ups and downs, we will confront challenges and difficulties – some that have the ability to leave us shattered, but, through the spectrum of emunah vision, we are enabled a path through the obstacles, a path called hope. Even then, when our vision lights up the path of hope, we might stumble, so we stretch out our hand and place it in the hands of the Almighty, Who will either walk us through, or, in some cases, even carry us.



The following vignette is a story related by **Rabbi Fishel Shachter**. I use it because it represents everyone's story. I, too, was born to Holocaust survivors who saw it all – yet survived, their emunah intact.

I write this today on the 75th yahrzeit of my three sisters who perished in the Warsaw Ghetto on Tishrei 13, 1942. Hashem yinkom damam: A female Holocaust survivor had been married for twelve years without being blessed with children. One day, she

sat in the Madison Avenue (Manhattan) office of a distinguished gynaecologist and heard the following: "Madame, I implore you to listen to me, since what I am saying is for your own benefit. Medically speaking, there is nothing that we can do for you. Hair will sooner grow on my palm than you will conceive."

The woman listened to the devastating news, bid the doctor good-by and left. She boarded the Madison Avenue bus. She sat there lost in thought, feeling sorry for herself, her life flashing before her. She had experienced the terrible horrors of the Holocaust.

Her family had a trap door beneath their dining room table, which they would use to access their hiding place, climbing down to the basement to evade the accursed Nazis. Her job (for which she volunteered) was to smooth over the small rug that covered the trap door. She would then hide beneath some furniture, hold her breath, and pray that her presence would not be detected.

The family descended the steps to the basement. She closed the trap door, smoothed over the carpet, then curled up as much as possible, and hid under some furniture.

Time and again, the family was saved as a result of her courage. Finally, however, the Nazis noticed a soft spot beneath the carpeting, and they discovered the trap door.

She remained hidden. Her family – everyone – did not fare as well. They were all dragged away and sent to Auschwitz. None survived the war.

She arrived in America with hope to rebuild her life, raise a family and somehow repair some of the loss of her family. Now, however, these hopes had all been shattered.

She sat on the bus, not getting off at her usual stop because she felt she had nothing, no reason to get off: "I have nothing for which to live." The driver felt bad, but it was the end of the line. He had put in a long, hard day. "Lady, I'm sorry that you are unhappy, but I

have to go home and eat supper. Have a life – somewhere else" were his parting words.

She got off the bus and raised her eyes Heavenward: "Ribbono shel olam! You saved my life countless times. You must have had a reason for keeping me alive. I want so much to start over, to have a family and raise them al taharas hakodesh. Please do not abandon me. I will not give up. I will always serve You. You have done so much for me, I only ask, please, perhaps give me a little more?"

One year later, she was the proud mother of an infant boy. Subsequently, she had a long life witnessing the births of children, grandchildren and greatgrandchildren. She never gave up hope. She believed with all of her heart in Hashem and in His ability to change everything k'heref ayin, with the blink of an eyelash. He did. - She was Rabbi Fishel Shachter's mother.

We all have such stories. Those of us whose parents survived the purgatory of the European Holocaust all can attest to our parents' abiding faith. It was absolutely clear and unshakeable. They saw with a vision unlike that of anyone else – because they believed.



וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נַכֶּנּוּ נָפֶשׁ '***Reuven heard, and he rescued him from their hand; he said, "We will not strike him mortally***."' (37:21)

Two of his brothers attempted to save Yosef from his fate: Reuven and Yehudah. Yet, it is only Reuven who has been recognized as the one who made the attempt, and it is he alone who has received credit for his effort. Why?

Chazal (Makkos 10a) explain, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא פָּתַח בְּהַצָּלָה תְּחִלָּה "***He was the first to initiate the rescue of Yosef***."

Yehudah made the attempt by convincing them to sell Yosef. Should he not also have received credit for his good intentions?



The Ponevezer Rav, Horav Yosef Kahaneman, zl, teaches us a profound lesson concerning the true meaning of "saving a Jew."

Regarding Reuven, the Torah writes that his goal was to save Yosef from the hands of his brothers, **לְהָשִׁיבוֹ אֶל-אָבִיו**, "***in order to return him to his father***." Reuven's goal was not simply saving a life; it was to return Yosef to his pre-capture idyllic state of ruchniyos, spirituality. Yosef had been ensconced in Yaakov's bais hamedrash, studying Torah with his father. This is where he belonged, and this is where Reuven sought to return him.

Concerning Yehudah, the Torah writes that his goal was to have him sold, rather than have him killed. True, this would have spared his life, but what would his life have been without Torah?

Undoubtedly, Yehudah was not overjoyed to see the saintly Yosef in the morally bankrupt environment of Egypt, but, at least, Yosef would be alive. His concern was for Yosef's hatzalah gashmis, physical survival, while Reuven's concern was also for his hatzalah ruchnis, spiritual survival.

Justifying Yehudah, he clearly read the situation differently than Reuven. Surely, if Yehudah could have successfully returned Yosef to his father's embrace, he would have done so. He did what he felt he could do at the time.

The lesson is significant for all those involved in reaching out to those in need. While they certainly have physical/material issues which must be addressed, we may not ignore their spiritual needs. - A hungry person is not concerned with Tefillin, but the one who supplies him with his next meal must remember that his Jewish

neshamah, soul, is hungry as well. One can satisfy his spiritual needs in various ways.

We are, of course, aware of the usual outreach efforts which bring those who never knew – or those who have, for some reason, become alienated – closer to Torah Judaism. What about when it is supposedly too late, when the subject of the outreach has passed from the world. Is it too late? Do we make an "x" and go on to the next person?

Rav Moshe Porush was one of the leaders of the Agudath Israel party in Eretz Yisrael. **Rav Shlomo Lorincz** once saw Rav Moshe reciting Kaddish. Startled, he asked him which relative had passed away. Rav Moshe replied that he had undertaken to say Kaddish for a certain individual who was one of the leaders of an extremely anti-religious party whose virulent diatribe against Orthodox Jewry was infamous. He had even served as a cabinet minister.

"Rav Moshe, what was your connection with him?" Rav Shlomo asked. "I had no connection with him," replied Rav Moshe, "but he left over no one to say Kaddish for him. Regrettably, his son is following in his footsteps. I simply felt sorry for his wretched soul, suffering without anybody to say Kaddish for it. It occurred to me that it was my achrayos, responsibility, to say Kaddish for his neshamah.

When it applies to a meis mitzvah, a deceased person who has no relatives to attend to his burial, all Jews are regarded as his relatives. Why should Kaddish be different? He has no one, so I will be his relative. Why should his neshamah suffer?

Incidentally, the deceased's grandson had been born and raised in the kibbutz founded by his grandfather. As a boy, his education reflected the myopic, single-minded Marxist ideology staunchly espoused by the members of the kibbutz.

When he joined the Israeli army he was the product of two generations of animus to Torah, with an education in anti-Torah

rhetoric to boot. In the army he discovered that the world contains a wide diversity of viewpoints, and, lo and behold, there are intelligent people whose opinions actually oppose the ones he had been taught on the kibbutz.

He began researching and investigating until he found his way to a kiruv, noted outreach, seminar. After some investigation, the young soldier/ex-kibbutznik discovered that his family name evoked extreme reverence – especially in Orthodox circles.

Apparently, his great-great-grandfather had settled in Yerushalayim over a century earlier. He was a well-known, highly respected Torah scholar whose Torah insights were quoted by the last generation's most illustrious rabbanim. His two sons had established one of the most prominent yeshivos in Tel Aviv.

Something had happened along the way, as a few of their descendants had become alienated from the Torah way of life. Yet, their descendant returned to the fold – and to the kibbutz where he was born and raised. He started a Torah shiur, which incidentally began on the yahrtzeit of his grandfather!

Did the Kaddish have something to do with it?

R' Yonason Eibeschutz ZT"L would say: "The main part of every controversy is that the quarrellers don't speak to each other, just like the Torah tells us about Yosef and his brothers. For if they had just spoken to one another, they might have come to realize that in almost every case, there is nothing to fight about."

Better a sinful person who knows that he has sinned, than a righteous person who knows that he is righteous. ~ "The Seer of Lublin," Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz.

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נַכֶּנּוּ נָפֶשׁ 'And Reuven heard, and he rescued him from their hand; he said, "We will not strike him mortally."' (37:21)

What is the meaning of "Reuven heard"? Was he not present together with his brothers? He did not "hear" from afar; he was there!



The Midrash explains that, indeed, Reuven was there; it is just that he viewed the situation from a different vantage point than his brothers did. It was as if he had heard differently than they did.

When Reuven heard Yosef relate his dream, he heard something which the other brothers either did not hear, or to which they did not bother listening: Yosef mentioned that there were eleven stars. This indicates that he still included Reuven as one of the Shivtei Kah, twelve tribes, from which Klal Yisrael would be built.

Up until now, Reuven had thought that, due to his impetuosity concerning Leah Imeinu's bed, he had crossed the "line" and was no longer included in the group. Apparently, Yosef did not think so.

Chazal understood that וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן, "*And Reuven heard*", has a much deeper meaning than simply perceiving sound. Reuven did more than hear – he understood; he cogitated; he derived a lesson.

True, the brothers thought that Yosef meant to take over the future reign of the brothers – to usurp Reuven's position as b'chor, firstborn, and assume the rulership himself.

Reuven understood differently. He understood that Yosef was not seeking monarchy; he saw it as coming to him. - In between the lines, however, he also heard that Yosef had included him as one of the brothers. He had retained his position as one of Yaakov Avinu's tribes.

Reuven felt a sense of hakoras hatov, gratitude, to Yosef. Thus, he came forward, demanding that Yosef be allowed to live.



Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, posits that the middah, character trait, of hakoras hatov is mechayev, is what compelled, Reuven's view of Yosef's intentions to be different than the view held by his brothers. This is why Reuven understood that Yosef was harmless; his intentions were not threatening.

When one views a situation through the lens of hakoras hatov, what he sees is illuminating.

The Rosh Yeshivah supplements this with another insight. Actually, when we think about it, what did Reuven owe Yosef? It was but a dream which Yosef had experienced. Indeed, this dream primarily concerned Yosef, and it was to his benefit.

Incidentally, he mentioned that there had been eleven stars, which represented eleven brothers – granting the fact that Reuven had been included in this sum total.

Such a message – although related innocuously without intention to make Reuven feel good – still demands hakoras hatov.

וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים...וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ *'And he made him a fine woolen tunic… so they hated him.'* (37:3,4)



When we recite the supplication during the Bircas Kohanim service on Yom Tov, Festivals, we say to Hashem, וְתִתְּנֵנוּ לְאַהֲבָה לְחֵן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ וּבְעֵינֵי כָל רוֹאֵינוּ... כְּשֵׁם שֶׁנָּתַתָּ אֶת יוֹסֵף צַדִּיקֶךָ בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁהִלְבִּישׁוֹ אָבִיו כְּתוֹנֶת פַּסִּים *"And may You grant that we find love, favour, kindness and mercy, in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who behold us… Just as You granted Yosef, Your righteous one – at the time that his father garbed him in a fine woolen tunic."*

It seems strange that we would ask for such favour, when, in fact, the kesones pasim, woolen tunic, triggered Yosef's brother's hatred toward him. What favour did he find as a result of this tunic?

In his **Kedushas Tzion, The Bobover Rebbe, zl**, employs a Midrash to explain this. David Hamelech says, לְכוּ וְרְאוּ מִפְעָלוֹת אֱלֹקִים נוֹרָא עֲלִילָה עַל־בְּנֵי אָדָם – *"Go and see the works of G-d, He is awesome indeed toward man."* This is immediately followed by, הָפַךְ יָם לְיַבָּשָׁה "*He changed the sea into the land*" (Tehillim 66:5,6).

The Midrash asks, "Why did the brothers hate Yosef? It was so that the sea would one day split for their descendants."

Chazal are teaching us a lesson concerning the wonders of G-d. He causes things to happen which, over time, are transformed into wonders for His people. In the beginning, however, they appear as awesome, almost fearful occurrences – something definitely not to

look forward to, suggesting the inevitable question: "Why me? What did I do to deserve this?"

In the end, however, we observe a transition to the good – "almost" as if this was Hashem's original intention. In other words, those *alilos*, awesome deeds, which, at first, had appeared fearful were really there for our good, to catalyze salvation for us.

Likewise, the kesones pasim originally appeared to be the source of the hatred the brothers harboured towards Yosef. In the end, all the troubles which resulted from that distinctive tunic led to the Splitting of the Red Sea. - Actually, when Yaakov Avinu garbed Yosef with the kesones pasim, it was the immediate catalyst for Krias Yam Suf – but we had to undergo a number of alilos on the way.

Thus, explains the Kedushas Tzion, we ask Hashem to grant us the result of Yosef's kesones pasim – only we really could do without the *alilos* that accompany it.

Could we just experience the miracles – right away?

הַיֶּלֶד אֵינֶנּוּ וַאֲנִי אָנָה אֲנִי־בָא "***The boy is gone! And I – where can I go?***" (37:30)

Reuven returned to the pit only to find that Yosef was no longer present. He expressed his sorrow at his father's grief, lamenting, "*Where can I flee from father's grief?*"

When he would come across this pasuk, **Horav Eliyahu Lopian, z.l.**, would sigh heavily and cry out, "הַיֶּלֶד אֵינֶנּוּ," ***the boy is gone – my youth has gone by – how will I face my Father in Heaven?***"

He was bemoaning the fact that he had let his youth slip by "unaccomplished," and now in his advanced years when the time to meet his Maker was drawing near, he sensed that he was unprepared. If a great saint and tzaddik such as Rav Elya Lopian feels that he could have accomplished much more during his formative years, what

should we say? The experiences of one's youth will invariably leave a lasting impression on one's inner personality.



Rebbetzin Shoshana Zilberstein, a"h, daughter of Horav Y.S. Eliashov, Zt'l, related how she and her siblings were "taught" about the insignificance of this temporal world. She was one of twelve children. Understandably, living in a small apartment with a large family necessitated much sacrifice. On the other hand, the children were being taught that Olam Hazeh, This World, with its material values does not necessarily coincide with the Torah's barometer of importance.

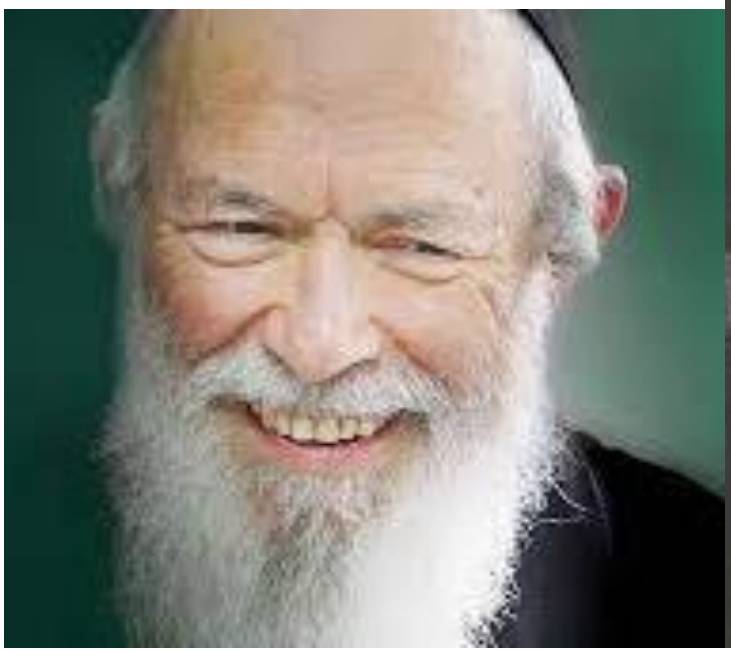
There were regrettably not enough beds for every one of the children. This reality mandated that some of the girls were subject to sharing a bed. She related that every day at three o'clock in the morning, when her father arose, he would take one of the girls and carry her into his bed. He would then proceed to the table and begin to study Torah.

It was this scene that remained engraved on the minds of his children. The sweet song of Torah that emanated from that room; the image of their father bent over his seforim, books, in the middle of the night was eternally etched in their psyche.

While they might not have enjoyed the physical comfort of a large mattress, how many of us can say we fell asleep listening to the pleasant sounds of the Torah study of a gadol ha'dor, leader of the generation?

וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף יְפֵה־תֹאַר וִיפֵה מַרְאֶה "***Yosef was handsome of form and handsome of appearance.***" (39:6)

Yosef's physical appearance was certainly to the yetzer hara's, evil inclination's, advantage. Undoubtedly, one who is blessed with the gift of extremely "good looks" is left wide open to contend with the pitfalls which the yetzer hara is so skilled at placing before him.





Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, cites a story that occurred concerning **Horav Yitzchak Bender, z.l.**, when he was Rosh HaYeshivah in Makov.

It was the summer of 1913, when a young student by the name of Yitzchak Krakowsky from the city of Lodz, Poland, registered in the yeshivah. He was known as "Reb Yitzchakel Otvozker," because of the time he had spent in the city of Otvozk due to a lung condition from which he suffered. He was only sixteen-years old, but his youth extended only to his chronological age. As a scholar, he was well beyond his years, soon becoming one of the foremost scholars in the yeshivah. His sagacity was captivating, his profundity in Torah knowledge was exemplary.

The Rosh HaYeshivah's shiurim, lectures, were well-known for their depth and brilliance. Yet, when the Rosh HaYeshivah would begin to

say the shiur, Reb Yitzchakel would soon complete his ideas. It got to the point that the Rosh HaYeshivah felt there was nothing more he could teach this young prodigy.

Reb Yitzchakel was also blessed with a physical appearance that was remarkable. His face shone, his high forehead seemed to glow. Indeed, his total physical image was captivating. Here was a human specimen who was outstanding in his physical and intellectual capacities.

The Rosh HaYeshivah once related how it came to pass that this exceptional young man was blessed with such an enchanting physical appearance: It happened that Reb Yitzchakel's parents came to the yeshivah to take their son home. The winds of World War I were beginning to gust. While it would not be safe anywhere in Europe, they wanted their child at home with them.

When the parents arrived, the Rosh HaYeshivah was shocked at the physical appearance of Reb Yitzchakel's father. He was the extreme opposite of his son. While the son was tall, erect and handsome, with radiant skin that seemed to glow, the father was dwarf-like, with skin like leather that was dark as a blacksmith's. It was difficult to imagine that there was any physical relationship between these two people.

The Rosh HaYeshivah turned to Reb Yitzchakel's father in bewilderment and asked him point blank to explain the "discrepancy" in the physical appearance between father and son.

The father turned to the Rosh HaYeshivah and said, "Let me tell you the following story which will shed light on the inconsistency in our appearances. "

The story goes back ten generations to the time of **Rav Mordechai Yoffe**, the author of the Levushim, an epithet given to him because of his brilliant, scholarly works, each entitled Levush i.e. Levush Techeiles, Levush Malchus, etc.

As his family name was Yoffe, which was derived from the Hebrew word ***yafeh***, beautiful, so was Rav Mordechai a man of captivating physical appearance. His visage was something to behold. - It is quite possible that his last name was directly associated with his appearance.

"One day Rav Mordechai's good looks almost became the source of his downfall. Similar to what occurred to Yosef Ha'tzaddik, our grandfather was confronted with an overwhelming challenge.

A beautiful gentile woman was so enchanted with his appearance that she did everything possible to encourage him to sin. When Rav Mordechai realized what was occurring, he was determined to ward off her blandishments – even at the expense of his own life.

Outside of the house was a canal filled with sewage. He immediately jumped into the foul-smelling water. The stench on his clothes was so overpowering that the woman was "turned off," and left Rav Mordechai alone.

The sewage seeped through all of Rav Mordechai's ten garments that he was wearing at the time. Although his garments were filthy and foul-smelling, his neshamah, soul, and moral character remained as pure as before.

"In the merit of his self-sacrifice to triumph over the yetzer hara, Hashem gave him the ability to author ten volumes of halachic treatise which he named Levushim, garments, corresponding to the ten garments that had become soiled. - The ten garments which saved him, would yield ten seforim, that would inspire a world of Torah students.

At that moment, Rav Mordechai turned his eyes Heavenward and in emotional prayer beseeched Hashem, 'The next ten generations that will descend from me should be repulsive in appearance, so that they should not encounter the challenges associated with physical beauty.'

"The ten generations, of descendants whose physical appearance was far from appealing," continued Reb Yitzchakel's father, "ended with my son. He is the eleventh generation, and with him the beauty begins anew. The external beauty and inner spiritual, moral beauty that reigned simultaneously in my sainted grandfather has returned to my son."

This incredible story gives us but a glimpse of the greatness of our Torah luminaries.



וַיִּרְאוּ אֶחָיו כִּי־אֹתוֹ אָהַב אֲבִיהֶם מִכָּל־אֶחָיו וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַּבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֹם
"***His brothers saw that it was he whom their father loved most of all his brothers, and so they hated him; and they could not speak to him peaceably***." (37:4)

How often do we clash with someone, and matters get out of hand to the point that it blossoms into a full-blown dispute? Suddenly, friends are not speaking to one another, and enmity creeps in. The first step towards any form of resolution is a meeting: sit down at the table, face each other and talk it out. Air out your differences and, before long, it becomes apparent that it really is not an important conflict.

As long as people are willing to meet and talk it out, to attempt to solve their problems, to seek a reconciliation – there is hope. When the two sides refuse to speak to each other; or when a meeting is convened and the irrational reigns, ending the meeting before any conversation has commenced, then there is no hope for a resolution to their differences. When people refuse to listen, rationality cannot prevail.

Perhaps a solution could have been reached concerning the brothers' "hatred" toward Yosef, but if they "could not speak to him peaceably," how could this conciliation ever be achieved? They harbored their enmity because they could not sit down to talk it out;

they would not listen to Yosef's explanation of the way he acted. It is then no wonder that their enmity led to such tragic consequences.

We must understand that the genesis of the brothers' dispute with Yosef was not petty jealousy. It was a question in Halachah: Was Yosef a rodef, pursuer, bent on destroying their lives – or not? If this was the case, then they had justifiable cause to defend themselves from his treachery.

Apparently, the brothers felt that Yosef was a pursuer with whom they had to cope, but what was Yosef thinking? What motivated his actions? Did he not understand the implications of his dreams? Was he not concerned with the pain and anguish he was causing his brothers?

The Gaon m'Vilna explains that Yosef was well aware of the message he was transmitting. Yet, he knew that his dreams were prophesies, and as a Navi, prophet, it behooved him to reveal his message to those for whom it was intended.



Horav Avrohom Pam, z.l. focuses on an important aspect of the rodef/nirdaf (pursuer/pursued) issue: Shlomo HaMelelch says in Koheles 3:15, וְהָאֱלֹקִים יְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת־נִרְדָּף - "***Hashem always seeks the pursued***."

Why does Shlomo HaMelech use the word *yevakesh*, seek, as opposed to, *matzil*, save? Hashem saves the pursued from his pursuer.

Rav Pam explains that at times it is difficult to distinguish between the *rodef* and the *nirdaf*. The one who appears to us to be a nirdaf might actually be the pursuer. He just knows how to conceal it better. Only Hashem Yisborach, Who looks into the deep recesses of the hearts

and minds of men, can seek out and discern who really is the nirdaf in order to protect him from the hands of his pursuer.

In some situations in life people become involved in bitter disputes over questions that could, and should, easily be resolved in Halachah. In many of these cases, the dispute is the product of an overactive ego, reflecting an individual who is deeply insecure and filled with misgivings.

Without an objective examination of the Halachah, one cannot possibly render a decision that coincides with Daas Torah, the wisdom that is derived from the Torah, which forms the basis for the only possible valid decision.

This confusion between rodef and nirdaf, attacker and victim, occurred between Yosef and his brothers. While the brothers were certain that they were the victims, it was only twenty-two years later, when Yosef's dreams were fulfilled, that the brothers finally confronted the truth:- they were the rodfim.



וַיֵּ֣שֶׁב יַעֲקֹ֔ב בְּאֶ֖רֶץ מְגוּרֵ֣י אָבִ֑יו בְּאֶ֖רֶץ כְּנָֽעַן '***And Yaakov settled in the land of his father's sojourning's***.' (37:1)

The Rokeach makes an incredible statement which begs elucidation. He says that every pasuk in Parashas Vayeshev, with the exception of eight pesukim, begins with the letter "vav." The eight exceptions correspond to the mitzvah of Bris Milah which is performed on the eighth day of the boy's life.

Horav Zeev Weinberger,Shlita, gives the following explanation: If one were to follow the narrative throughout Parashas Vayeshev, it would seem to be one long story in which everything fits into place naturally. This is implied by the "vav" which is the connecting letter meaning "and." This is the picture perceived by the average person, who sees things from a purely superficial perspective.

One who looks at an incident with both of his eyes, with depth and understanding, clearly sees that nothing just occurs as a natural course of events. This is especially true concerning the events surrounding Yosef's life, from his sale as a slave to his eventual liberation and ascent to leadership over Egypt. Every incident was pure miracle!

Indeed, this idea applies particularly to Klal Yisrael, whose very existence is beyond the scope of the natural. Klal Yisrael's survival throughout history, marked by challenge, tribulation and suffering, is truly miraculous.

Bris Milah, performed on the eighth day, is linked to the eight pesukim which do not begin with the "vav". The number eight symbolizes the spiritual, since the highest number in creation is seven. The number eight transcends creation and, therefore, implies miracle.

It behooves the nation whose standard for existence is supernatural, to view life's occurrences with more depth than the human eye can perceive.



וַיְהִי ה' אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ '***Hashem was with Yosef, and he became a successful man***.' (39:2)

Horav Bunim M'Peshischa notes the Torah's emphasis on Yosef's "remembering" the source of his success. He realized that the success he had achieved was only because "Hashem was with Yosef."

All too often we pray to Hashem for various favours. Shortly after Hashem grants us His good will, we seem to forget the source of our beneficience.

Along these same lines, **the Chofetz Chaim** explains that in the tefillah that we say on the Shabbos prior to Rosh Chodesh, we implore Hashem **חַיִּים שֶׁיֵּשׁ בָּהֶם יִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם וְיִרְאַת חֵטְא** - to grant us a life replete with fear of Heaven, and fear of sin. Once again, at the

end of the tefillah, we ask for - **חַיִּים שֶׁתְּהֵא בָּנוּ אַהֲבַת תּוֹרָה וְיִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם** - love of Torah and fear of Heaven.

Why do we ask Hashem to grant us **יִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם** twice?

The Chofetz Chaim relates that after our first request for yiraas Shomayim, we ask - **חַיִּים שֶׁל עשֶׁר וְכָבוֹד** - for a life of wealth and honour.

Once a person has "tasted" a life of wealth and honour, he seldom retains the yiraas Shomayim he once had developed. Consequently, it is necessary to request yiraas Shomayim a second time.

בְּעוֹד שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים יִשָּׂא פַרְעֹה אֶת־רֹאשְׁךָ מֵעָלֶיךָ וְתָלָה אוֹתְךָ עַל־עֵץ וְאָכַל הָעוֹף אֶת־בְּשָׂרְךָ מֵעָלֶיךָ '***In three days Pharaoh will lift your head from you and hang you on a tree; birds will eat your flesh from you***.' (40:19)



Why did Yosef interpret the bakers' dream in this manner? What clue did he have that the baker would die?

Horav Meir Shapiro, zl, responded by citing a story: Once, at an art festival, the organizers hung up a picture that was drawn by a world-famous artist. It was a picture of a man holding a basket of fruit in his hands. The illustration was so realistic that birds would fly over the picture and attempt to eat the fruit!

This picture amazed everyone, to the point that a prize was offered to anyone who could find an error in this picture. A wise man came along and said, "Although the fruits truly appear to be realistic, the man does not. If the man really appeared to be alive, the birds would be

afraid to go near him. The birds' bold approach indicates that they know the person is not real."

The man received the prize. Similarly, when the baker said that in his dream the birds ate from the basket that was on his head, Yosef knew that he was a dead man. Otherwise, why would the birds not be afraid to approach him?

וְהִנֵּה אֹרְחַת יִשְׁמְעֵאלִים בָּאָה מִגִּלְעָד וּגְמַלֵּיהֶם נֹשְׂאִים נְכֹאת וּצְרִי וָלֹט
'***Behold, a caravan of Yishmaelim was coming from Gilead, their camels bearing spices, balsam, and lotus***...' (37:25)



What does the composition of the Yishmaelim's cargo mean to us?

Rashi claims that Hashem intervened on Yosef's behalf. Yishmaelim usually carry foul-smelling cargo. In order to spare Yosef from being subjected to the harsh odour, Hashem "arranged" that this caravan carry only sweet-smelling spices.

This is enigmatic! Imagine being sold as a slave -- with no hope for redemption. Yosef's life was literally falling apart in front of his eyes. Should he be concerned about the odour of the cargo that was to accompany him?



Horav Mordechai Pogremonsky, zl, compares this to a sick man who has undergone a very serious and dangerous surgery. Everyone stands around his bed as he lies unconscious from the effects of the surgery. Suddenly, he opens his eyes; all assembled break into extreme joy, knowing that phase one of his recovery has been successfully achieved. - His open eyes are far from proof that the surgery was successful, but the initial alertness is a hopeful sign that the patient is on the road to recovery.

The same idea may be applied to Yosef. Amidst his terrible predicament, Yosef noted a slight change, a behavior pattern which is atypical. Thus, he was encouraged and hopeful. Everyday the Arab merchants carried foul-smelling cargo. If --specifically today the caravan to which he was sold was carrying sweet-smelling spices, it was a message from Hashem that the future would not be so bad. There was hope.

There is no greater assurance than the knowledge that Hashem is with us--all the way. Perhaps if we look a little closer, we might also see the silver lining shining through the clouds.

"Hashem is in control of every detail of your life. He is manoeuvring the steering wheel of your own personal history in the direction that He wants, and He's not doing it randomly. – He is purposely placing you in various situations because each circumstance is its own separate test and its own unique opportunity for achievement. ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

וַיְקַנְאוּ־בוֹ אֶחָיו "***And his brothers were jealous of him***." (37:11)

Meilitz Yosher infers a striking lesson from this pasuk.

One can have an abundance of "heteirim," reasons for eating a certain food that is not kosher. He can find a number of reasons to justify his actions. Yet, when all is said and done, his action is simply not justifiable.

This is similar to the lazy person who comes up with a multitude of excuses for not participating in a given endeavor. Indeed, all of the stated reasons may be true, but - the main reason that he is not involved in this endeavor is his indolence!

The Torah tells us that in the final analysis, the brothers were nothing more than jealous. They had rendered a halachic decision; they had discussed every reason pro and con for finding clemency for Yosef; but in the end, they were simply jealous.

The Torah's insight pierces through the facade that veils the real reason for selling Yosef - jealousy!

A person can shout that he is acting l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven, but in reality he is responding to his own misguided passion. He may claim that he is zealous but -- in reality -- he is nothing more than jealous!

"Patience is a wonderful virtue. Make an effort to be gentle and forbearing with insulting and aggravating people and with your family. Be as strong as a lion to control your tongue even if you are burning with the desire to speak your mind.

מִלָּה — בְּסֶלַע, מַשְׁתּוֹקָא — בִּתְרֵין - "A word is worth one gold piece; silence is worth two." (Talmud Megillah 18a) ~ R' Eliezer Papo zt"l- The Pelah Yoetz.

וַיִּקָּחֻהוּ וַיַּשְׁלִכוּ אֹתוֹ הַבֹּרָה וְהַבּוֹר רֵק אֵין בּוֹ מָיִם "***And they took him, and cast him into the pit; the pit was empty, no water was in it.***" (37:24)



Chazal derive from the redundancy of the text that, although there was no water in the pit, dangerous creatures, such as serpents and scorpians, abounded.

We may question the Torah's style in expressing its point. If the pit contained serpents and scorpions, why did the Torah not clearly state that fact? What purpose does the Torah serve with this back-handed approach?

This question is posed by every serious reader of the text. The commentators offer a number of explanations.

Horav David Shneuer, Shlita, takes a novel approach which teaches us an important lesson. The Torah asserts, "The pit was empty, no water was in it." It is making a positive statement. The pit is empty; no one will die as a result of drowning. Saying, however, that the pit is filled with dangerous creatures bent upon killing whatever comes their way is tantamount to presenting a negative perspective. The Torah would rather indicate the pit's positive traits, leaving its negative feature up to the imagination.

The lesson for us to derive is simple: whenever one is about to judge his friend's deed or activity, he should view it from a positive perspective. Upon expressing criticism, one should emphasize the positive and allude to the negative.

This is one of the most difficult things to do, since by nature we focus in upon the negative aspects of a person's behaviour. This

jaundiced view of others regretfully spreads to the home when parents fail to laud their child's successes and instead accentuate their faults.

The Torah teaches us to always look for the good in a person, to underscore his positive actions and to accentuate his noble intentions - even if we do not always see positive repercussions.

וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־סְרִיסֵי פַרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בְּמִשְׁמַר בֵּית אֲדֹנָיו לֵאמֹר מַדּוּעַ פְּנֵיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוֹם *'And he asked Pharaoh's courtiers who were with him in the prison...."Why do you appear downcast today?"'* (40:7)

Four words! **מַדּוּעַ פְּנֵיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוֹם** - Yosef turned to the dejected, deposed courtiers of Pharaoh, noticing their downcast appearance, he asked them, "Why are you so downcast? What is the cause of your depression?"

Yosef's sensitivity catalysed circumstances that changed his entire life and the history of Klal Yisrael. Our course of history was altered because Yosef asked a simple question. He noticed--he cared--he took action. - First and foremost, however, he noticed.

This caring for another human being ultimately led to Yosef's salvation from imprisonment and elevation to the position of viceroy. Thus, his father, Yaakov, was able to come down to Egypt as royalty -- all as the result of a few words.

Horav Ze'ev Weinberger cites Targum Onkelos' interpretation of the pasuk describing Yosef as foreman in the prison, **וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עֹשִׂים שָׁם הוּא הָיָה עֹשֶׂה** "***And everything that was done there, he would accomplish***." (39:22) - Everyone -- prisoners and warden alike -- admired Yosef. He succeeded in everything that he undertook. He was, therefore, given dominion over the entire prison.

In translating the above pasuk Onkeles says, **עַל מֵימְרֵיהּ הֲוָה מִתְעַבֵּד** "***And everything that was done was according to his command***."

This does not seem consistent with the pasuk which implies that Yosef did more than command--he worked!

Horav Weinberger says that Yosef's tendency to work with the other prisoners achieved for him the respect and admiration necessary for his directives to be executed. When the other prisoners saw that Yosef cared for them and that he also worked with them, they were happy to carry out his orders. All of this happened as a result of Yosef's sensitivity to them, his caring.

וְלֹא־זָכַר שַׂר־הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ "***And the chief wine steward did not remember Yosef and he forgot him.***" (40:23)

Chazal teach us that Yosef was forgotten because he was wrong in placing his trust in a mere human being. Did Yosef really behave inappropriately? What about the concept of hishtadlus, endeavour? Is one to sit back with folded hands doing nothing whatsoever, expecting the blessing to descend from Hashem?



Horav Elyakim Shlesinger surmises from here a significant principle regarding the idea of hishtadlus. He cites the Midrash which quotes Hashem's statement to Yosef, "*The Sar Ha'Mashkim, wine steward, forgot you. I will not forget you. Who waited for Avraham and Sarah to attain old age before they had a child? Who waited for Yaakov as he left his parents' home with nothing but a staff and later became wealthy? Who waited for Yosef to undergo his various trials only to ascend as Viceroy over Egypt?*"

It was Hashem who waited, as His plan reached its goal. There is a time and place for everything. Hashem does not forget. We must wait patiently until that moment arrives.

We see from Chazal that hishtadlus is permissible and even essential. Hashem blesses us in our maas'e ya'daim, actions and endeavors. We must realize and remember, however, that even if we do not see an immediate response from Hashem to our hishtadlus, Hashem does not ignore or forget us. The time has simply not arrived.

Yosef was correct in turning to the wine steward for assistance. His error was in imploring him to remember him. Hashem does not forget! - Yosef should have simply said to him, "Speak to Pharaoh in my behalf." To ask him to remember is tantamount to insinuating that Hashem might forget about him.

Yosef should not have performed his hishtadlus in the area of remembrance, since that is an area with which we do not concern ourselves. - Hashem never forgets!



וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְּמִים אֲלֻמִּים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלֻמָּתִי וְגַם־נִצָּבָה וְהִנֵּה תְסֻבֶּינָה אֲלֻמֹּתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ לַאֲלֻמָּתִי. וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֶחָיו הֲמָלֹךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ אִם־ מָשׁוֹל תִּמְשֹׁל בָּנוּ... וְהִנֵּה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְאַחַד עָשָׂר כּוֹכָבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לִי" ***And lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright, and behold your sheaves came round about, and bowed down to my sheaf. And his brothers said to him: 'Shall you indeed reign over us, or shall you indeed have dominion over us?' And behold the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me***." (37:7,8,9)

At first glance, Yosef's second dream is a repetition of the first. This design, which emphasized Yosef's superiority. effected a response of hatred from his brothers. When he related the second dream, however, his brothers seemed to have reacted with silence. Indeed, their loathing of him increased in intensity. This hatred festered and developed into a state of physical violence. Yet, the Torah does not record any semblance of protest toward the second dream. Why were they so passive in responding to this second dream?



Horav Moshe Swift ztl offers the following rationale: There is a marked difference between a dream which suggests material superiority and a dream which implies spiritual superiority.

In the first dream, Yosef tells his brothers of his vast material abundance. The sheaves of corn symbolize material wealth and personal success. Yosef's "sheaves" will stand upright, and all will bow down to him. His fortune will captivate the entire world, and everyone will be beholden to him. He will prosper, while others will capitulate and perish.

Such a dream speaks of power, glory, wealth and subjugation. People respond with suspicion and scepticism. - The brothers must denounce these evil aspirations, for they are dangerous.

The second dream is of an entirely different nature. This time the sun, the moon, and the stars bow down to Yosef. The focus is not his sheaves or possessions, it is Yosef himself, his personality.

Yosef, as an individual, will become the envy of the world. His moral and ethical values, his passion for justice, his unbounding kindness to others, and unshakable belief in G-d will inspire humanity.

True, such a claim arouses envy, but it cannot be challenged. No one can protest or defame the individual who is truly devout, whose sense of dignity is unimpeachable, whose faith in Hashem is unswerving. -The world admires the man of G-d. To him the world must bow, for he towers above them. - Yosef's brothers realized that his second dream reflected the Jewish ideal, a mission they must not thwart.

וַיִּקְרַע יַעֲקֹב שִׂמְלֹתָיו... וַיִּתְאַבֵּל עַל־בְּנוֹ יָמִים רַבִּים... וַיְמָאֵן לְהִתְנַחֵם "***And Yaakov rent his garments ... and (he) mourned for his son many days ... and he refused to be comforted***." (37:34,35)

Yaakov Avinu's behavior seems to defy Chazal's dictum concerning mourning.

Chazal state that Hashem enables human beings to cope with death and that the image of the deceased will fade from the mind of the mourners after a period of twelve months.

Yaakov refused to be consoled over Yosef's disappearance. He continued to mourn him for many years. Furthermore, we are taught that one should not overindulge in mourning. Why then did Yaakov continue to mourn Yosef, refusing to be consoled by his family?



Horav Moshe Mordechai Epstein z.l., differentiates between personal loss and communal misfortune. When a person dies, he is mourned by his family and close friends. As time passes, however, this expression of loss dissipates. This is the "natural" effect of time. As the memory of the loved one slowly begins to fade, so does the pain and sadness begin to recede.

Hashem imbued our psyche with this feature so that we would be able to continue on after the death of a loved one.

Yaakov, however, was not simply responding to a personal loss. Yosef's disappearance and presumed death was a national tragedy. Because he was a brilliant son and student, Yaakov had transmitted to Yosef all of his Torah knowledge. Yaakov saw in Yosef special qualities that would enable him to spread the wisdom of Hashem and

inspire the spiritual development of Klal Yisrael. He was destined to carry on the mantle of leadership of his people. His death brought about an abrupt end to the transmission of the spiritual legacy of Klal Yisrael.

The tragedy that Yaakov mourned was not only of a personal nature. A national catastrophe of such immense proportion cannot be alleviated, even with the support and sympathy of family and friends.

וַיִּתֵּן שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר בְּיַד־יוֹסֵף אֶת כָּל־הָאֲסִירִם אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עֹשִׂים שָׁם הוּא הָיָה עֹשֶׂה "***And the keeper of the prison put in Yosef's hand all the prisoners... and whatever they did there he was the doer of it***." (39:22)

The pasuk implies that Yosef initiated everything that was accomplished by the prisoners.

The redundancy of the text begs explanation. Obviously, everything they did he would do.



Horav Moshe Yechiel Epstein, z.l., interprets this pasuk homiletically: Yosef was teaching us a profound lesson in avodas Hashem, serving the Almighty. Yosef was not satisfied with the fact that he upheld all of the mitzvos. He was not complacent with his own mitzvah observance. He was driven to do more, to correct and complete what others had either denigrated or discarded. Yosef was not content simply to abstain from transgressing any aveiros, sins; rather, he further sought to perform mitzvos which could deflect the effects of the aveiros of others.

Yosef's name is derived from the Hebrew word "to add." Yosef added on to his own mitzvah observance; he was constantly "doing" good deeds.

Yosef reflected upon the "doings" of the evil Egyptians, and he countered their actions with his mitzvos. For "whatever they did," he would do the opposite. - His positive action in performing mitzvos filled a void left by the behaviour of others.

וְלֹא־זָכַר שַׂר־הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ "***And the chief butler did not remember Yosef, but he forgot him***." (40:23)

Rashi says that Hashem increased Yosef's prison sentence by an extra two years. This was because he had placed his trust in the Sar Ha'Mashkim, by asking him twice to remember him before Pharaoh.



What would have happened if Yosef had asked him only once? Would he have been punished with only a single year?

This question was posed by **Horav Shimon Shkop, z.l.**, to a group of his students during a session devoted to reproving them for behavior unbecoming a ben Torah.

The economic conditions in the yeshivah of Grodno, in which Horav Shkop was Rosh Ha'Yeshivah left much to be desired. In protest, a group of students who desired to express their discontent with the situation, left for a day to study in a different Bais Ha'Midrash. At the end of that day the Rosh Ha'Yeshivah sent a message to the young men that they were "expected" to return the next morning for shiur.

Horav Shkop walked into the room and began to reprove their actions of the previous day. He prefaced his words with the question, "Would Yosef have been punished with one year had he only asked the Sar Ha'Mashkim once?"

The Rosh Ha'Yeshivah responded, "No, he would not have been punished at all. Everyone is permitted to make an effort to improve his lot. By asking the chief butler to remember him, Yosef did not demonstrate a lack of faith. When he asked him a second time to remember him, however, he indicated that his previous request was also inappropriate.

One request is permissible; it does not suggest impropriety. The second request, however, is inappropriate and indicates distance from Torah perspective. - Yosef's second petition cast a cloud upon his first request and catalysed his punishment.

"Likewise, my students," said Horav Shkop, "the first time you left the yeshivah, you made a statement which does not necessarily demonstrate inappropriate behaviour on your part. If you entertain the thought of going a second time, be aware that you will be crossing the boundary of rectitude. - Immediately return to the Bais Ha'Midrash and forget this nonsense!"

"You shall surely rebuke your neighbour" (Vayikra 19:17) is a commandment, but someone who cannot rebuke gently, without hurting the other's feelings, is free from the obligation to rebuke. ~ R' Chaim of Volozhin zt"l.

"Our purpose in this world is to take a fleeting moment and transform it into an eternal moment." ~ Rav Shach zt"l.

וַיְהִי אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה חָטְאוּ מַשְׁקֵה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם וְהָאֹפֶה לַאֲדֹנֵיהֶם לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם "***And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt, and his baker had sinned against their master, the king of Egypt***."(40:1)

The next pasuk refers to them in a slightly different way. וַיִּקְצֹף פַּרְעֹה עַל שְׁנֵי סָרִיסָיו עַל שַׂר הַמַּשְׁקִים וְעַל שַׂר הָאוֹפִים -"***And Pharoah became angry against his two officials, <u>the prince</u> of the butlers, and <u>the prince</u> of the bakers***." (40:2)

While in the first pasuk they are simply referred to as butler and baker, they are referred to as "prince" of the butlers and "prince" of the bakers in the second pasuk.

Horav S. R. Hirsh, z.l., notes the apparent mockery reflected in the pathos of these "princes."

They are princes to those beneath them in status, but to those above them they are merely slaves to be manipulated at the whim of their superior.

When one's stature is dependent solely upon his relation to the king, his princely position is -- at best -- precarious. The king holds the life of these "princes" in his hand, as if they were his chattel. To him they are not princes; they are simply butlers and bakers.

This would seem an appropriate message for those who delude themselves with self-aggrandisement as soon as they ascend to a position of semi-importance. The opinion of underlings is of little consequence. What really matters is one's image in the eyes of those to whom he is beholden.

We may extend this to a spiritual perspective. We often concern ourselves with the opinion of man, while we neglect to reflect upon the only opinion which is of primary significance - that of Hashem.

וַיְהִי֮ בָּעֵת֒ הַהִ֣וא וַיֵּ֣רֶד יְהוּדָ֗ה מֵאֵת֙ אֶחָ֔יו "***And it came to pass at that time and Yehudah went down from his brothers***." (38:1)

Rashi comments: This is to teach us that his brothers lowered him from his exalted rank, when they saw their father's grief. They said "You said to sell him. Had you said to return him, we would have listened to you."

Sforno comments in even stronger terms by claiming that the tragic loss of Yehuda's two sons was a punishment for not insisting that Yosef be saved.

The accusation being leveled at Yehudah and the resulting punishments seem overly severe. Surely had Yehudah felt that his brothers would accept his words, he would have asserted himself and demanded that Yosef be returned home.

Leadership requires enormous responsibility. A leader must express his feelings whether they are popular or not, not simply to support what is popular, but to make what is unpopular popular. - One should not concern himself with the success or failure of his statements, but rather state that which is true and just.

Parsha Points to Ponder by Oizer Alport

וְיִשְׂרָאֵ֞ל אָהַ֣ב אֶת־יוֹסֵ֗ף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו֙ כִּי־בֶן־זְקֻנִ֣ים הוּא־לֽוֹ '***Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was a son of his old age***.

Rashi writes שֶׁנּוֹלַד לוֹ לְעֵת זִקְנָתוֹ (37:3) that Yaakov loved Yosef more than his other sons because Yosef was born in his old age.

According to this, why wasn't Binyomin, who was born later, even more beloved than Yosef?

The Chizkuni answers that because Yaakov's beloved wife Rochel died while giving birth to Binyomin, his love toward Binyomin was somewhat lessened.

Rav Mordechai Gifter derives from here that if our love for our children is dependent on our feelings toward our spouse, then how important it is for the sake of our children that we work hard to establish a loving relationship with our spouse.

Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi and the Maharal explain that Binyomin was born 7 or 8 years after Yosef. During this time, Yaakov assumed that he wouldn't have any more children, and his extra love for Yosef as his last child cemented and wasn't diminished even by the subsequent birth of Binyomin.

Alternatively, the Maharal notes that Binyomin wasn't even 10 at this time, and his mind wasn't developed like his brothers. Among the sons who had already matured, Yosef was the youngest and received the most love.

JEP 50 OVER 50 YEARS
Jewish Education Program
Queens

The Answer To "Why" Will Soon Be Understood

In 1942, in the early morning of erev Rosh Hashana, a large group of Danish Jews gathered in the shul to recite slichos. The chief rabbi announced that instead of saying slichos, they had to go into hiding and arrange passage from Denmark to Sweden. The rabbi had received a secret tip that the Nazis were planning on rounding-up the Danish Jews the night of Rosh Hashana.

A few families planned with a Danish fisherman to take them on the six-hour journey to safety. There was always a risk that the Nazis would catch them, but they felt that they had no choice. It was a moonless night and their boat rocked violently from the stormy winds and rain. Finally, they arrived a few hundred feet from the

Swedish coast where they dropped anchor. The plan was for the Swedish Coast Guard to notice them and send a boat to rescue them.

Suddenly, from the coast, they saw searchlights scanning the water. The Jewish families were hopeful that they would soon be saved. However, the searchlights kept missing their boat.

The Jews prayed to Hashem to allow the searchlights to find them. However, the searchlights missed them. They realized that they would have to wait until morning to be saved.

In the morning, they realized that something was desperately wrong. Apparently, because of the storm, their boat landed back in Danish and not Swedish waters. The searchlights that were trying to find them were from the Nazis who were looking for escaped Jews.

Because the searchlights missed seeing them, they were able to reverse their trip and were saved. (**In the Spirit of the Maggid by Rabbi Paysach Krohn**)

The Rokeach, a Tosafist and Kabbalist, writes that this parsha has a total of 112 psukim and Tehillim chapter 92, Mizmor Shir Leyom HaShabbos, contains 112 words. What is the connection between these two?

Rav Mattisyahu Solomon gives a beautiful explanation:

We know that the Book of Bereishis is the blueprint of Jewish history. There is the concept of maaseh avos siman labanim, that the actions of our forefathers foreshadow events that will befall the Jewish People.

Parshas Vayeshev illustrates that Hashem runs the world, down to the most minute details. Hashem showed Adam HaRishon all the future events that would occur to the Jewish People.

After seeing how Hashem would bring His master plan to fruition, Adam HaRishon was moved to say this chapter of Tehillim that includes the words, מַה־גָּדְלוּ מַעֲשֶׂיךָ ה׳ מְאֹד עָמְקוּ מַחְשְׁבֹתֶיךָ "***O Hashem,***

how great are your deeds! Your thoughts are very profound." (92:6)

We have various questions. There are numerous world events that cause us to wonder why Hashem allowed them to happen. All of this will only be properly understood when Hashem brings Moshiach to redeem us.

A person may be in a distressing situation, never realizing that this will ultimately bring him great benefit and joy. When the kingship of Hashem will be revealed to the world, we will see, with perfect clarity, how all our trials and tribulations were necessary steps in our rise to greatness. "And in that day, you shall say, O Hashem, I will praise You: Although You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You do comfort me."

וְאָמַרְתָּ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אוֹדְךָ ה' כִּי אָנַפְתָּ בִּי יָשֹׁב אַפְּךָ וְתְנַחֲמֵנִי There will come a time when we will praise Hashem for all our suffering. At that time, we will understand that it was our path to salvation and success (Isaiah 12:1)

Short And Sweet Story of The Week by R'Yoni Schwartz

In Petach Tikva, Israel an older man had just made *aliyah* from America. It was his first Shabbos in the new community and being a new face to the congregation, the gabbai called him up to the Torah to receive an aliyah. As he was reading the blessings for the Torah, he suddenly started to cry. His crying only intensified and before long, the elderly gentleman was bawling like a baby.

The congregants sat the old man on a chair and after he calmed down, asked why he was crying. He responded: "today is my eighty-third birthday and the last time I had an aliyah was exactly seventy years ago at my bar mitzvah which took place at the shul of the Gadol **Rav Chaim Ozer** in Europe." It turns out that during this

fellow's bar mitzvah, Rav Chaim asked his father which yeshiva his son planned on attending.

His father responded that he was not planning on going to yeshiva; instead, he was going to apply to attend a university (which was much different in those days than it is today). Rav Chaim exclaimed, "Don't send him - it's dangerous! If you send him, it will be seventy years until he has an aliyah as a Jewish person!" As Rav Chaim spoke, so it was, seventy years to the day. This is the power of words, they do not just share ideas, they shape one's reality.

Comment: This week's parsha revolves around the power of words. Yosef speaks poorly of his brothers, while his brothers could not speak peacefully with him. Yosef is subsequently sold into slavery where his master's wife levies accusations on him. - While the power of words can turn a nation of slaves into free people, they can also transform a free person into a slave, as we see with Yosef. Words can be more powerful than nuclear energy. Words are free, yet if properly used, their effects can be priceless. However, if misused, as this week's parsha reminds us, the cost can be expensive, indeed.



The Weekly Vort

● **ויקחהו וישלכו אתו הברה והבור רק אין בו מים** - ***they cast him into the pit and the pit was empty, with no water in it*** (37:24).

The word **בור** , *pit*, occurs twice in this *pasuk* – **הברה** , *into the pit*, and **והבור** , *and the pit*. The first instance appears in the abbreviated form without a *vav*, while the latter is spelled fully with the *vav*.

The Vilna Gaon explains this variance as an allusion in support of the statement in Gemarah Shabbos (22) that the pit contained no water, but it did contain snakes and scorpions.

According to the **Ramban**, Yosef's brothers knew the pit was empty of water, but they did not know that it contained snakes and

scorpions. Therefore, when the Torah relates that they threw him into the pit, the abbreviated spelling is used to indicate their perception that the pit was totally empty.

However, when the Torah narrates the true state of affairs, it uses the full spelling to indicate that it did contain snakes and scorpions, and that the brothers should have examined the pit in order to ascertain if it was indeed as empty as they had presumed it to be. (**Torah Treasures**)

● **מה בצע כי נהרג את אחינו וכסינו את דמו** - ***What gain will there be if we kill our brother*** (37:26).

R' Yechiel Meir Lifshitz of Gostynin once rebuked a store owner for exploiting the poor and unfortunate people that resided in his town. Instead of showing them mercy, he cruelly charged exorbitant prices for his goods. R' Lifshitz told them: "What you are doing is hinted to in a *pasuk* describing a conversation between Yosef's brothers: 'What gain (*betzah*) will there be if we kill our brother?'

The acronym of the word *betzah* is *boker* (morning), *tzaharayim* (afternoon), and *erev* (evening) – the three periods of the day when a Jew is required to *daven* to Hashem. - Now tell me, *mah betzah* – why bother *davening* three times a day – 'if we kill our brother' – if at the same time we are busy cruelly exploiting our poor and needy brethren?" (***A Shabbos Vort***)

If a person gives to another all the good gifts of the world but does so with a grumpy demeanour, the Torah regards it as if he had given nothing. But if he receives his neighbor cheerfully and kindly, the Torah regards it as if he had given him all the good gifts of the world. ~ Avot D'Rabbi Natan.



A soldier once came into the house of **Horav Boruch Ber Leibowitz זצ"ל** and wanted to take the watch of Rav Boruch Ber's father, **Rav Shmuel Dovid Leibowitz זי"ל**. Rav Shmuel Dovid did not want to give him his watch, and the soldier started to wrestle with him.

When the soldier saw that he was not succeeding in getting the watch, he pulled out a knife to hurt RavShmuel Dovid.

When Rav Boruch Ber saw this, he jumped up and said, "Hurt me, do not hurt my father!"

All of a sudden, a high-ranking officer walked by and commanded the soldier to leave the house.

Rav Boruch Ber said that in the zechus of his mesiras nefesh for the mitzvah of kibbud av, they were zoche to this miracle.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Birthday Parties

We know many have a birthday party when that big day arrives. What is the Jewish outlook on this?

[**R' Tzadok Hakohen** (Divrei Chalomos) writes that a person is at the strength of his Mazel (**בתוקף מזלו**) on the day he is born, and he shouldn't be afraid on his birthday that something bad will happen.]

R' Yisrael Lipshitz (1782-1860), the author of the commentary Tiferes Yisrael on Mishnayos, told each of his family members, in his Tzavaa (ethical will), that all the siblings should send birthday greetings of Mazal Tov on the occasion of their birthdays. He writes

further that this custom shouldn't be stopped, and only if there is



an absolute emergency should it be shortened. The Midrash Seichel Tov says :

רוב בני אדם מחבבים...ושמחים בו ועושין בו משתה - to most people, their birthday is beloved to them and they rejoice and make a party.

The Ben Ish Chai remarks that there are those who are accustomed every year on their birthday to make it a festive day, and this is a good omen. This is what we are accustomed to doing in our house.

R' Ovadia Yosef writes that when there are Divrei Torah and **שירות ותשבחות** to Hashem at a birthday meal, it is a Seudas Mitzva.

When the **Chafetz Chaim** turned 70 years old, he invited his students - **R' Elchonon Wasserman and R' Yosef Kahanamen** (known as the Ponovezher Rav)—and said the Bracha of Shehechiyanu in their presence and gave them cake and *schnapps* - **יין שרף**.

R' Dovid Chazzan would celebrate his birthday yearly after he reached the age of 70.

R' Nosson Adler (1741-1800), the Rebbe of the **Chassam Sofer**, held a birthday party on the 80th birthday of his mother and invited the entire town.

For **R' Shmuel Salant's** 93rd birthday, on Rosh Chodesh Shvat in 1909, a party took place at his house with cake. Nearly all of Yerushalayim was there including the Chevra Kadisha, the staff of the Bikur Cholim hospital and the B'datz of Yerushalayim.

MEOROS HATZADDIKIM
Lights Of Our Righteous

Gedolim Be'Masayhem
Stories & Anecdotes

Rav Elozor Haufstein Kozhnitzer Rebbe (Kislev 26, 5622 / 1861 - 162nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Elozor was born sometime after 5566/1806, the son of Rav Moshe Elyokim Beriya of Kozhnitz. He later became the son-in-law of Rav Yaakov Horowitz of Meilitz, a scion of the Ropshitzer dynasty. He received the Chassidic tradition from his father, as well as from the Sabba Kadisha, Rav Yissochor Dov of Radoshitz and from his cousin Rav Meor Yechiel Shapira of Mogolinitza.

He traveled to many Tzaddikim, including Rav Yeshaya of Pshedburzh, Rav Yisrael of Rizhin and Rav Naftoli of Ropshitz. Rav Yisrael of Rizhin testified, "Elozor ben Chaya Sora shines very much indeed!" - In 5608, after Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel of Mogolinitza was niftar, Rav Elozor was crowned Rebbe. Most of the Chassidim of Kozhnitz who had been his father's, accepted his authority as the new Rebbe. Some say that Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel himself crowned

him Rebbe when Rav Elozor was there on Parshas Mikeitz and was called to the Torah.

The Rebbe Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel read the pasuk (Bereishis 41:40): "You shall rule over my household and my people shall follow the orders you give with your mouth," and he emphasized this pasuk, reciting and emphasizing it three times. The Gutter Yid of Neustadt, Rav Yosef Boruch, testified, "Every Rebbe must have the ability to uplift the souls of the Jewish people, but to uplift up the entire world? – that is a chiddush that only this Rebbe, Rav Elozor of Kozhnitz, could achieve!"

Rav Elozor was niftar at a young age. His Divrei Torah were collected and published as Likkutei Mahar"a.

No Travelling After Chatzos



Rav Elozor of Kozhnitz had a custom: he was very strict regarding travel on Erev Shabbos and would never travel anywhere after midday, no matter how short a distance and no matter what the circumstances – no exceptions.

Rav Elozor was once traveling home on Erev Shabbos. When they were just a few miles from their destination, the Rebbe noticed that the time of day was Chatzos. Since it was midday and the Rebbe was careful not to travel after Chatzos on Erev Shabbos, he refused to travel any further and ordered the gabbai to stop. "We will spend

Shabbos here in this village," explained the Rebbe to the shocked gabbai.

When the gabbai went to see to their lodgings, he discovered that fewer than ten Jews lived in this village and that wherever they could stay the food and provisions would be simple, meagre and certainly not the Shabbos delicacies they were accustomed to for honoring Shabbos. "Rebbe, please, we are just a few miles from home – we must continue!" declared the gabbai as the Rebbe shook his head in refusal. "But Rebbe, it's just another half hour!" pleaded the gabbai, "and there is no food in honor of Shabbos here – they don't even have a minyan!"

All his protests fell on deaf ears. "You know," explained Rav Elozor calmly,"that under no circumstances do I travel after Chatzos, and so I will go no further." So saying, the Rebbe went to immerse himself in the river to purify himself for Shabbos.

Meantime, while the Rebbe was busy preparing and immersing, the gabbai set off toward Kozhnitz. He decided that if the Rebbe was so obstinate as to stay, he could still gather Shabbos food and bring it back with time to spare.

When the gabbai arrived in Kozhnitz and word spread throughout the city that the Rebbe was spending Shabbos alone with no minyan, just half an hour away, the Chassidim gathered, and scores of yungeleit and bochurim began making preparations to travel to the Rebbe.

When the gabbai arrived in the small village with the Shabbos food there came with him tens of Chassidim and the Shabbos ended up being an uplifting, spiritual experience for all.

The Rebbe was greatly pleased and told the Chassidim a story: **The holy Chozeh of Lublin** owned a special white bekesche that he always wore when he was honored as the mohel at a bris mila. Once, the Chassidim noticed that the Chozeh donned the special white robe

even when he was not performing a bris, and as there was no circumcision the entire day, their wonder only grew. It was the custom that on Purim the talmidim were allowed to ask any questions they wished. The Chassidim asked the Chozeh, "Why did the Rebbe wear the white robe even though he wasn't a mohel that day?"

The Tzaddik answered them with a story: There was a wealthy but miserly merchant who came to conduct some business in Lublin. He was delayed in his business and with half an hour to Shabbos he found himself in Lublin with no relatives or acquaintances where he could find lodgings to spend Shabbos.

As he was stingy, he did not wish to rent a hotel room or pay for his lodgings and so, not knowing anyone, he decided after running out of any other ideas, to head to the Rebbe's hoif. Although he was not a Chassid, he trusted the Chessed of the Rebbe and the Chassidim to provide him with food and lodgings for Shabbos for free. And so it was.

On Motzoei Shabbos he headed to the Rebbe with a kvittel and a pidyon, a note of petition with his name to ask for the Rebbe's blessing and a small donation. Paltry indeed – he was so miserly that his half-coin donation was merely symbolic. The Rebbe nonetheless accepted both his pidyon and his kvittel, blessed him and he went on his way.

After the miser passed away, his soul arose to the heavenly worlds and continued until it reached a certain point where one of the angels stopped him from continuing. "Stop! You can go no further, explained the angel, for you have a blemish in your bris mila."

"What? How can this be?" protested the miser. "I was once visiting the Tzaddik, the Chozeh of Lublin, whose eyes can see from one end of this world to the other; if I had a blemish, wouldn't he have let me know and rectified the matter?"

The angel took his protest and argument to the court, which ruled that he had a good point. They ruled that he had permission to ask the Rebbe for a tikkun and so he did, and that is why the Rebbe wore his white mohel's bekesche, which he normally wore for a bris mila, since he rectified that Jew's bris.

"And now," concluded Rav Elozor of Kozhnitz to his Chassidim, who had come to spend Shabbos together in the village with him, "if that miser wasn't a Chassid, and only visited the Rebbe on the pretext of saving himself the fare of a hotel lodging for the weekend, and only donated a paltry half coin as a pidyon, yet in Heaven they saw fit that the Chozeh should do him a favor and rectify him with a tikkun, just think how much more so are you true Chassidim, desiring favor and blessings, since you came specifically to spend Shabbos here with me! Just think what blessings and favors await all of you!" and he promised them all manner of berochos. (Yafe Sichoson Radomishla II p. 6:9)

Rav Chaim Tirar Be'er Mayim Chaim, The Czernowitzer, Reb Chaim of Czernowitz (Kislev 27, 5577 / 1816 - 207th Yahrzeit)

Rav Chaim (Tirar) Czernowitz (or Chernovitzer) was the *mechaber* of *Be'er Mayim Chaim*.

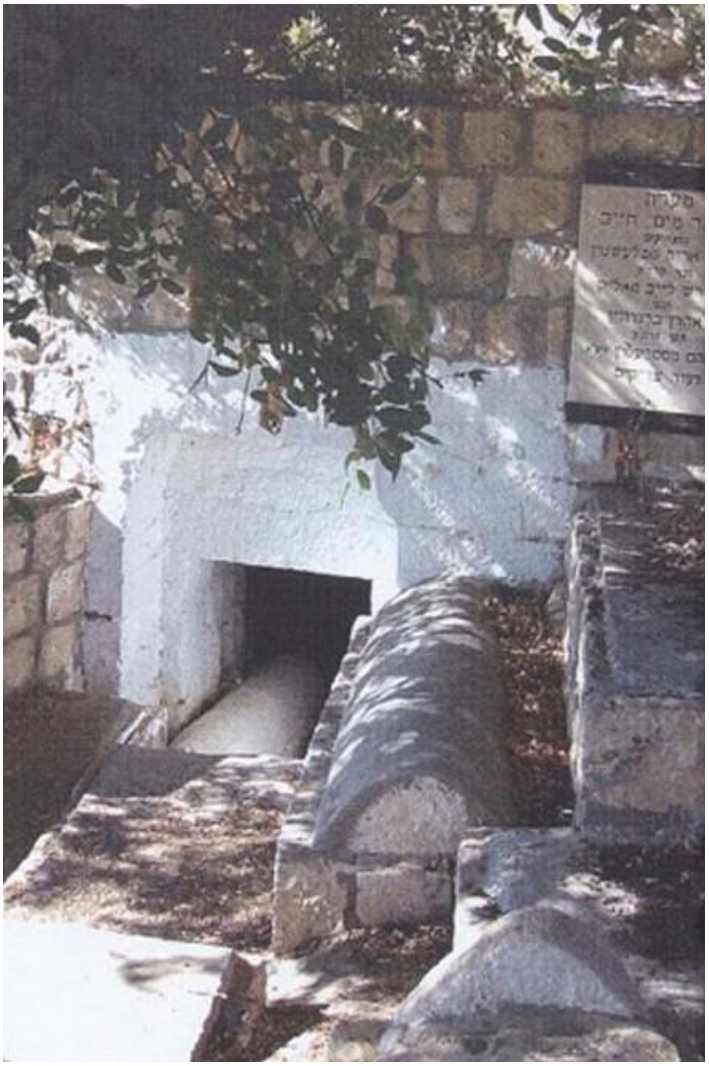
Born near Butchatch, Galicia (now Poland), he studied under Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Butchatch and became a *Chassid* of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov, Rav Shmelke of Nikolsburg and the *Maggid* of Mezritch. He became Rav in Czernowitz in the Bukovina province of Romania, in 1789, and remained there for twenty-three years.

In 1812, war broke out, and Bukovina was annexed by Austria. The new government issued harsh anti-Semitic decrees, resulting in Rav Chaim's departure, first to Botchan, then to Eretz *Yisrael*. He

settled in Tzefas, where he lived privately for the last five years of his life. He is buried in Tzefas.

His *seforim* include *Be'er Mayim Chaim* on the Torah, *Sha'ar Hatefilla* on *davening*, *Eretz Hachaim* on *Berochos* and *Sidduro Shel Shabbos* on Shabbos.

Shabbos



Tzaddikim used to say about Rav Chaim of Czernowitz, mechaber of Be'er Mayim Chaim and Siddur Shel Shabbos that on Shabbos "***er iz gevein mit a kup hecher – he was a head taller***!" His appearance changed so drastically on Shabbos that he appeared to be a different person completely. (Maamar Mordechai Slonim 2)

The Tosher Rebbe related the well-known story of how the Be'er Mayim Chaim once collected tzedoka for hachnossas kalla to help marry off a poor orphan. As he approached one of the simpler, rougher elements among the Jews of Czernowitz, one of the known troublemakers was seized by a feeling that moved him to donate the entire sum, whereupon the Tzaddik blessed him that he should merit to feel the light and sanctity of Shabbos. When Shabbos came, the simple Jew was so overcome by the sanctity of Shabbos that he simply could not handle it! He was so simple that he was unaccustomed to such kedusha! It almost drove

him out of his mind. He went back to the Be'er Mayim Chaim and asked him to take back his berocha!

The Tzaddik answered him that whatever gift had been bestowed by Heaven could not be taken away or given back. Instead he advised the Jew to stay with him and he would instruct him in Avodas Hashem. And so he did. The Yid grew and grew in yiras shomayim and slowly he was able to properly receive the light of Shabbos within himself.

Day after day he rose to higher spiritual levels until he himself became a great Tzaddik and received kvitlech (petitions) and blessed many Jews, performing miracles and bringing about salvation for others! (Avodas Avoda Pisgamei Kodesh p. 17)

In What Merit

On another occasion, the Tosher Rebbe related the well-known story (also found in Maamar Mordechai) how once the Be'er Mayim Chaim grew sick and weak, and he fainted. His soul soared heavenward and reached the world of emes (truth). There he saw the holy **Ba'al Shem Tov**.

Rav Chaim of Czernowitz asked the Ba'al Shem to heal him and save him. "In what merit?" asked the Ba'al Shem. "My Rebbe, the **Zlotshover Maggid**, was your direct talmid," explained the Be'er Mayim Chaim. "It was my Rebbe's custom always to relate some story, parable or teaching from the Ba'al Shem Tov during the Sholosh Seudos meal on Shabbos.

One Shabbos, however, they had already brought the *mayim acharonim* to wash and prepare to bentsch, signaling the end of the meal. I stopped my Rebbe from reciting Birkas Hamozon and reminded him, though the hour was late, that he had not yet related something from the Ba'al Shem Tov. Then the Zlotshover Maggid recited a story from the Ba'al Shem and we bentsched."

The Ba'al Shem Tov had great satisfaction from this, and he healed the Be'er Mayim Chaim.

The Tosher Rebbe concluded, "This story clearly demonstrates that when we tell stories about Tzaddikim who are in the Olam Ho'elyon (World Above), the merit of doing them this favor stands by us, safeguards and protects us, sending us salvation, healing and all manner of blessings from above, to allow us to study Torah in purity and sanctity! (Avodas Avoda Sichos Kodesh p. 211)

The Promise

When the Be'er Mayim Chaim was Rav of Czernowitz, there was a bochur who wanted to be chazzan, but the heads of the congregation were against it, until Rav Chaim convinced them to allow him. From then on, this bochur became an avid Chassid of the Be'er Mayim Chaim and attended to his Rebbe's needs all the time.

After many years, before the Be'er Mayim Chaim moved to Eretz Yisrael, he promised his young Chassid and attendant that if he ever needed his assistance or a salvation of any kind, he should mention his name and picture his face, and that he would save him.

Many years later, when this young man was in the mikve, he accidentally slipped and fell into the boiling hot water of the heating pit.

In those days some of the mikvaos were built in such a way that one of the pits was filled with water that was heated and boiling hot and this was mixed together with cooler water for bathing. Everyone thought that surely there was no way he could have survived, but when they pulled out his "body" they discovered that not only was he alive, but he also appeared like a new person.

When they asked him how he had survived he told them of the Be'er Mayim Chaim's promise before leaving for Eretz Yisrael and that

even though now the Be'er Mayim Chaim was no longer alive, his promise lived on.

"When I fell into the boiling water, I immediately pictured the Tzaddik's face and form, and the Be'er Mayim Chaim came and anointed my entire body with fragrant oil from Gan Eden, healing me completely! (Maasei Tzaddikim p. 81)

A Head Taller

It is a well-known fact related by many Tzaddikim that on Shabbos the Be'er Mayim Chaim was a head taller than on weekdays.

Rav Dov Beirish Weidenfeld, the Tchebiner Rav, used to explain this phenomenon as follows: It simply means that during the week the Tzaddik was so intimately involved in suffering the pain and anguish of Hashem's Divine Presence, the Shechina, in Her exile, that he was bent over in mourning. However, on Shabbos Kodesh he felt the awesome sanctity and holiness of Shabbos, especially according to his own lofty level, so much so that this straightened him out and everyone clearly saw that he was indeed a head taller on Shabbos than on weekdays. (Yafeh Sichoson II #45)

A True Taste Of Shabbos

Hershel was a pure comedian, one of a rare breed. He didn't just tell jokes; he breathed them. Certainly, it seemed to the people in his village of Mosayov in the Marmorash area that he had never drawn a serious breath in his life. He lived for laughs. Nothing was sacred or out of bounds to make fun of. Fear of Hashem was absolutely foreign to him. The grin never left his face. As might be expected, Hershel soon became the most popular guy in Mosayov among idle, the crude, the silly and the drinkers. Whenever there was a crowd of people on the street or in the village tavern laughing hilariously,

it was guaranteed that in the middle was to be found Hershel, perfecting his craft.

Hershel himself was not numbered among the unemployed. He made a nice living as a seller of livestock. As his business took him to all the neighboring towns and villages, his reputation as a comic spread throughout the Marmorash region.

Each year he would travel to the annual great livestock fair in Czernowitz. Another person who consistently attended the fair was the Rav of the city, the well-known Tzaddik and scholarly author, Rav Chaim of Czernowitz. He would circulate among the merchants and give them the opportunity to contribute to the many worthy causes that he was involved in for helping needy people and educational institutions.

One year, the fair took place from Sunday through Friday. By the last day the Tzaddik had already gathered a significant sum. As he made his final rounds of the stalls, he came across a large group laughing raucously, slapping their thighs, and winking at each other. No doubt about it – Hershel the Mosayover must be in the midst of them. And in top form, too.

Rav Chaim thought to slip around them inconspicuously. He knew that from these crude, empty-headed types he could not expect much 'business' anyway.

But Hershel was quicker than him. "Hey! Holy Rebbe! Sholom Aleichem!" he called out, still grinning from the last joke he had just successfully cracked. "Aleichem sholom, my fellow Jews," responded the Rav warmly.

The die was cast. Now he could no longer turn away. "Perhaps you gentlemen would care to take a share in the great mitzva of tzedoka?"

"And why would you need charitable contributions?" asked Hershel, still smirking. "For pidyon shevuyim – redeeming Jews in captivity,

called the greatest mitzva of all," the Rav responded promptly. "There is a poor, unfortunate Jew who owes a large debt of 1500 zylotas (Polish gold currency) to his noble. Now he is languishing in a dungeon."

Hershel's companions were all grinning in anticipation. They waited eagerly for their friend's witty riposte in the rabbi-jester dialogue.

Hershel put his hand in his pocket and took out 1500 zylotas, all the money he had brought with him to replenish his livestock. "Here you are, Rav," he said quietly, with a strange look on his face. "Here is the entire sum you need for the redeeming captives mitzva."

All the onlookers were startled for a moment, but then they realized this must be one of Hershel's clever jests. The naive Rav would put out his hand for the money, and Hershel would pretend to give it to him and then at the last moment he would snatch it back, making a fool of the gullible scholar.

But the Tzaddik was not so naive after all. He held back, and simply gazed at the clownish Hershel thoughtfully. "No, No," exclaimed Hershel, as his face took on a fully serious expression. "I really mean it. No joke. Please. Take the money."

As he spoke the words, he approached the Tzaddik and pushed into his hand the bulging wallet he had drawn out of his pocket.

The astonished Rav felt himself overwhelmed with emotion: excitement and relief at being able to secure the release of the poor imprisoned Jew, amazement that such a lowly soul could ascend to the highest of peaks in the briefest of moments.

His cheeks were flushed; warm tears pooled at the corners of his eyes. Hershel himself was stunned. He couldn't understand what he had just done. It had been a spontaneous impulse that had overcome him, but why had it been so irresistible?

The Tzaddik wished to bless his donor appropriately but wasn't sure how. For Rav Chaim, life turned on one hinge: Shabbos. He had even

written a unique book, Sidduro Shel Shabbos, explaining according to mystical principles the exaltedness and holiness of the Seventh Day. But how was that relevant to the loutish man who stood before him? Nevertheless, he thought to himself, such a deed deserves the greatest blessing of all.

Still brimming with enthusiasm, he exclaimed: "I bless you that, in the merit of this great mitzva that you have done, you will experience the true taste of Shabbos."

Hershel was still numb. He nodded his head as if he understood what the Tzaddik was talking about and answered, "Amen."

On Sunday Hershel returned to Mosayov. Since he had no money, there was no reason to remain in Czernowitz. Still, he remained his cheerful, joking self.

As the week progressed, however, he began to feel a strange feeling welling up inside him, a spirit of holiness, something he had never felt before in his life.

When Friday dawned and the feeling was even more intense, he realized that it must be connected to the oncoming Shabbos, and that this Shabbos would definitely be like no other he had ever experienced.

He went shopping to purchase appropriate food, and he could barely control his trembling. As the hours went by, his inner upheaval grew stronger and stronger. He didn't know what would be.

All those who encountered Hershel that Shabbos could hardly recognize him. Was that really him – singing, dancing, studying, praying with ecstasy? Hershel could barely recognize himself! His entire being was bursting with the pleasure of Shabbos. It was the talk of the town.

The idea that Hershel the clown could be caught up in a Tzaddik-type of intense love of Shabbos cracked up everyone who heard it even more than Hershel's intentional jests. They even entertained

the possibility that he had gone insane. But then the news spread about what had happened at the livestock fair in Czernowitz – of the incongruous charitable deed that Hershel had done and the extraordinary blessing of the Tzaddik. People began to consider the issue more seriously.

After that Shabbos, Hershel returned to his customary light-hearted joking manner. But by the following Shabbos he was again overwhelmed by the same spirit of holiness. It was as if there were two Hershels: the weekday persona and the special Shabbos one.

Weeks went by, and months, without change in his situation. Hershel felt himself cracking under the strain of his dual personality. He decided to travel back to Czernowitz to discuss his situation with the Tzaddik who had blessed him.

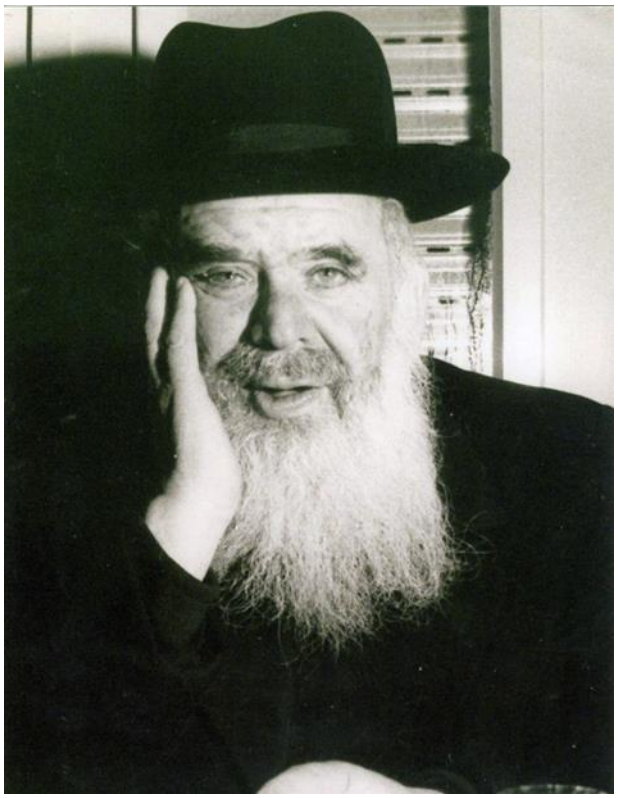
Rav Chaim told him that in order to absorb the taste of Shabbos without spiritual and psychological damage, he would have to refine his weekday behavior.

Hershel decided to stay on in Czernowitz in order to attach himself to the Tzaddik and to learn from him. He did so and became a completely different person as his daily lifestyle changed to be harmonious with his weekly Shabbos elevation. [Translated and freely adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from Sichas HaShavua #461.]

"If you haven't found the beauty in another person's soul, it's because you haven't looked close enough." ~ R' Lazer Brody.

"Hashem did not create woman from man's head, that he should command her; nor from his feet, that she should be his slave; but from his side, that she should be nearest his heart." ~~ [adapted from] Talmud

Rav Chaim Leib Shmuelevitz *(Teves 3, 5740 / 1979 - 44th Yahrzeit)*



Rav Chaim Leib Shmuelevitz, Rosh Yeshiva Mir, was born in Kovno, Lithuania, where his father, Rav Alter Refoel, was Rosh Yeshiva. His mother, Ettel, was the daughter of Rav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, the Alter of Novardok. In 1920, both of his parents suddenly passed away, and Rav Chaim was left to care for his younger brother and two younger sisters.

When Rav Chaim was twenty-two, Rav Shimon Shkop, Rosh Yeshiva in Grodno, invited him to join his Yeshiva. Within three years, Chaim was appointed to a lecturing post in the Yeshiva. Rav Chaim continued his studies in Mir where the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, chose him as a suitable match for his daughter.



With the outbreak of World War II, he remained with the Mirrer Yeshiva in its exile in Shanghai for five years. After the war, he lived for a short while in America. With the establishment of the Mirrer Yeshiva in Yerushalayim, he immigrated to Eretz Yisrael and served as its Rosh Yeshiva. Rav Chaim authored Sichos Mussar.

Unworthy

Rav Fisher related the following account: In the summer of tov-shin-lamed-alef, I was driving my car past the Bais Yisrael neighborhood in Yerushalayim, when suddenly I noticed Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz standing by the bus stop, waiting. I stopped my car and offered him a ride.

"Listen, you don't know where I am traveling to and I don't wish to take you out of your way, so I don't want to get into your car," the Rosh Yeshiva answered.

"I am traveling in the same direction as you anyway."

"How do you know which way I am headed?" smiled the Rosh Yeshiva in response, and I answered him the same: "And how does the Rosh Yeshiva know which way I am headed?"

In the end, the Rosh Yeshiva admitted defeat to my coaxing and arguments and agreed to get into my car.

As soon as he was settled, I turned to the Rosh Yeshiva and asked, "Where to?"

"To Chevron, to the Kivrei Avos!" answered Rav Chaim.

"That's exactly where I was going," I bantered back.

We continued on our way till we arrived not far from Kever Rochel. We were prevented from continuing by a large Arab demonstration taking place following the Egyptian president's death. This violent demonstration was accompanied by rock-throwing toward our vehicle and I had no choice but to turn the car around and head back, seeing that our way was blocked and dangerous.

After a few minutes, the Rosh Yeshiva asked, "Why are we headed back?"

"Because," I answered naively, "they are throwing rocks at us and it's dangerous!"

At this, the Rosh Yeshiva began to cry, and he declared, "No! That's not why! That's not the reason! We are headed back because from Shomayim they aren't giving me the opportunity – I don't have the zechus to daven at the Kivrei Avos!

The demonstration, the Arabs, the rocks – all these obstacles are against me, personally, to prevent me from getting to the Avos. Through my numerous sins I have been prevented, because I don't have the zechus to daven at the Kivrei Avos." - And so he continued to cry.

This memory is something that will always be with me, explained Rav Fisher, and from that trip I learned hands-on that if ever anything in life is a failure, if ever something doesn't work out the way I chose or decided, the fault lies solely with me. I am he who was found unworthy; I did not have the zechus (merit) – and I am the cause of my own failures." (Sefer Shemuos Tovos)

Reb Yoel on the Parsha

ויאמר יהודה אל אחיו מה בצע כי נהרג את אחינו פרק לז פסוק כו

"***Yehudah said to his brothers, what will we gain if we kill our brother***"

The *sefer* **פרדת יוסף** gives a most incredible interpretation of these words. The word **בצע** can be read as an acronym for **בקר צהרים ערב** – ***morning, afternoon and evening*** – referring to our three daily *tefillos, Shacharis, Minchah and Ma'ariv.*

Now we can understand the *pasuk* as **מה בצע** – what value can our *tefillos* possibly have, **כי נהרג את אחינו** – if we kill our brother, i.e, if we live with hatred and divisiveness, if we cannot get along with each other?

If we cannot learn to love each other, our *tefillos* cannot achieve their ultimate fulfillment.

In fact, the **Arizal** instructs that one should commit himself to the *mitzzah* of *v'ahavata l'rei'acha kamocha* before *davening*. The Arizal even concludes that in the absence of this commitment, *tefillah* is powerless.

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל

Why He Missed the Bus by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach zt"l

As the bus to Bnei Brak approached the young man at the Beit Shemesh stop, he put his hand in his pocket to take out the 13 shekels he had prepared for paying the fare. He was shocked to find only three shekels and decided to forgo that bus and go home to get the rest of the money.

No sooner had the bus pulled out than a neighbor pulled up in his car and asked him why he didn't get on the bus. Upon hearing his explanation, he informed him that he was driving to Bnei Brak and would be glad to give him a lift.

They rode for a while behind the missed bus and suddenly saw it swerve off the road and fall into a deep gorge, an accident which resulted in injuries to many passengers. Realizing that he had almost been on that bus the young man began to weep. - He put his hand in his pocket to get a handkerchief to wipe his tears and what did he find hiding in it? The missing ten shekels!

"A lack of emuna is like a passenger on an airline who doesn't believe that there's a pilot in the cockpit." ~ R' Lazer Brody.

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

No Recliners in A Factory - Rav Wolbe on Chumash by Rabbi Yitzchok Caplan

וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב - '***Yaakov settled***.' (37:1)

Immediately after the Torah relates that Yaakov settled in the land of Canaan, it launches into the narrative of the dreams and the subsequent sale of Yosef.

Rashi explains that Yaakov yearned to settle down and live without distress, but shortly after his "settling" in Eretz Yisrael, he suffered the tragedy of Yosef's disappearance.

Chazal tell us that when righteous people seek to live in peace and tranquility, Hashem counters, "Is it not sufficient what awaits them in the World to Come? Do they also want to live in this world without difficulties?"

When Yaakov sought serenity, his intention was not to relax in a recliner with a cigar. Yaakov Avinu, the embodiment of perpetual Torah study, felt that if his life were tranquil, he would be better able to delve into Torah study. Why, then, was Yaakov not granted his request?

Rav Yerucham Levovitz said, "***You will never find a recliner in a factory***." Since everyone in a factory is busy working, there is no time to sit back and relax. Likewise, we are not meant to amble through a utopian life in this world. That state of tranquility is reserved for the next world.

Yaakov Avinu had an extremely difficult life. His brother, Eisav, was bent on killing him, and he fled to his uncle Lavan, who cheated him

incessantly. On his way back to his parents' home, he experienced the kidnapping of his daughter, Dinah. When he finally arrived home, his beloved son Yosef was sold by his brothers — eventually leading to Yaakov's exile to Egypt.

All of the distress he experienced was meted out to him in order that he realize that in this world he must rise above adversity and perform to the best of his ability.

Often, a person feels that his circumstances make it impossible for him to focus on his spiritual obligations. After all, how can he possibly concentrate on Torah study or davening when his life is in such turmoil? However, it is specifically in these situations that we are expected to rise above the external factors that were placed in our paths to test us.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe commented that sometimes, when he had quiet time to study, he could not arrive at a chiddush. However, chiddushim would often occur to him when the phone was ringing, or students needed attention, or things had to be organized, or there was someplace he had to go.

It is specifically during busy times that we can reap the boundless rewards of fulfilling our spiritual obligations despite adversity.

With Brilliance and Compassion - Rav Nota – The Story of Rav Nota Greenblatt by Shmuel Botnick

Rav Nota Greenblatt was once sitting in the beis medrash of Far Rockaway's Sh'or Yoshuv and a group of students gathered around him, drawn by his magnetic personality. He began sharing story after story with his riveted audience, describing in impeccable detail his many interactions with the leading gedolim of bygone eras.

"Rabbi Greenblatt," one boy commented, "you knew such great people. Today, we don't have anyone like that." Rav Nota nodded,

deep in thought. He then grew very emotional. "*Uber s'veht nuch zein*," he proclaimed. "There will yet be!"

This attitude was evident each time he shared a story about one of his sacred rabbeim. Rav Nota was a masterful storyteller, and his voice quivered at the mere mention of their names. He laughed at the funny stories and shook his head in consternation at the ones he never comprehended. He loved to tell stories, sharing a revivified past with a hopeful future.

Rav Nota had witnessed greatness throughout his lifetime and was determined to relay it to the next generations. "*S'veht nuch zein*!" Rav Nota insisted. "*There will yet be*!"



One Chol Hamoed, Reb Shuey Scheinberg called Rav Nota with a question. Sometime during Yom Tov, his baby contracted a stomach virus and had vomited all over his wife's primary Yom Tov outfit. Could the outfit be sent to the cleaner's on Chol Hamoed?

Before Rav Nota answered, there was a more pressing issue to discuss. "First of all," said Rav Nota, "*Vuhs macht der yingel*? How is the baby feeling?"

"Not a single person in the world never makes a mistake. There is no shame in a person's saying he made a mistake. But to stubbornly refuse to admit you made a mistake is shameful." ~ Pele Yoetz.

Rabbi Sholom Fishbane, kashrus administrator for the Chicago Rabbinical Council (cRc), was present at a question-and-answer forum held at the 2017 Association of Kashrus Organizations' conference. The panel featured several leading poskim in the field of kashrus, Rav Nota among them.

One of the questions focused on the halachic reliability of cameras as a method of kashrus oversight: Could modern camera surveillance replace the trained observation of the traditional mashgiach?

Rav Nota skipped the expected recitation of sources. "It is possible that cameras are sufficient for oversight," he said. "But if you use a camera instead of a mashgiach, you're taking parnassah away from a fellow Jew. And that has to be given serious consideration."

וְהוּא נַעַר

Yosef Hatzadik was steadily in the situation of a youngster. Since he always renewed himself anew in his Avodas Hashem (service to Hashem) - **Beis Aharon, Pninei HaTorah**.

וַיִּשְׁאָלֵהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ

The Malach taught him to say and repeat and say steadily his aspirations, - to steadily aspire. - **Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk.**

וְלֹא־זָכַר שַׂר־הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ *'The chief butler did not remember Yoseph, and forgot him.'* (40:23)

While "not remembering" Yoseph indicates a passive, unintentional action, "forgetting" refers to the chief butler's deliberate attempt to dismiss him from his mind. - His failure to remember Joseph was purposeful. ***(Ohr HaTorah)***

וּבַגֶּפֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׂרִיגִם ***'And the vine had three branches.'*** (40:10)

As explained in the Midrash, the "vine" is an allusion to the Jewish people, as it states in Psalms (80:9): גֶּפֶן מִמִּצְרַיִם תַּסִּיעַ "***You have brought a vine from Egypt***."

In the same way that wine is described as "bringing joy to G-d and man," so too does every single Jew possess this quality of "wine": an innate love for G-d, inherited from his ancestors, that enables him to rejoice in Hashem. ***(Torah Ohr)***

R' Yisroel Salanter's Question



R' Yisroel Salanter was once invited to meet a royal family member who had finally given birth after waiting for many years. Nothing was held back from this child. He had anything that possibly could've and would've been needed. His father hired the top educators to train him to be the very best…

R' Yisroel posed a question to the mother: "I see that you're very much concerned for your child's wellbeing. What would be if he stuck his hand into his pocket to get a coin and he got the wrong one? Would anyone worry for him?"

"That's his own business. We supply him with all his needs, but regarding his personal things, he'll have to figure them out on his own."

Hearing this, R' Yisroel burst into tears.

"When something like that happens to us, we can be sure that Hashem is bothered. He cares for us so much so, that even the

slightest inconvenience is taken into account. Hashem feels every person's pain, and as the pasuk says: '***I have become weak in my arm, and in my head from the suffering that my children encounter***,' which Chazal learn to mean that the slightest inconvenience that we come across is considered yisurim.

"If so," concluded R' Yisroel, "the love that Hashem has for his children is greater than the love that a noblewoman has for her only son. The love that Hashem has for his children is greater than any love that can be in This World.

The greatest love that the most capable people in this world can give doesn't come close to the love that Hashem has for every one of his beloved children." (**Tiv HaEmunah**, p. 136)

It's From Hashem!

Forty years ago, there was a snowstorm in Yerushalayim on Purim, and a poor man couldn't get around to collect matanos l'evyonim. He was distraught and complained, "Why did it have to snow today?"

Reb Nota Zenwirth, zt"l, told him, "I have proof that it had to snow today."

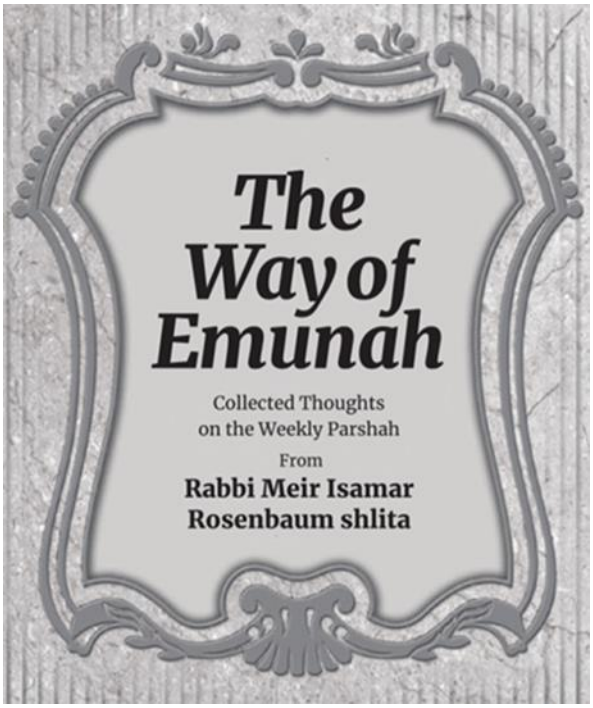
"What's your proof?"

"My proof is that it snowed today. It must be that this is what was meant to be."

On a different occasion, it rained in Yerushalayim, and the people in his beis midrash were upset because they didn't have any rain gear with them. Reb Nota told them, "This rain is according to the **Raavad**'s view, and also the **Rambam**."

The people in the beis midrash were talmidei chachamim, and this unusual sentence spiked their curiosity. How was the rain like the Raavad and like the Rambam?

Reb Nota explained, "Whenever the Rambam and the Raavad argue, they ultimately disagree about Hashem's will. The Rambam proclaims that this is Hashem's will, and the Raavad shouts back, 'No, this is Hashem's will.' However, since it is raining today, both the Rambam and the Raavad would agree that this rain is Hashem's will." (**Torah Wellsprings**)



Connecting All Their Words to Hashem

וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־דִּבָּתָם רָעָה אֶל־אֲבִיהֶם *'And Yosef brought their bad speech to their father.'* (37:2)

Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Rimanov zy"a (Sefer Be'eros Hamayim) translates this pasuk to mean that Yosef raised his brothers to a level where all of their words were "to their father", i.e., to their Father in Heaven.

This is what every tzadik does in every generation. He takes people's words and brings them directly to Hashem.

The Power of Achdus

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־אַחַי אָנֹכִי מְבַקֵּשׁ *'And he said, "I am looking for my brothers..."* (37:16)

My father, the **Kretchnifer Rebbe shlita** explains this pasuk by quoting the words of the **Ruzhiner Rebbe zy"a** on the words Yaakov Avinu said to his sons (Bereishis 49:1): הֵאָסְפוּ וְאַגִּידָה לָכֶם אֵת אֲשֶׁר־ יִקְרָא אֶתְכֶם בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים "*Gather and I will relate to you what will happen to you at the end of days.*"

The Ruzhiner Rebbe explains that he was hinting to them that at the end of days, during the generation immediately prior to Moshiach's arrival, Klal Yisroel will face many problems and difficulties. In such circumstances, it will be very difficult to retain one's emunah. The only way to do so will be through unity and connecting to our fellow Yidden.

Thus, Yaakov was saying that only by gathering together will we be able to get through what will happen at the end of days.

The word "**אַחַי**" (my brothers) symbolizes warmth (as in Yirmiyahu 36:22 - **וְאֶת־הָאָח לְפָנָיו מְבֹעָרֶת** - *and the brazier was burning before him*.). This word also represents unity and brotherly love.

Accordingly, Yosef was saying that he was seeking warmth in avodas Hashem, which can only be found through achdus and forging connections with other Yidden.

Accepting Hashem's Will with Joy

וַיִּקַּח אֲדֹנֵי יוֹסֵף אֹתוֹ וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ אֶל־בֵּית הַסֹּהַר ... וַיְהִי־שָׁם בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר *'And Yosef's master took him and he put him in prison…and he was there in prison*.' (39:20)

Sefer Bais Yitzchok quotes **Rav Menachem Mendel of Vorka zy"a** as asking why the pasuk says that "he was there is prison." What is added with these words?

He answers that when it says that "he was there", the intent is that he accepted the fact that he was there with love and joy.

He said, "If Hashem put me here, it must be good!"

"He was there" in the sense that he accepted that this was the place where he was meant to be.



To Be 'Shomer Mitzvot' Does Not Mean to Keep Mitzvot!

That is the surprising view of the **Or HaChaim Hakadosh**. If that's the case, what does being 'shomer mitzvot' mean?

The Or HaChaim explains that it means '***to look forward to the performance of mitzvot***.' He derives this from a passuk that we're all familiar with from our kiddush on Shabbat: " **ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת לעשות את השבת** which we usually translate as, "***and the people of Israel shall keep the Shabbat to perform the mitzvot of Shabbat***."

The Or HaChaim points out that **לעשות את השבת** surely means '***to do Shabbat***' – to perform the mitzvot of Shabbat, which we usually call 'keeping' Shabbat, so if that's the case what is **ושמרו בני ישראל** – '***and the people of Israel shall keep***'?

With regard to Shabbat, he explains, it means to look forward to each and every Shabbat.

Where does he derive this from?

It's from our parsha. In Parshat Vayeishev, we read about the dreams of Yosef. The reaction of his brothers in Bereishit 37:11 was, **וַיְקַנְאוּ־בוֹ אֶחָיו**- His brothers were jealous of him," But what was the reaction of his father Yaakov?

וְאָבִיו שָׁמַר אֶת־הַדָּבָר – 'and his father was shomer this matter,' - meaning Yaakov knew that Yosef's dreams were prophecy and therefore he looked forward to the day when he would see the fulfilment of these dreams, when the rest of the family and all of society would pay homage and respect to Yosef who would be a great ruler.

שָׁמַר therefore means to look forward to, and as a result to be 'shomer mitzvot' means to have a passion for mitzvot. To be 'oseh mitzvot' of course means to fulfil the mitzvot, but from here we learn a very relevant and important lesson for us today.

It is not only important to technically and practically carry out mitzvot, through which we can check a box with their fulfilment. If we want to preserve our tradition and guarantee that future generations will be as passionate as we are about mitzvot, we should celebrate them and perform them with absolute passion.

We are so fortunate and privileged through the Torah, to have a code of law and a guide to a fulfilling meaningful and joyous existence. Let us therefore be truly 'shomrei mitzvot' looking forward to the performance with passion of each and every precept that Hashem has gifted us.

So let us join together and pray with all our hearts for the healing of all those injured, for the safe return of those taken as hostages, as well as Divine Protection for our brave IDF soldiers, police officers, medical professionals, firefighters, ZAKA members, security personnel and all those citizens protecting us in Israel as well as around the world, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, safe, quiet and sweet Shabbat, happy Chanukah and Chodesh Tov

"Desires must be purified and idealized, not eradicated." ~ Vilna Gaon.

A man should always be in the habit of saying: "Whatever Hashem did, He did for the best." ~~ Talmud, Berakhos



Yosef Hatzaddik Was *Mehader* in Answering Amen

וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְּמִים אֲלֻמִּים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלֻמָּתִי וְגַם־נִצָּבָה וְהִנֵּה תְסֻבֶּינָה אֲלֻמֹּתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ לַאֲלֻמָּתִי

Harav Nossson Shapiro, the author of Megaleh Amukos, reveals that the shoresh, the root of Yosef Hatzaddik was the sod of amen, and he explained:

"Yosef is the gatekeeper, and the gates are opened with amen, as it says (Yeshayah 26:2): 'פִּתְחוּ שְׁעָרִים וְיָבֹא גּוֹי־צַדִּיק שֹׁמֵר אֱמֻנִים.'" - This is alluded to in the fact that it says regarding Yosef (ibid 37:3): **בן הוא זקנים** – the final letter of each word is an acronym for amen, and the fact that when he was born, Yaakov Avinu was 91 – numerically equivalent to amen.

And based on this is the vision he saw in his dream: **וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְּמִים אֲלֻמִּים** - it comes to teach us that with the power of answering amen, the hostile forces are quieted, and they become like '*ilmim*'- mute.

L'Maaseh

A bochur spent a Shabbos in the home of **Rav Shimshon Pinkus zt"l**. At some point while they were sitting around the table, the Rav pointed to a broken clock on the wall and asked his guest if he knows why it is broken.

After a shrug of the shoulders, R' Shimshon explained that one of his kids had thrown a plate at it and it broke.

"Do you know what I said to him?"

After a pause and another shrug of the shoulders, he added "nothing"!

He explained that he only commented on spiritual damage which his kids caused, but anything that didn't fit into that category wasn't important in their development and overall chinuch.

The lesson was clear: He won't grow up to be a plate thrower, and the goal is to ensure he becomes a yarei shomayim with good midos.

From our Sages

אֵלֶּה תֹּלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף '***These are the generations of Jacob, Joseph***.' (37:2)

The name 'Yosef' is from the Hebrew meaning to add or increase. Joseph is symbolic of every Jew. The lesson to be derived is that a Jew must never allow himself to stagnate but must always climb upward along the spiritual "ladder" of Judaism. (**Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Riminov**)

וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַּבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֹם '***They hated him and could not speak peaceably to him***.' (37:4)

The main component of all controversy is the absence of dialogue, the unwillingness to listen to what someone else has to say and understand it from his perspective. - If people would really know how to talk to each other, most of the time they would discover that they have nothing to argue about. (**Rabbi Yonatan Eibeschitz**)

וַיְהִי ה' אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ '***G-d was with Yoseph and he was a successful man***.' (39:2)

Yoseph was close to G-d when things were good for him, even when he was a "successful man." (**Rabbi Simcha Bunim**)

וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֶת־אַחַ֔י אֲנֹכִ֖י מְבַקֵּ֑שׁ '***And he said, I seek my brothers***.' (37:16)

When a Jew prays, he should try to connect his personal requests to the needs of the Jewish people. For example, when praying for a sick person, we say, "*may G-d show you mercy, along with the rest of the ill of Israel*." - Yoseph prayed to be saved together with his brethren. (**Ohr HaTefila**)



The gemara says that one who wakes up in the morning, goes to the bathroom, washes his hands and then puts on tefillin and davens is considered as if he immersed in a mikva before davening. If one has to go to the bathroom, he is prohibited from davening anyway, so what do Chazal mean to tell us here?

Rav Shimshon Pinkus explains that it is the preparation for tefilah itself that has this elevated status; one who wakes up with a guf naki has not achieved this because it is the act of preparing for tefilah itself which enhances a person's davening.

He explains that preparation can also be a state of mind. Take for example, someone who travels erev Rosh Hashana to join his yeshiva, but arrives late in the afternoon. He will still have an uplifted Rosh Hashana davening. Yet, if this were to happen on a random erev Shabbos in Cheshvan, his tefilah maariv will be with little focus or concentration. This is because his mindest throughout the day was leading up to Rosh Hashana, even though he did nothing concrete to prepare himself for it. - By not rushing into davening, and preparing, even mentally, a little while before, will enhance a person's tefilah.

The Hand of Hashem – Rabbi Shlomo Landau



On October the 5th, one young lady in Israel was fortunate to be gifted by her father, a brand-new jeep. She was so excited by the new gift, that she drove it to the Nova Festival on the horrific day of Oct 7th.

She had no clue that somewhere along the journey, her licence plates had worked themselves loose, and had fallen off un-noticed. [This had never happened before to this type of jeep].

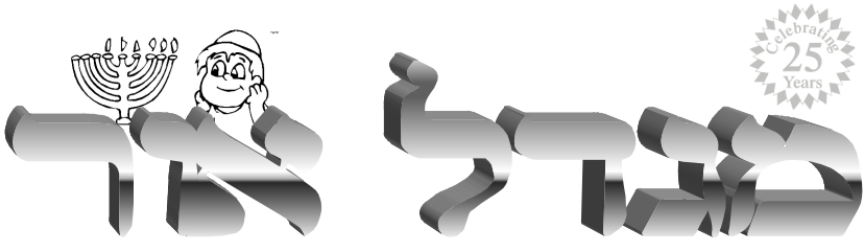


Actual CCTV still photo of her jeep entering the festival – minus the licence plates

When the terror unfolded at the Nova Festival, she managed to gather 14 people into the jeep to attempt to escape the massacre. Unbeknownst to her, Hamas terrorists were using exactly the same type and model of jeep that she was now driving! So, when she got to the main road, which was teeming on either side with terrorists armed with Kalashnikovs, she was waved through! They thought that the jeep was one of theirs!

She got all 14 people to safety, and they survived. Incredible **יד השם**! And by the way, **יד** is the gematria of 14! It was clearly the hand of Hashem that assisted her in saving those 14 people.

עַל נִסֶּיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ. וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוּבוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל עֵת



When **R' Chaim Volozhiner z"l** had the idea to found his famous yeshiva in Volozhin, which came to be the paradigm for the modern-day Yeshiva, he excitedly approached his Rebbi, **R' Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna**. He was surprised and more than a little disappointed when the Gaon did not share his enthusiasm. He shelved the project.

A few years later, he still thought it was a good idea, so he approached the Vilna Gaon again. This time his Rebbi wished him well and told him it was a wonderful idea.

He was confused. Previously, the Gaon had not thought highly of the concept. What changed?

"When you first came to me," explained R' Eliyahu, "you were so passionate and sure this was a great idea that I was afraid the Yetzer Hara was involved. But now that you have let your passion cool, and you still think it's a good idea, I know your intentions are pure and your efforts will be blessed."

"Imagine you could open your eyes to see only the good in every person, the positive in every circumstance, and the opportunity in every challenge." ~ Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Chabad.ORG

From our Sages

וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־דִּבָּתָם רָעָה אֶל־אֲבִיהֶם – *'Joseph brought their evil report to his father.' (37:2)*

Said the sages: Two righteous men were punished on account of the bearing of malevolent reports—Jacob and Joseph. Because Joseph spoke badly of his brothers, he was incarcerated in prison for 12 years; and because Jacob listened to these reports, the divine spirit departed from him for 22 years.

This teaches us that one who speaks negatively of another is punished once, while someone who listens to negative talk about another is twice punished. ~ (**Pirkei d'Rabbeinu HaKadosh**)

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו... וַיְקַנְאוּ־בוֹ אֶחָיו – *'Israel loved Joseph more than all his children .. and his brothers envied him.' (37:3,11)*

Said Reish Lakish in the name of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah: A person should not discriminate among his children, for on account of the coat of many colours which our father Jacob made for Joseph, "they hated him." ~ (**Midrash Rabbah**)

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם - *Reuben heard it, and he saved him from their hands (37:21)*

Had Reuben known that the Torah would write of him, "Reuben heard it, and he saved him from their hands," he would have loaded Joseph on his shoulders and carried him back to his father. ~ (**Vayikra Rabbah 34:9**)

וַיִּקְרַע יַעֲקֹב שִׂמְלֹתָיו וַיָּשֶׂם שַׂק בְּמָתְנָיו וַיִּתְאַבֵּל עַל־בְּנוֹ יָמִים רַבִּים - '***Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son for many days.***' *(37:34)*

Why didn't G-d reveal to him the truth? Because when the brothers sold Joseph, they made a vow that none of them would tell their father of their deed, and they included G-d in their vow. ~ (**Midrash; Rashi**)

From here we learn that the divine spirit does not rest upon one who is in a state of torpor, nor on one who is in a state of sorrow; this is why Jacob could not know the fate of Joseph. ~ (**Lekach Tov**)

וְאֵיךְ אֶעֱשֶׂה הָרָעָה הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְחָטָאתִי לֵאלֹקִים - "***How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against G-d?***" *(39:9)*

Should not Joseph have said, "How then can *we* do this great wickedness, and sin against G-d"?

But Joseph did not want to share in anything with her—not even the pronoun "we." ~ (**Rabbi Bunim of Peshischa**)

Rabbeinu Yonah said that even the blink of an eye should be lesheim shamayim. In other words, all of our actions, should be lesheim shamayim. When you walk down the street and the world sees you, they should say, "Ah, there is a Ben Torah walking." Because you see, a Lomeid Torah is maybe only a few hours a day. But a Ben Torah is 24 hours a day.

~ R' Noach Isaac Oelbaum Shlita.

"When one trusts in Hashem, Hashem will help him in ways that he never imagined." ~ R' Pinchas Koritzer zt'l.



Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin) - When Angry, Talk Things Over. "And they [Yoseph's brothers] hated him and they were unable to speak to him for peace".

Rabbi Yonoson Eibeshutz commented that it is possible that if the brothers would have spoken the matter over with Yoseph, they would have been able to make peace. The problem was that they were not talking to each other. This is what frequently happens when two people are in the middle of a feud. One doesn't listen to the other. If they will talk things over calmly, they will often see that they have nothing to argue about. Even if they still disagree in the end, the heavy emotionalism will be greatly diminished.

Avoid Boasting.

Sforno comments that it was a mistake on Yoseph's part to tell his brothers about the dream; even worse was his interpreting the dreams to them to mean that he would rule over them. When you boast to others, your intention might be to gain respect from them, but envy is a very powerful emotion which easily leads to hatred.

Be careful about boasting to others, for your boasting may lead to hatred. Furthermore, refraining from causing others these painful feelings is an act of kindness. Sharing your successes with a close friend is very different than boasting; your goal is not to show off, but to have someone share your joy.

Recognize That You Can Never Tell How Things Will Turn Out In The End.

Yoseph's ups-and-downs highlight that one must not despair when things are bleak nor gloat when things are good, since we don't have the omniscience to know what the final consequences of a situation will be. Therefore, when a situation seems extremely negative, don't despair for it could lead to wonderful things for you. Conversely, when things seem to be going extremely well, don't become overly complacent or arrogant. One can never tell what the future has in store.

Kol Dodi on the Torah (Rabbi David Feinstein) - One Must Not Show Favoritism To One Child Over Another.

Even in cases such as this — when Yaakov assumed that his other sons would understand his favoritism as being the result of Yoseph being born in Yaakov's old age — one can never predict what other factors will come into play. In this case, Yaakov didn't predict that Yoseph would bring evil reports about the brothers to him, thus arousing their hatred. For this reason, our Sages teach (Shabbos 10b) that one must never show favoritism to one child over another.

Something to Say (Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser) - True Brotherhood.

When Jacob sent Yoseph to see his brothers in the field, a man found Yoseph wandering and asked him "what are you seeking?" Yoseph answered, "I seek my brothers. Tell me where they are."

The responsibility one Jew feels for another has become proverbial and throughout the centuries of persecution has saved countless Jewish lives. While geographic and cultural differences exist, the bond remains strong. There is something even deeper implied in Yoseph's declaration, "I seek my brothers." He didn't know whether they needed him, but they might, and Yoseph had to find out.

Seeking out our brothers – helping them before their situation becomes desperate – is the true measure of greatness.

Maintaining Our Jewish Identity.

"And he [Yoseph] was in the house of his Egyptian master."

The S'fas Emes noted that no matter the circumstances in which Yoseph found himself while in his master's house, he was always himself. He did not change.

No matter what happens to us, we must always behave as a Jew.

Causeless Love.

"Yoseph dreamt a dream which he told to his brothers, and they hated him even more."

Yoseph had not yet revealed the contents of his dream, yet the mere fact that he had a dream caused his brothers to increase their hatreds towards him. Why?

The Belzer Rebbe once showed great love to a person who was known to be rather uncharitable. His Chassidim asked him, "are we supposed to show great love to such a person?"

The Rebbe answered, "after 120 years, I would rather be rebuked for loving someone without cause than for hating someone with cause."

We don't need a miracle to happen in order to see Hashem. We can see Hashem in every part of the day. ~ Chovot Halevavot

Focusing On The Positive.

"The pit was empty, there was no water in it . . . "

Isn't the latter part of this verse redundant? Rashi notes that it teaches us that there were snakes and scorpions in the pit.

We can learn an important lesson from this verse. The pit had an advantage in that it had no water in it; however, it also had a disadvantage in that it was filled with snakes and scorpions. - In referring to the advantages of the pit the Torah explicitly states that there was no water in it. As to its disadvantage, however, it can only be implied from the hint.

If this is true for a pit, how much more so when dealing with our fellow man: when it comes to praising someone, we should do so wholeheartedly and clearly; when we are forced to say something negative about someone, we should say it indirectly. (Oznayim La-Torah)



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● **What was Yosef's intention in telling his brothers about his dream?**

וַיַּחֲלֹם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם וַיַּגֶּד לְאֶחָיו וַיּוֹסִפוּ עוֹד שְׂנֹא אֹתוֹ. וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שִׁמְעוּ־נָּא הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חָלָמְתִּי (37:5,6) "***And Yosef dreamed a dream and he told his brothers, and they hated him even more. And he said to them: Listen now to this dream which I have dreamed.***"

There is a difficulty with these posukim, because first it says that he told his brothers his dream and that they hated him for it, and then it again says he told his brothers his dream!

Chazal taught in gemora Berachos that joy which is experienced as a result of having a good dream can suffice to act as its fulfilment, so that it will no longer actually come to pass. This is why Yosef related the dream to his brothers even though he knew that they would hate him for it, because if he did not tell them, his joy would cause the dream not to come to pass. But by telling them the dream it would cause him distress, and so it would certainly come true.

Thus the posuk means that "he told his brothers" so that "they hated him even more" - this first posuk is telling us why Yosef told them his dream in the next posuk, because he wanted them to hate him in order that the dream would come true.



◣ Caring Leader - Radamsker Rebbe

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לֶךְ־נָא רְאֵה אֶת־שְׁלוֹם אַחֶיךָ וְאֶת־שְׁלוֹם הַצֹּאן - "***Go see how your brothers are faring and how the herd is doing.***" (37:14)

This pasuk teaches us that a true leader must concern himself not only with the spiritual matters of his people, but also with how they earn a living.

"Hashem's love for us is infinite and unconditional. We must strive to reflect that love in our relationships with others." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986)

◣ Keeping It Under Wraps - Reb Yitzchak of Vorka

וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־דִּבָּתָם רָעָה אֶל־אֲבִיהֶם - "*...and Yosef brought evil report of [his brothers] to their father*." (37:2)

Yosef did not actually bear tales of the conduct of his brothers to his father. But by his own conspicuous righteousness, he caused Yaakov to be displeased with his other children's conduct.

If a father has one child whose conduct is exemplary, the shortcomings of his other children will stand out more and he will rebuke them for not being as good as their sibling. Thus, although he was not guilty of tale-bearing or desirous of shaming his brothers, Yosef was punished because he should have performed his good deeds so quietly and unostentatiously that even his father should not have noticed them.

◣ Patience Is a Virtue - Ben Ish Chai

וַיִּרְאוּ אֹתוֹ מֵרָחֹק וּבְטֶרֶם יִקְרַב אֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְנַכְּלוּ אֹתוֹ לַהֲמִיתוֹ - "*They saw him from afar, and before he came close to them, they conspired to kill him*." (37:18)

The pasuk tells us that when the brothers saw Yosef approaching from afar, they decided right then and there to kill him. But by the time he reached them, the plan had changed, and they ended up selling him.

We learn two things from this: First, never give up – when all seems lost, one never knows what might happen or how things could change in an instant. Second, when one comes to a decision in haste, wait a few moments and rethink the issue. You never know how the decision may be altered with a clearer mind.

◣ Always A Jew - Sefas Emes

וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרִי - "*And he [Yosef] was in the house of his Egyptian master*" (39:2)

No matter what circumstances Yosef found himself while in his master's house, he was always himself. He did not change. Thus a Jew must behave - no matter what should happen to him, he should always behave as a Jew.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

This story of the week - is in fact – a life story, told by a 99-year-old Holocaust survivor in front of full capacity crowd auditorium, who describes himself as the happiest man on earth. Here he is, telling his story.

"My dear new friends…. My name is Eddi Jaku,

And I'm standing in front of you today, a survivor of the Holocaust and a witness of the most tragic times in the history of mankind. I was a proud young German. I thought this was the best civilization that could be given to a young man like me. How wrong I was. On the 9th November, 1938, I returned from boarding school where I had lived under a false name for five years because I was a Jew. I lived away from my family, like an orphan, getting an education and under enormous pressure and fear that somebody could find out that I was not Walter Shleiss who I pretended to be. I was in great danger. On that fateful night, I had arrived home, but my family had gone into hiding, and I was alone. I went to bed with my dog close by.

At 5 am, on the 10th of November, 1938, ten Nazis broke down the door of our house. What they did to me, I am ashamed to tell you. It was so bad that I believed, "Eddie, you're going to die today." After they made me witness the demolition of our 200-year-old

house and they murdered my beloved dog, Lulu, who had tried to protect me, in front of my eyes. I lost my dignity, my freedom, and my faith in humanity. I lost everything I lived for. I was reduced from a man to being nothing. What happened to my county where I was born in, the country of my ancestors, the country which produced Schiller, Goethe, Beethoven, and Mozart? What happened to my German friends who became murderers? At the time, none of us understood the 'Kristallnacht' – the "Night of Broken Glass" where the fronts of Jewish-owned shops were smashed and the shops looted, and homes and synagogues were set on fire – was only the beginning of the nightmare of much, much worse to come.

That day, I was transported to my first concentration camp, Buchenwald, where I was kept with another 11,000 Jewish men for about five months. On the 2nd of May 1939, I was released. My father picked me up and bought me to Aachen. After 10 hours driving, we made an arrangement with a smuggler to take us to Belgium. I spent two weeks, there, with my dad in an apartment until I was arrested by Belgian police as a German, not a Jew, and interned in a camp with 4,000 other Germans. On the 10th of May 1940, the camp was liquidated. We split up in Dunkirk, and I continued on to Lyon. There I was arrested by French police and sent to Gurs, a terrible camp with 6,000 Germans. After my internments at camps, I was finally transported to what became my hell on earth: Auschwitz.

My parents and sister were also transported to Auschwitz, but I was never to see my parents again. I did not have a chance to say goodbye to my beloved mother, and I have missed her every day of my life. If you have the opportunity today, please go home and make sure you tell your mom how much you love her. Please do this for your new friend, Eddie.

I was lucky enough, to manage to escape what became known as the death march, and I hid in a forest, alone, for many months, before

I was found by the American army. But I'm standing here today a happy man, who enjoys life with a wonderful wife and a beautiful family. I do not hate anyone. Hate is a disease which may destroy your enemy but will also destroy you in the process. I am doing everything I can to make this world a better place for everyone, and I implore you to do your best, too. Let us ensure that this terrible tragedy, the worst in the history, may never happen again and also will never, ever be forgotten.

After many years of hardship and hiding, on the 7th September, 1945, after a long journey by train, I entered back into Belgium without any papers. Very shortly after that, I met and married my wife, Flore, to whom I have been married for 73 years. [Applause from the audience] Thank you. At that time, I was not a happy man. I did not enjoy being amongst people. That was until our first son, Michael, was born. At that time, my heart was healed and my happiness returned in abundance. I made a promise that from that day until the end of my life, I promised to be happy, smile, be polite, helpful, and kind. I also promised to never put my foot on German soil again.

Today, I stand in front of you, a man who has kept all those promises. My greatest happiness comes from my family, my wife, two sons – Michael and Andre – my many grandchildren and great grandchildren, who all bring so much joy. Today, I teach and share happiness with everyone I meet. Happiness does not fall from the sky, it's in your hands. If your healthy and happy, you're a millionaire. Happiness also brings good health to the body and mind, and I attribute my 99 years of health mostly to the positive and happy attitude.

One flower in my garden, one good friend is my world. Young people today forget to stop. They are constantly running and don't know where they're running to. You should take time to be happy and enjoy life. There is a time to laugh and there's a time to cry. I see good

things in life. Invite a friend or family member for a meal. Go for a walk. Tomorrow will come, but first enjoy today!

I wonder how people exist without friendship, without people to share their secrets, hopes and dreams, to share good fortune or sad losses. In the sweetness of friendship, let there be laughter and sharing of pleasure. Good times made better and bad times forgotten – due to the magic of friendship. For me, when I wake up, I'm happy because it is another day to enjoy. When I remember that I should have died a miserable death, but instead I'm alive, so I aim to help people who are down. I was at the bottom of the pit. So, if I can make one miserable person smile, I'm happy.

Remember these words: Please do not walk in front of me – I may not be able to follow. Please do not walk behind me – I may not be able to lead. Just walk besides me and be my friend.

I will end my talk with a wish from my heart to all your hearts:

'*May you always have lots of love to share,*

lots of good health to spare,

and lots of good friends that care. '

Thank you for giving me the privilege of speaking to you today. Thank you. "

אחינו כל בית ישראל, הנתונים בצרה ובשביה, העומדים בין בים ובין ביבשה, המקום ירחם עליהם ויוציאם מצרה לרוחה, ומאפלה לאורה, ומשעבוד לגאלה, השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב, ונאמר: אמן

Good Shabbos

כל נשמה מישראל חשובה בעיני ה' כאוצר יקר

"Every Jewish soul is as precious in Hashem's eyes as a priceless treasure." ~ Midrash Rabbah.

Getting Dressed for Shabbos by Rabbi Yair Hoffman



Picture the holy **Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk**, known as the No'am Elimelech – a towering 18th-century Chassidic master whose writings and very name reflects the idea of, "Hashem is my king." This tzaddik, who drew thousands to the path of dveikus Bashem with his profound teachings and personal example, reveals to us a stunning truth about Adam HaRishon's original state in Gan Eden.

Before the first Aveirah, Adam HaRishon dwelled in pure ruchnius – spirituality, connected to the Etz Chaim – the Tree of Life. Let's imagine such an existence.

But after the Aveirah, something profound happened – humanity descended into the physical realm, and Hashem clothed Adam and Chava in "garments of skin."

Here, however, is where matters get interesting.

In Lashon HaKodesh, the word for skin – 'ohr' with an ayin – is intimately connected to the word for light – 'ohr' with an alef. Do we see the magnificent potential here? Even in our descent, the possibility of growth and ascent was woven into the very garments that we wear.

When Erev Shabbos arrives, we don't just change our clothes – we participate in a cosmic change and elevation. When we remove our weekday clothes, we are not just changing outfits. No,we are

symbolically shedding our physicality, the mistakes, the errors. The ill-treatment of others around us that are a tzelem Elokim and a chailek Elokah mima'al. We shed the mundane concerns of the week.

When we put on our Shabbos clothes – oh, what a moment of sheer kedusha! It is not just a nice suit or a beautiful dress. We are clothing ourselves in garments of Ohr – light! We are connecting ourselves to the Aitz Chaim – the Tree of Life! We are, for these precious 25 hours, elevating ourselves to taste that original spiritual state that existed before any sin, before any cataclysmic descent.

This is why our Shabbos clothes feel different, why they make us stand taller, feel holier. Because they're not just clothes – they are spiritual tools or ladders, connecting us to the highest realms of existence and Kedusha.

So today, when we prepare for Shabbos, let us remember that we are not just getting dressed. We are participating in a transformation that echoes from Gan Aiden itself. We are turning skin into light, physicality into spirituality, mundane into Kedusha!

This is the power of Shabbos. This is the magic woven into every thread of our Shabbos garments. May we merit to fully experience this elevation every single week and may our Shabbos clothes truly become garments of light, illuminating our homes, our communities, and our very souls with the radiance of holiness!

[This article is based on the writings of the Noam Elimelech and the Ma'or Vashemesh – Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Epstein of Krakow. Writing in the late 1700s, his teachings illuminated deeper meanings of Shabbos for generations to come.]

"To fall is only human, but to rise back up again and again is simply divine." ~ The Ramchal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto.

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

Never Give Up!

In this week's Parsha (Bereishes 37:35) Yaakov is grieving intensely over the purported loss of his dear son Yosef. He's inconsolable. His children attempt to comfort him and to console him. The pasuk says that all of Yaakov's children arose to comfort him. However, *vayema'ein lehisnachem* – Yaakov refused to be consoled. The Torah does not reveal to us what precisely the *Shevatim* said and how they attempted to make their father Yaakov feel better.

I heard from Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh says that Yaakov's children did not say anything to him. Rather, it was the mere fact that his eleven sons and all their offspring gathered together. Yaakov's children were showing him, why mourn? Look at this huge gathering of all your descendants! They were telling their father that the loss of one child shouldn't put him in such a state when he had so much. But Yaakov said otherwise. By the loss of Yosef, one of Yaakov's twelve sons, even though it was only one child that one child was priceless. That one child is irreplaceable. That's why Yaakov refused to be comforted.

Every child is dear to Hashem and He is in pain. Hashem is mourning the loss of the fact that close to 90% of His children are lost. One cannot imagine the pain Hashem has! We try to comfort Hashem by pointing out different *yeshivos* that are teeming with *talmidei chachamim,* but Hashem says *vayema'ein lehisnachem* – Hashem's reaction is: that doesn't comfort me because every single child of mine is precious! Every child of mine is priceless! Every child of Mine is irreplaceable! Hashem wants all His children back, no matter how unaffiliated they are because they are His children! It is dependent on us to realize that all these Jews are never to be replaced!

There was a woman who had a 12-year-old son who was very disrespectful and rebellious. She gave up on her kid. She called her sister who lived in another town and said, "I'm begging you, please take my son as your foster child." The sister had 6 children of her own, and they were not the easiest kids. The sister replied that she did not see how she could take him. Yet the boy's mother persisted and said, "There is nobody else in the world; you are my only sister. Should I rather give him to a stranger as a foster child?" The sister agreed and took the boy in. The boy behaved terribly and was a horrible example for the rest of the family. Every day was a battle.

The aunt's husband taught in the local yeshivah where this boy learned. The principal tried his best to cope with the kid, but one day he called up the aunt and said, "I feel awkward talking to your husband because he is my employee – he is a teacher in our school; so, I am talking to you. I cannot tolerate this child anymore. He is going to have to be expelled." The first thing the woman felt was elation. She thought this could be the excuse for her to get out of the responsibility of taking care of her nephew. She would simply tell her sister that the boy's school is expelling him.

Then something happened. She said to the principal, "Do what you must do, but if you expel him, my husband is quitting his job. The principal couldn't believe what he was hearing. He replied, "Okay, we'll put him on probation. The boy came home that day, looked his aunt right in the eye, and said, "Is it true? Did you really put my uncle's job on the line to save me? You were willing to risk your whole livelihood, the bread on your table, just for me?"

The aunt said, "It's true." The kid was never the same. This act of kindness was what he needed to turn around his life around – someone to put their life on the line for him. This woman understood how every person is considered Hashem's only child. Every single person is irreplaceable!



There is a fellow that I know, that when he meets somebody, instead of just saying. "Hi, have a good morning", or "Good Shabbos", he always gives you a bracha. He always adds on a little blessing.

Rav Sholom Noach Landau (Rosh Yeshiva of Veretzky) said something amazing: His grandfather who was a holocaust survivor and who lost five children during the war, was once sitting in his apartment. Rav Sholom Noach happened to walk in, and he sees his grandfather sitting at the dining room table with a bottle of vodka and a schnapps glass next to him.

He sees his grandfather fill up the little glass with vodka, make a Shehakol, then lift his glass and call out, "Lechaim Heiliger Bashefer! - **לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם!**" And he drinks the l'chaim.

He says to his zaide, "What were you doing? You're making a l'chaim to Hashem?"

His grandfather smiled, "When you're at your Shabbos table, or at a simcha, and you say to the person next to you – 'Ah, l'chaim', what does the guy say back? - **לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם**: So when you wish Hakadosh Baruch Hu a **לְחַיִּים**, He tells you back - **לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם**! Is there not a better entity in the world than Hashem – The **מכלכל חיים** Himself that could wish you 'Life, Goodness and Peace?

But it's deeper than that – When you meet another Yid, and you give them a bracha, it's not just a nice thing, but when you give someone else a bracha, you get a bracha yourself! **וַאֲבָרְכָה֙ מְבָרֲכֶ֔יךָ** – ***'And I will bless those who bless you.'***

Smile



The first day Rebbetzin Jungreis arrived at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, her father turned to her and said, "Here you have a great mission."

She replied "Here? I'm just a little girl? What can I do here?"

Her father answered, "Here you can give a smile to someone!"

Let us conclude with the following saying: "Let your smile change the world but don't let the world change your smile."

Moshe Pardo was a wealthy Jew in Turkey who owned many businesses and properties. He also had a number of orchards in Israel near the town of Bnei Brak. He had just one daughter, but a few weeks before her wedding, she contracted meningitis and didn't make it to see her wedding day.

Seeking solace and advice, Moshe Pardo visited the Chazon Ish - Rav Avraham Yishayahu Karelitz - one of the leading rabbis of the 20th century who himself was childless his entire life.

Moshe told the Chazon Ish the tragic story of his daughter and said, "I want to leave this world too."

The Chazon Ish told Moshe, "It is forbidden for a believing Jew to think like that, but I'll tell you what to do. Give up your business and make a school for Sephardic girls because you see what's happening here. The Sephardim are being destroyed. You make a school for them here in Bnei Brak, take some of your orchards, and start a

school. I promise you hundreds of children and thousands of grandchildren.

Moshe took the Chazon Ish's advice and founded Ohr Hachaim Seminary in Bnei Brak in 1952. For girls from kindergarten up to high school, the school continues to serve children from disadvantaged homes, girls who would otherwise find themselves on the street, and gives them a chance to have a livelihood. The school also helps make shidduchim so the girls could find suitable husbands to marry.

Ohr Hachaim seminary in Bnei Brak currently serves 1,500 students. On the day Moshe Pardo shared this story with Rav Berel Wein, Moshe pulled out a notebook. In it, he recorded the name of every girl who ever went to the school, what happened to her, and how many children she had.

On that day, his 4,000th grandchild was born!



The power of self-sacrifice is seen in Rav Avner Chakimi, a student in Rav Daniel Zer's yeshiva in Pardes Katz.

Rav Avner was single for many years and his Rebbeim advised him to pray for forty consecutive days at the grave of the **Chazon Ish**. Rav Chakimi followed their advice but on the 39th day he developed cellulitis in his leg which made walking exceedingly painful. That day also happened to be the day when the Steipler - the Chazon Ish's brother-in-law- buried.

Despite Rav Avner's pain, he made a superhuman effort to daven at the Chazon Ish's grave on the 40th day. When he arrived at the cemetery, he saw the members of the Chevra Kadisha burial society

digging the **Steipler**'s grave. However, their digging tools had been stolen, so they were digging the sage's grave with their bare hands. Rav Avner prayed at the grave and mustered his last ounce of inner strength to bring new digging tools to the members of the Chevra Kadisha. Despite enduring excruciating pain in his leg the entire time, he participated in digging the grave himself.

That night, the Steipler appeared to Rav Avner in a dream and told him that if Rav Avner would pass his hand over the area affected by the cellulitis three times, then the affliction would disappear instantly in the morning.

Rav Avner followed his advice, and the cellulitis disappeared completely. "Since then, any time a person is suffering from cellulitis in his leg, and I do to him what the Steipler told me to do, the cellulitis disappears within a day or two."

Praying at the grave for forty days also had its desired effect - a short while later, Rav Avner saw open miracles in the area of shidduchim as he soon became engaged to his wife.

Success

Our Parsha tells us that Yosef was sold to Egypt, to the house of Potiphar. However, he quickly rose in the ranks and became the Chief of Staff. All he did was successful. The Torah tells us, **וַיְהִי ה' אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ** -"***And G-d was with him, and Yosef was a successful man.***"

R' Shlomo Ephraim Luntshitz, in his sefer, Klei Yakar, explains that there was something unique about Yosef's success. The Torah says he was "matzliach." This is a grammatical form called hip'il, which implies causation. What was spectacular about Yosef was that he caused those around him to be successful too. G-d's blessings poured down on him and overflowed onto others. In fact, his master

noted that HE was successful and those around the master became successful as well.

It seems that the Torah's definition of success is to not only be successful but to spread your success to others. On Chanukah, we become enlightened. Just as a candle that lights another loses none of its own light, so do we never lose by helping another. A clue to this is the fact that we light the Menorah with a special candle called the 'shamash,' the attendant, the job of which is to light the other lights. It often stands higher than the other candles. This reminds us that being of service to others uplifts us and raises our stature.

A Loving Father – Rabbi Yaakov Hibbert

Every pasuk in this week's sedra begins with a '*vav*' except for 9 pesukim (37:2, 37:27 ,38:25 ,39:9 ,39:23 ,40:13 ,40:14 ,40:15 ,40:19)

The gematria of the first letters of each pasuk = 82. This is the Same gematria as **א-ל כאב אהבך** – '**Hashem is like a father Who loves you**!'

וישב

שָׂשׂון וְשִׂמְחָה יִמָּצֵא בָהּ – '***Joy and happiness shall be found therein***.'

שִׂיתָן ה' בָּרְכָה וְהַצְלָחָה – '***May Hashem give you blessings and success***.'

מַדּוּעַ פְּנֵיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוֹם - "***Why are your faces sad today?***"

What is the significance of the word **הַיּוֹם** - 'today?' **[Be'er Yoseph]**

That day was Rosh Hashana, and as is well known, it is a serious day, but not a sad day. It is especially important not to be sad on Rosh Hashana- therefore Yoseph asked – 'Why are you sad today?'

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



The Great Roller Coaster

When we study, even superficially, the life of Yosef Hatzadik, we see that it was a roller coaster ride of tumultuous circumstances and emotions. Sometimes he rode to the heights of success, and then suddenly he found himself thrown into a deep pit of despair. Over and over again, Yosef was buffeted up and down by the waves of life, back and forth, up and down.

Sometimes the wave would bring him up- he's the chosen one of his brothers, the apple of his father's eye. As a young boy he was the most beloved son, and his father conferred upon him the *kesoness passim*, a *kapoteh* that conferred upon him *gedulah*, a sign of extraordinary love from his father.

And then the wave came crashing down on him; he found himself hated by his brothers. They couldn't even look at him because of their disgust, and they threw him into a deep pit and left him there to die. The "darling son" was then taken down in chains to a foreign country, a land of strangers, where he suffered the terrible indignity of being sold off, never to see his family again. From the heights of success, the young leader of the family, he was suddenly a lowly and ignoble slave in *Mitzrayim*.

And then unexpectedly, this *eved ivri* began to rise to power in one of the most powerful and aristocratic homes in Egypt. His master elevated him, and he became the *major domo* who was in charge of the whole household. It says in the *possuk* that the master knew nothing of what was transpiring in the house because Yosef was given full authority!

Yosef Was Not In New York

But the roller coaster ride was only beginning. Once again, the wave of despair came crashing down upon him and he's in the dark and foul dungeon of prison. The same family that had raised him to a position of honor, now turned on him and had him thrown into prison.

Now this prison was a hole in the ground. It wasn't a prison as fancy as Attica. Attica is a luxury palace! The people locked up there are doing just fine. Three square meals a day, television, a bed, recreation, all good things they have. Only that the felons who go there know that they have a big sympathetic public – the New York Times and all the liberals. And all they have to do is shoot some of the guards and kill them. And then they set fire to the building and say "We want a hearing!" And now they get a hearing. The stupid people who run New York set up a committee to hear out the complaints of these wicked felons. They're upset; why? Because they want color television; they're being deprived of human rights. It's a basic human right to have color television!

But Yosef didn't have such privileges. He couldn't get any hearings. It wasn't a prison building. It was a hole in the ground, a *bor*. **כי שמו אותי בבור**, they put me into a big hole in the ground. No windows, no sanitation, whatever you "dropped" remained there. It was a foul hole. And it was done on purpose. In the good old days the purpose of prison was to *discourage* crime, not to encourage it. And now Yosef found himself in prison. And he wasn't going to get out, that's where he would stay until his last breath.

The Calm Tsunami Victim

And then abruptly he was pulled out of that dungeon, and his prison clothes are replaced with **לבוש מלכות**. Before he could blink, this lowly *eved ivri*, a lowly prisoner, is standing before Pharaoh and he is appointed the **מושל בכל ארץ מצרים**, the ruler over the whole land of *Mitzrayim*. Pharaoh put a golden chain around his neck and made him second in command over the most powerful country in the world! Imagine the exhilaration! It was the pinnacle of success; nobody in Mitzrayim ever dreamed of such happiness!

When you think about it, it's remarkable how many extreme circumstances Yosef underwent in the first forty years of his life. It makes the head spin. And yet we find something exceptional when we study Yosef's life. And it's encapsulated in the words of *chazal* that he remained righteous wherever he was. He weathered every storm he encountered with the equilibrium of a most calm man and wasn't thrown off balance by the tsunami of circumstances that buffeted him to and fro.

Yosef didn't fall prey to the despair and *yei'ush* of the lows that he encountered. In prison he should have fallen to the lowest rung of discouragement. Now, who would have blamed Yosef had he sat down and moped, "What happened to me?! This is not my place; what can I accomplish here? Look what they did to me! Such wicked people in the world – I have to suffer for nothing! Ah, the heck with everything!" No, Yosef didn't say, "If only this" or "If only that." He made the best of his new "home."

The Dead Heir

And when he was suddenly appointed the **מושל בכל ארץ מצרים**, the shock of such a change of circumstances, would have been too much for anyone. The human body can't handle such extremes.

But we see that Yosef wasn't disturbed by even the most extreme fluctuations in his circumstances. He rode the roller coaster ride of life with the calm demeanour of a man who seemed to be ready for it all.

Moshe To Morris To Maurice

And neither was he led astray, like so many others have been, by all of power he suddenly acquired. Yosef was Yosef Hatzadik from beginning to end.

You know it's not easy to stay Yosef. I'll give you a *mashal*. Seventy five years ago a distant relative of mine, his name was Moshe, came to America from Europe. Now, is he still Moshe today? No; first he became Morris. As soon as he walked off the boat he became Morris. That's what people did when they became overwhelmed by the neon lights of America. And then when he achieved some wealth, some stability, Morris wouldn't do. So he became Maurice. Maurice! Now that's a *chashuveh* name. And today the family is no more. All gone. Not a Jew left from that line in the family.

And that's what should have happened to Yosef. He should have become Joseph, and then Joe and then in no time he's Ossie. And that would have been the end of him. Now, the question we have to ask ourselves, the question we want to answer tonight, is how did Yosef accomplish such a feat? How did Yosef remain Yosef *no matter what happened*? How is it that Yosef Hatzadik remained Yosef Hatzadik through all the ups and downs? And it's a very important question we're asking right now because that's what we want to do as well. We're also being buffeted by the currents of life, and we want to know the secret of achieving greatness in the midst of life's various circumstances.

Hashem Was Always "With Yosef"

Now it this lesson in Koheles that we studied tonight that opens the door to understanding the success of Yosef Hatzadik. You know that more than once the Torah says about Yosef that **השם אתו**, that Hashem was with him. Now that doesn't just mean that whatever he was going through he felt that Hashem was with him. It's true, but actually it means much more than that. **השם אתו** means that

Hakodosh Boruch Hu was right there *putting him into these situations.*

And Yosef was fully aware of this at all times. Every situation he found himself in, he knew it was **השם אתו**, it was Hashem standing with him, placing him into that specific circumstance as an opportunity for perfection.

There Are No Accidents In Life

Now remember what I'm telling you now because this is our lesson for tonight: Yosef didn't use any alibis, he didn't look for any excuses to say, this is not the situation that I could become great in. That's the main point here, that's the important point. Because of his *emunah* in Hashem, he knew that there were no accidents. For Yosef Hatzadik there was never a question of "Why did this happen? And why this? And why not that? Why am I being placed in *these* circumstances?" Yosef never lost sight of this great truth that there are no accidents in life. And instead of being downcast and embittered in the most difficult moments, and instead of losing his head at the heights of his success, he was aware that Hakodosh Boruch Hu was putting him through tests; and he therefore rose to the occasion. Because the man who knows that **לכל זמן ועת** and that **השם אתו**, understands that every situation in life is a test, and an opportunity for greatness.

A man who recognizes that whatever circumstance he is confronted with in life is being purposefully sent to him as an opportunity, he's the one who pulls the bull by the horns and makes the best of it of every **עת** in his life. That's how all of our great people made their lives into careers of success. They always kept at the forefront of their minds the fundamental concept of *emunah* that Hashem is in full control. And included in His control is that every stage in one's life, is a fulfillment of the lesson of **לכל זמן**.

Yosef Was A Model

And that's why the story of Yosef is written in Torah; so that we can have before us the model of a boy, a son, a brother, a slave, a prisoner, and a ruler, whose power of *emunah* provided him with all the succor he needed to face every stage of his life and to make the best out of every situation. And the best out of every situation means making yourself the best you possibly could. And that's why Yosef succeeded in everything he did.

And we need that model of Yosef, absolutely. Because today you hear all the time people complaining. If only this, if only that. But not Yosef; he knew that it was *davka* this and *davka* that, those were the **עיתים** that were going to be his success in life.

And if we learn this great lesson of *emunah*, the fundamental principle that Hashem is placing you within each experience for the purpose of seeing how you react, how you utilize it, then that will be the foundation of your success in life.

And that's why it's so urgent for you to use all the opportunities that come your way; because they are not *coming* your way, they are being *sent* your way. And you have to constantly be reminding yourself that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is manipulating your **עיתים** in order make you great.

A person must utilize the various **עיתים** that Hashem is providing him with as tests, by recognizing that that's what it is, a test. Every situation in life is being sent *min hashamayim* as an opportunity for greatness.

Thought of the Week

"A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you."

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar

Shabbos-the Source of Blessing

New York, 1930s

America was a melting pot of humanity, flooded with immigrants from around the world seeking fame, fortune, and a new life in a country where the streets themselves were paved with gold. Only upon arriving on the shores of this dream country did most discover that the perfection and glory were but a dream. People toiled long and miserable hours in factories and sweatshops just to put bread on the table. The foremen were demanding, oppressing, and unyielding, as for every worker they employed, there were another ten begging to fill his position.

Work was six days a week, including Saturdays. Keeping Shabbos became a mighty struggle for those who yearned to preserve it. When these Jewish workers approached their foremen on Friday to explain that they would not be able to come the next day, the foremen would merely shake their heads and reply, "If you don't come tomorrow, don't bother coming back on Monday."

The new immigrants bore this challenge nobly, and week after week were forced to launch a new job hunt, only to find themselves unemployed again by the end of the week. Many genuine, G-d-fearing Jews tragically succumbed to the circumstances, unable to face their wives and children at the end of the week, unable to admit that they'd lost yet another job, unable to bear the thought that their families would go hungry.

There were few who coped despite the challenge, who triumphed over the trial and disgrace. Week after week after week, they returned home on Friday knowing they had nowhere to return to on Monday, and week after week after week, they were forced to wander the city again in search of employment. For lack of any

alternative, some were determined to open small businesses of their own, while others resorted to performing menial, sometimes degrading tasks in order to avoid desecrating the holy Shabbos.

One such man, Meir Klein,* had worked at no fewer than fifteen jobs before he was fired yet again. Seeing that his options were dwindling by the week, he accepted the menial task of a janitor in a Manhattan office building. Despite the undignified position, Meir worked capably and efficiently, maintaining his proud carriage and pleasant smile, so unusual for a simple cleaner.

His efforts caught the attention of his employer, who was pleased by the janitor's competence and devotion to the job.

Seeing that he'd pleased his boss, Meir summoned the courage to approach him and said, "Sir, I would like to request one thing: If possible, I would like to work on Fridays, and then, on Saturday nights, I'll come again and make this place spick-and-span. But please, I beg you not to make me work on Saturday, which is my holy Sabbath."

The goodhearted gentile employer gladly agreed, and Meir was ecstatic. This was the first time in many months that he'd kept a job for longer than one week.

Meir remained at the job for approximately a year and a half, in the course of which he earned the friendship and respect of all members of the office faculty, who all marveled at his unobtrusive manner, refined nature, devotion, and dignity. Meir carried out every task to perfection, keeping the office in mint condition, while he himself reveled in the pleasure and relief of simply not worrying. Not worrying about a job, not worrying about parnassah. He had a cozy little apartment, a steady income, darling children... What else could a man want?

And it was precisely then that the challenges, which he had been so sure were finally behind him, returned in full force.

One Monday, out of the blue, his boss, Mr. Walker,* summoned him to his office and informed him that their Friday-Saturday night deal was off, and he demanded that Meir report to work on Saturday.

"B-but sir, I always make sure that the office is spotless before and after-"

"That's right, and now it's time that you start doing the same on Saturday, too," his boss coldly replied.

Meir tried to make sense of this bizarre situation. "Did something happen? Did anything go wrong in the past year and a half? Was it something I did?"

Walker silenced him with a glare. "Cut the excuses. I'm the one in charge, and you're just a worker. You'll do as I say, not what you decide." - Realizing that this really was his last chance, Meir beseeched the man with tears in his eyes to reconsider, but Walker was adamant.

The week passed far too quickly, and before Meir knew it, it was Friday in the office. Hoping that Mr. Walker would have a change of heart, Meir approached him mid-Friday afternoon to remind him that he wouldn't be coming in the next day.

"Then this is your last day here!" Walker threatened.

"I wish you would reconsider-"

"I suggest that you reconsider. You'll be unemployed. Penniless. How will you feed your family?"

Meir lifted his chin. "I'll manage, just like I managed until now. G-d is with me. Come what may, I won't desecrate my holy Sabbath!"

Meir returned home that day with a heavy heart, but immediately put aside his worries and entered into the Erev Shabbos spirit. Monday saw him setting out on a new job hunt and returning home empty-handed.

The same occurred on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. On Friday, he knew, there was no use in even trying and he determined to start fresh on Monday. Yet the second week was no better than the first, and neither did the third or fourth weeks see any progress. In the meantime, the Kleins lived sparingly, eating into the meager savings they'd amassed penny by penny.

By the end of the second month, Meir was still unemployed, and the last of their savings were gone. By the middle of the third month, he had no choice but to borrow a sum of money while he continued what was turning into a fruitless job hunt, because no one was willing to hire a worker who refused to work one day of the week.

Five months after he'd been fired, Meir was still jobless and in debt. When he approached his creditor for another loan, the man replied, "This is the last time I can lend you money. You've borrowed consistently for three months, and the first loan is already coming due."

The Kleins were nearing the point of despair. Meir had been jobless for nearly half a year, and they were penniless, without even a challah to cut for Shabbos. With no choice, he took the leftover bread from Thursday and recited hamotzi, distributing tiny pieces to his wife and children-the extent of their Shabbos seudah. Meir struggled to maintain an elevated attitude during the meal, replacing the fish and chicken with divrei Torah and zemiros sung from the depths of his soul. Yet afterward, when everyone else retired, he sat in his rocking chair and lifted tortured eyes to his Father in Heaven.

"Ribono Shel Olam! Please, have mercy on me and my family! I sacrifice so much for the sake of Your holy Shabbos, but I can't do it any longer! I can't bear to see the children's pinched, hungry faces; I can't bear to hear Hinda* tell them that all we have left is two potatoes and one onion... Help us before we surrender! Give us strength so we shouldn't fall!"

On Motza'ei Shabbos, knocks sounded on the door. Meir opened the door and was astonished to find his former employer, Mr. Walker, standing there with a briefcase in hand, and accompanied by a distinguished gentleman in expensive attire.

"May we come in?" Walker inquired.

"Oh... certainly!" Meir quickly regained his bearings and ushered them into his modest apartment. His wife, meanwhile, hastened to bring glasses of cool water, which was all they had in the house.

Following a brief moment of silence, Meir asked, "How can I help you gentlemen?"

"Klein, meet my partner Carl Hanson.* You've never met him before because he meets with clients out of the office, while I hold down the fort in the factory. Six months ago, we were discussing investing in a new, modern factory, and I mentioned to Carl here that I've employed hundreds of workers in my life, but I'd never yet met a worker as loyal or honest as you, and I mentioned that you're an Orthodox Jew. Carl told me that all the Jews he knows are loyal and honest until it comes to money, and that a Jew would sell his own mother for a nickel and a dime.

"We argued about it, and finally I told him that I knew how I could prove him wrong. If I'd order you to work on your Sabbath, you'd give up the job and forfeit your income and livelihood rather than violate your religion. I told him that you'd lose all your money and stay at home penniless to safeguard your faith.

"Carl here said, 'He might keep it up for a month or two, but he'll succumb quickly enough like they all do. I give him six months. Six months is enough to prove you wrong, and I guarantee that he'll break long before that.'

"We bet ten thousand dollars. We've been trailing you for months to see if you'd break or not. And "-he winked-"we made sure that you didn't get a single job in the interim. Today, it is precisely six

months from the day that I fired you... and I won the bet!" He opened his brief- case and proudly displayed neat piles of dollar bills.

"This money is rightfully yours," he said, handing over the briefcase. "And I'd like to offer you a job-not as a janitor, but as my foreman!"

In time, this Jew became one of the major Jewish philanthropists who donated handsomely to Torah institutions and yeshivos.

In his later years, Meir Klein often retold the story, adding at the end, "I remember thinking, Ribono Shel Olam, what do you want from me? I've been unemployed for six months, I'm penniless, and my children are on the verge of starvation...' Only in retrospect did I glean that Hashem had orchestrated these events to elevate me from the menial job of a janitor to become a foreman!

What I, in my limited view, saw as failure, as challenge and hardship, was really Hashem's wondrous ways of leading me to the pinnacle of success. Often what we view as the most gruelling challenges and obstacles along the way are really steps that enable us to climb to the summit. - And who merits to scale Har Hashem? One who understands that the challenges he views as impediments to his avodas Hashem are not impediments, but the large boulders he must climb to reach the top.

"G-d appears distant, but there is in fact no one closer than Him… The space between heaven and earth is vast, and He is high above His universe, but a person can enter the synagogue, stand near the pulpit, and pray in a whisper, and G-d hears his prayer, like a person whispering in his friend's ear… Could there be a G-d any closer than that?" ~ Rabbi Simlai, Talmud Yerushalmi (Berachos 9:1)

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

At the end of parshas **וישלח** the Torah describes at great length all the representatives of the household of Esav. **וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת אַלּוּפֵי עֵשָׂו**

There is a famous Rashi at the beginning of this week's sedra that describes the drasha of Chazal - **וישב יעקב, הִפְשִׁתָנִי הַזֶּה נִכְנְסוּ גְמַלָיו טְעוּנִים פִּשְׁתָן** – '*The camels of a flax dealer [once] entered [a town], laden with flax. The blacksmith wondered, "Where will all this flax go?" One clever fellow answered him, "One spark will come out of your bellows, which will burn it all." – You have nothing to fear.*'

Yaakov was worried about the power of Esav.

The question is, and many meforshim struggle to understand is how does this analogy fit?

There is an important *yesod* that we must understand. When we are first introduced to Esav in parshas Toldos the pasuk says: **וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הַלְעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדֹם הָאָדֹם הַזֶּה כִּי עָיֵף אָנֹכִי עַל־כֵּן קָרָא־שְׁמוֹ אֱדוֹם** '*And Esav said to Yaakov, "Pour into [me] some of this red, red [pottage], for I am faint"; he was therefore named Edom.*' (25:30)

He was thus called Edom for all generations and is the galus that we are struggling with today – Galus Edom.

This pasuk needs explaining; Just because Esav called the food red, he was defined and named red for all generations? It's strange! The whole power of Edom appears to be based on something so trivial.

I once heard that the pshat is like this: When a person sees food, he can relate to what it is - fish, meat, salad, its taste, flavour etc, but rarely does he relate to a food by its colour. It has no connection to what the food really is.

When Esav called it **אֱדוֹם**, he was showing that he was only connected to it by the appearance and glamour of what it looked like on the outside – superficially. He wasn't interested at all in internalising what lies therein.

Rabboisai, this כּוֹחַ of Edom is not to be underestimated. The whole essence of the Yetzer Horah is what something appears externally and superficially.

This message continues in parshas וישלח when Yaakov presented the gift of animals to Esav, he spread them out to appear a much larger gift - וְרֶוַח תָּשִׂימוּ בֵּין עֵדֶר וּבֵין עֵדֶר – *'Make a space between one herd and another herd.'* (32:17) Rashi explains: כְּדֵי לְהַשְׂבִּיעַ עֵינוֹ שֶׁל אוֹתוֹ רָשָׁע וּלְתַוְּהוּ עַל רִבּוּי הַדּוֹרוֹן - *'In order to satisfy the eye of the wicked man and bewilder him with the enormity of the gift.'*

The spaces are nothing – if you want to give a present, put it all together. – No, if you give Esav a present, he will also be impressed by the large expanse of emptiness! – Do you know why? Because Esav is only impressed superficially. It looks big from the outside.

Chazal tell us that Esav was an אִישׁ שָׂדֶה – 'a person on the outside'. A person who is only interested in the external. Whereas Yaakov was אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים – He was inside, interested in the '*penimi*'.

The bitterness of our galus, and strength of Esav is being attracted to superficial values in this world. We mustn't underestimate this, as this strength is particularly powerful. We might think that things will give us so much pleasure, but we must realize that this is the Yetzer Hara enticing us with external desires. – But when you look at it with true values, there is nothing to it. - To fight the Yetzer Hora, we must connect to the penimi, connect to Torah and kedusha, then the whole of Esav will disappear.

Says Rashi in this week's parsha – The פִּשְׁתָּנִי are compared to Esav as it looks big and impressive externally. But the chacham says, "You don't need to worry about them as one spark will destroy them all." – One spark of kedusha from the inside is all that it takes to take down Esav and the Yetzer Hora!



In this week's Parsha, through a fascinating series of events, Yosef Hatzadik is placed in prison together with the royal baker and the wine maker. Yosef asks the wine maker not to forget him when he goes to Pharaoh, and we find that Yosef was punished for this request. Rashi brings down at the end of the Parsha that Yosef had to spend an extra two years in prison and Rashi brings down the verse, "Lucky is the person who trusts in Hashem…"

The obvious difficulty with Rashi is that certainly a person is permitted to do a certain amount of natural Hishtadlus during the course of their normal lives! Why would Yosef be punished for simply asking the wine maker to remember him?

There are many possibilities to solve this difficulty. Some say that Yosef was indeed on the level where any Hishtadlus would be denying Hashem to a certain extent. Others claim that although Hishtadlus is permitted, Yosef did too much.

R' Chaim explains that there is a hint to the latter answer that we gave in the verse itself. The verse records that Yosef mentions to the wine maker, "Remember me and don't forget me (to mention me to Pharaoh)". This redundancy indicates Yosef's slightly excessive form of Histhtadlus which resulted in his punishment, for when a person does too much Hishtadlus he is demonstrating his lack of Bitachon.

Alternatively, the **Chazon Ish** suggest that it was inappropriate for Yosef to go to the wine maker, because the wine maker was a non-Jew who showed himself later as an adversary of Yosef (by the way he spoke about him to Pharaoh), and rely on such an unlikely person to help him. That is why he was punished, as attempting to do

Hishtadlus which is unlikely to succeed demonstrates a lack of Bitachon.

Many people imagine that trusting in Hashem and having Bitachon is reserved for the righteous people of the generation. However, we find in Chazal that this is not true. Each and every Jew has an obligation to trust in Hashem.

The Vilna Gaon says that if a person wishes to build their trust in Hashem, he must contemplate the kindness that Hashem has performed for him throughout the years and continues to perform for him daily and this will generate in him a strong bond of trust to Hashem.

The Ramban brings the passuk in **תהילים ל"ז** which says **בְּטַח בַּה' וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב** "We trust in Hashem and we do good". By placing the phrase "we trust in Hashem" preceding the phrase, "We do good", the Ramban claims that Dovid Hamelech is telling us that even before we have done any good deeds, we can rely on Hashem to help us merely based on our trust in Him.

May we all be Zoche to develop and perfect this crucial attribute of Bitachon!

This week's parsha begins with the infamous recounting of the story of Yosef and his brothers. We know from chazal that the brothers were all righteous, so obviously their initial decision to kill Yosef wasn't the disgusting act of brutality and barbarism which a simple understanding of the Chumash seems to imply.

Chazal tell us that the brothers had in fact reached a verdict, deciding that Yosef had the halachic status of a "*rodef*," and according to Torah law, he had to be killed. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* Himself, chazal tell us, even approved of their decision. However, just as the brothers prepared to put Yosef to death, Yehuda stepped forward and saved Yosef's life with the immortal words

מה בצע כי נהרוג את אחינו וכסינו את דמו? - What gain will we have if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?

According to chazal, what was Yehuda talking about? Why was Yehuda trying to dissuade his brothers, arguing that it wasn't a good idea? Yosef was a *rodef* according to Torah law! And Yehuda himself was part of the *beis din* that decided it!!! Law must be carried out!!!

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that Yehuda was arguing on the implementation of the *psak* itself. If we have to hide his death and do a cover-up on the execution, we're not taking full responsibility for our *psak*. And a *psak* for which we can't take full responsibility can't be carried out.

We see from here, concludes Rav Chaim, the incredible importance of taking responsibility for all of our actions. A person who doesn't know how to take responsibility is not a functional and participating member of society.

The **Tosefta** in the 4th chapter of Brachos asks, "Why was Yehuda fitting for royalty? Because he said, 'What gain will we have if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?'" That's the very same verse we cited above! It was Yehuda's responsibility that caused him to be fitting for greatness!

Yosef also merited being a ruler of Egypt due to this trait. When Potifar tried to entice Yosef to sin, he dismissed her by citing the responsibilities he had both to her husband and, of course, to G-d. The Gemara in Sota 36 adds that what helped Yosef to restrain himself from Potifar was that he saw his father's image. The responsibility of embodying his family's morals gave him the power to resist the greatest test that man may ever have.

So, how does such a thing work? How does responsibility give a person more strength, when it's something we're all afraid of? Won't it overburden us?

Rav Yechezkel Levenshtein, at the *hesped* of the Brisker Rav, revealed the reason that he believed the Brisker Rav became the great man he was. While the **Chazon Ish** was alive, everybody came to him with their questions and problems. **The Brisker Rav** himself would come often with his own questions to the Chazon Ish. When the Chazon Ish passed away, he left a great vacuum. Who would answer and help all the Jewish people?

The Brisker Rav realized that he had an obligation to do his best to take on the incredible burden of *Klall Yisrael*. Rav Yechezel believed that it was this decision that allowed the Brisker Rav to transcend and become as great as he was.

He added that we can learn from the Brisker Rav that all of us have great powers within us that aren't being utilized. So they remain dormant. But if we really decided to take on responsibility for people besides ourselves, we would be surprised to find how great we really could be.

We see from here that, in fact, taking on responsibility **makes** us into who we should be.

May we all merit taking on more responsibility and seeing how great we really can be!!!

Parshah Pearls *(Adapted from the Ba'al ha'Turim)*

A Fool

וְהוּא נַעַר אֶת־בְּנֵי בִלְהָה ***"And he was a boy [friendly] with the sons of Bilhah"*** (37:2).

The word **נַעַר** has the same numerical value as **שוטה** (a fool), comments the Ba'al ha'Turim, conforming with the Pasuk in Mishlei (10: 18) "And someone who speaks slander is a fool".



Surviving His Ordeal

וַיִּמְצָאֵהוּ אִישׁ, וְהִנֵּה תֹּעֶה בַּשָּׂדֶה; וַיִּשְׁאָלֵהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר, מַה-תְּבַקֵּשׁ Yaakov sent Yosef to check on the welfare of his brothers and the welfare of the flocks. The pasuk says: "And behold a man found him and he was lost in the field" [Bereishis 37:15].

This was in the days before GPS. There was no address to type in. It was a big country. He tried to find his brothers and got lost. "The man found him and asked 'What are you looking for?'". The Rabbis tell us that the 'Ish' [man] alluded to in the pasuk was actually the Angel Gavriel. Gavriel haMalach literally led Yosef by the hand and took him to his appointed place. But before he did this, the Malach asked Yosef "What are you looking for?" (Mah t'vakesh?)

There is a word in this pasuk that does not fit in — namely the word "leimor" which means literally "to say over to others". This word is not typically used in direct dialogue between two individuals. The pasuk should read "Vayishaleyhu haIsh, mah tivakesh?" (and the man asked him 'What are you looking for?'); not "Vayishaleyhu haIsh LEIMOR mah tivakesh?"

What does the word LEIMOR here mean?

The Kotzker Rebbe answers: Yosef is about to embark on an epic odyssey. In the next several parshiyos, Yosef experiences things that should not happen to any individual. He is going to be accused of murder by his brothers, he is going to be thrown in a pit to die, he is going to be 'rescued' and sold to a bunch of merchants, he is going to be transported against his will to Egypt, he will be purchased as a slave only to be accused of trying to seduce his master's wife,

and he will be thrown into jail for an extended period of time. Finally, Yosef will get out of jail and eventually become the viceroy of Egypt.

This is like a roller coaster, except that most of the roller coaster is down in the valley. How does a person not give up when must contend with all this trauma? How does such a person not throw up his hands in despair? How does he remain strong to his Yiddishkeit? How was Yosef able to stand up to the seduction of Potiphar's wife? What is the secret of his strength?

The Kotzker Rebbe explains that the Angel was telling him: "Yosef, I will give you the key. The secret is always to keep your mind on one thing: Mah Tevakesh? [What are you looking for?]". You should constantly keep asking yourself "What is my goal?"

When a person is focused on a goal, he can contend with the vagaries that life throws at him. He knows "I have a mission to accomplish and I will not let anything get in my way." When a person has a clear understanding of "Mah Tevakesh?" then he can be tried with all these tests, all these 'ups', but mostly 'downs' in life and can remain true to his principles because he knows what his goals are.

This is what LEIMOR means here. It does not mean to say it over to anyone else, it means keep saying it over to yourself! Say it over and over again. Every time you find yourself confronting a test, a challenge, ask "Mah Tevakesh?" [What is my goal?] This prevents you from giving up, it prevents you from being seduced, and it keeps you honest. - This is one factor which allowed Yosef to survive.

No Good Guys and Bad Guys Here

The Yeshiva in Volozhin was known as the "mother of all Lithuanian Yeshivas." There was a period in time when there was a question regarding who should head the yeshiva. The two candidates for the position were **Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin** (the Netzi"v) and **Rabbi Yosef Dov haLevi Soloveitchik** (the Bais HaLevi). This was

such a world class issue, that it was taken before a Beis Din of three distinguished Rabbanim.

One of the judges on the Rabbinical panel who were convened to hear the Din Torah was the Vilna Magid. The Vilna Magid commented to the other Judges that the Din Torah coincided with Parshas VaYeshev. The other Dayanim did not understand what the Vilna Magid meant because it was not Parshas VaYeshev, it was a totally different parsha that week!

The Vilna Magid explained: In the Book of Bereishis, up until Parshas VaYeshev, all disputes involved a "good guy" and a "bad guy". Bereishis, it is Adam against the Snake, in Noach, it is Noach against the Generation of the Flood, in Lech Lecha, it is Avraham against Lot. In Vayera, it is Yitzchak against Yishmael. In Chayei Sara, it is Avraham against Ephron. In Toldos, it is Yitzchak against Avimelech. In Vayeitzei, it is Yaakov against Lavan. Finally, in Vayishlach, it is Yaakov against Eisav. In each parsha, we have a hero and a villain, a good person and a bad person.

All of these were "no brainers" in terms of which side to pick in the argument. However, in Parshas VaYeshev – regarding the argument between Yosef and his brothers — we have great difficulty deciding who is right and who is wrong. Both sides were righteous individuals. Both sides had rationales for doing what they were doing. Therefore, it is not so easy to rule who is right and who is wrong. - This is exactly the same situation in the dispute here in Volozhin between the Netziv and Rav Chaim, he noted. This is not a question of a good person versus a bad person. They are all *Tzadikim* here. They are both qualified. They are both perfectly righteous. – This is like the story of Parshas Vayeshev.



Reb Elchanon Sees Blood Libels Foreshadowed In This Week's Parsha

One of the overriding themes of the book of Genesis is that the actions of the forefathers foreshadow events that will happen to their descendants (ma'aseh avos siman l'banim). The blueprint of Jewish history is contained in this first book of the Chumash. This week's parsha is no exception to that rule.

Last week's parsha (recounting Yaakov's meeting with Eisav) represented the paradigm of how Jews must deal with the non-Jewish world. This week's parsha foreshadows the ways Jews act among themselves.

Unfortunately, parshas Vayeshev has become the blueprint for intra-Jewish relations.

Unfortunately, the undeserved hatred, jealousy and divisiveness that existed between Yosef and his brothers set the tone for thousands of years of Jewish history. Of course, we need to preface our remarks with the disclaimer that when we speak about the actions of the patriarchs and the founders of the Tribes, we cannot superimpose our petty jealousies and sibling rivalries on these holy individuals. But nevertheless, if one wonders why the Jewish people have always been so argumentative, why the Second Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of undeserved hatred, one has to only look at this week's parsha to see from where the die was cast.

Rav Elchanon Wasserman (1875-1941) carried this idea one step further with the following very scary thought.

For thousands of years, Jews have always suffered from blood libels. Many thousands of Jewish lives have been lost because of

them. As recently as the 1930s there was also a blood libel in the state of New York.

A blood libel was the absolutely ludicrous charge that somehow or another the Jews needed the blood of Christian children as an ingredient in the baking of Matzah for Passover. Anyone who knows the slightest thing about Judaism knows that the Torah is replete with exhortations warning us against the consumption of blood. We must salt our meat to remove the blood. We must salt our chicken to remove the blood. We are not allowed to drink any kind of blood. It is absolutely incongruous that the Jews would have anything to do with blood, let alone human blood. So how and why did this falsehood get started?

Rav Elchanon says that the history of blood libels all started with the fact that Yosef's brothers slaughtered a goat, and dipped his coat in its blood — in order to deceive their father into thinking that a wild animal killed Yosef. This is the Ma'aseh Avos Siman L'Banim. The foreshadowing of patriarchal actions can work in a positive fashion, and it can also work in a negative fashion.

We are still suffering from the ramifications of the argument between Yosef and his brothers, up until this very day.



Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

"Most people who run away, are actually fleeing from themselves – leaving not even a shadow in their wake!" – Ostroh Chassidim.

Nice Guy's Finish Second — Second in Command to Pharoah! (Shemen HaTov by Rabbi Dov Weinberger.)

This week's parsha contains four words that changed the course of history. We all know the story of Yosef's arrest and imprisonment. Shortly afterwards, two members of Pharoah's Court were also thrown into jail.

We need to understand what it was like to be in jail with two officers of Pharoah's Court. To give an analogy, this would be like having a two-bit drug dealer in jail together with two members of the President's cabinet. We are dealing with 'Cabinet level' positions in the Egyptian government — the person who brought Pharoah his wine was a trusted individual. He was the wine taster, a person in whom the King had implicit trust. We are dealing here with people who could be compared to the Attorney General and the Secretary of State. They are sitting in jail with a Hebrew slave — the lowest rung of society, someone who is serving time for a petty crime. We can be sure that there was not a lot of camaraderie and social action between Yosef and Pharoah's officials.

They had their respective dreams, which upset them. Yosef saw that they were depressed and asked them "Why are you depressed?" The "drug dealer" (Yosef) comments to the "Secretary of State" (Wine Butler), "You don't look so good this morning!" Because of that remark, because of those four words, what happens?

The dreams are related to Yosef. Yosef interprets the dreams. The Butler sees that Yosef has special powers. The Butler is eventually released from jail and, in the time-honored tradition, gets put back on the 'Cabinet'. Years later, he remembers Yosef. Yosef is brought out of jail. He interprets the dreams of Pharoah correctly. He becomes the second in command. He feeds the entire world including his own brothers and father. And the rest — as they say — is history!

Why? Because of four words: "מַדּוּעַ פְּנֵיכֶם רָעִים, הַיּוֹם?" (Why are your faces troubled today? 40:7)

What is the ethical lesson to be learned here? The lesson is that it is incumbent to be a "nice guy". Yosef was concerned about how they looked and how they felt, even though we have to assume that these were people who did not give Yosef a second look. Merely saying a nice, kind word makes such a difference!

Four words changed history. Two words can change history — "Good Morning" "How are you?" "How are you doing?" "How was your holiday?" "How is your wife?" "How are your kids?" These are the types of words that can make a difference. They made a vast difference in Yosef's life and for Klal Yisrael's.

One Can Rely On The Gerer Rebbe

Rav Yehudah Leib Zirelson was the Rav of Kishinev (Moldova). He was a great individual, but Kishinev was "off the beaten path" in terms of what was going on in the Torah world of his time. In other words, it was far removed from Central Europe and the major Torah communities of the day - Poland, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, etc. Rav Zirelson used to correspond with a Polish Rav named Rav Moshe Nachum Yerushalmski.

One day, Rav Moshe Nachum received a letter from Rav Yehudah Leib of Kishinev in which he wrote the following: "I recently received a letter that a group of Rabbis intend to start a new organization called 'Agudas Yisrael' and they want to place at the head of this organization someone known as the 'Admor of Gur' (the Gerer Rebbe). They are asking me to go along with their decision. Please tell me, who, is this fellow known as the 'Admor of Gur' and should I acquiesce to his being given this leadership position in the proposed new organization?"

This is what is called "being out of it". However, he simply did not know any better. He was stuck in Kishinev in Moldova and he simply

did not have his finger on the pulse of what was going on in the wider Jewish community.

The Polish Rabbi wrote back to his colleague in Kishinev as follows: "Yes the Admor of Gur is someone who can be relied upon. He is in fact a great Tzaddik and indeed has thousands of Chassidic followers. Furthermore, I know that he is a person who has "Siyata d'Shmaya" [Divine Assistance]. He is certainly worthy of the position."

Rav Yerushalmski proceeded to relate the basis of his first-hand knowledge that the Gerer Rebbe possessed "Siyata d'Shmaya": In my little village there is a Jew named Rav Sheinfeld, who happens to be the uncle of the Gerer Rebbe. Every so often, the Gerer Rebbe comes to visit this uncle and — as was the custom in Europe – whenever a visiting Rabbi visits another town, he pays a courtesy visit to the town's official Rabbi (Moreh d'Asra). Therefore, I had yearly visits from the Gerer Rebbe. During one visit, I was discussing with him the weekly parsha and I told him that I had a question on Parshas Vayeshev.

The pasuk states that "Yosef was a 'na-ar' [youth or lad] with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah" [Bereishis 37:2]. The Medrash questions the use of the term 'naar' here, which connotes a young immature child, as at this time Yosef was already 17 years old. The Medrash infers from this description that Yosef did childish things. Rashi explains that Yosef used to fix his hair and groom his eyes so that he should look attractive.

Rav Yerushalmski asked the Gerer Rebbe, that by Akeidas Yitzchak, the pasuk says, "I and the 'na-ar' will go up to here" [Bereishis 22:5] where the word 'na-ar' refers to Yitzchak, even though he was 37 years old at the time! Why does the Medrash not question the use of the term na-ar for Yitzchak, who was more than twice as old as Yosef when he was described as a na-ar?

The Gerer Rebbe dismissed the question. He explained that in the story of the Akeidah, Avraham Avinu called Yitzchak a na-ar. To a father, a child is always a child! It is not at all noteworthy to hear a father refer to his son, regardless of his age, as a young child. However, in Parshas Vayeshev, the Torah calls Yosef a na-ar, not his father. Therefore, this usage can be used for Medrashic exposition!

Rav Yerushalmski, who lived on the second floor of his building, went to accompany the Gerer Rebbe out of his apartment when the visit was over. A 100-year-old widow lived on the first floor of the building. She came out of her house and upon seeing the Rebbe she asked him for a Bracha. The Rebbe gave her a bracha. This woman had a son who was 80 years old. She then requested of the Rebbe "Give my little one a blessing as well." Here then was an 80 year old man who was referred to as "my little one" by his mother.

Literally within moments of the Gerer Rebbe giving an answer to the question, his insight was validated with a real life story, proving from Heaven as it were, that the 'vort' was true!

The current Tolner Rebbe asks on this answer of the Gerer Rebbe one basic question: In the Akeida we find a later pasuk in which the Angel from Heaven calls out to Avraham and also uses the term 'na-ar': "Do not send forth your hand to the 'na-ar'" [22:12]. This was not a parent speaking. Why then does the Medrash ignore the Torah's use the term na-ar by Akeidas Yitzchak?

The Tolner Rebbe answers that the Angel speaks in the Name of Hashem and to the Almighty, every Jew is like a child! "For Israel was a na-ar and I loved him…" [Hoshea 11:1]; "Children are you to the L-rd your G-d" [Devorim 14:1]. Once we are like the sons of G-d, it is understandable why we should always be thought of as a young lad.

"To know that a thing is bad is half way to repentance." -Meiri

The Father Who Weeps Unceasingly for His Lost Son

The brothers threw Yosef into a pit on Reuvain's advice (rather than kill him outright). Reuvain intended to come back to the pit and rescue Yosef. However, in Reuvain's absence, the brothers decided to sell Yosef to traveling merchants. They first stripped him of the special robe his father had made for him and dipped it into the blood of a goat they slaughtered to make it look like Yosef was killed by a wild animal.

They sent the bloodied garment to their father and asked him to identify it. He recognized the garment and, as the brothers anticipated, concluded that his beloved son was torn up by a wild animal. The *pasuk* states that Yaakov ripped his garments, put on sackcloth and went into an extended period of inconsolable mourning for Yosef.

The *pasuk* further relates: "All of his sons and daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be consoled. He said, 'I will descend to the grave mourning my son'. And his father mourned for him." [Bereshis 37:35]

At a recent Agudah Convention, Rabbi Noach Isaac Oelbaum from Queens told a story about a Rav from *Eretz Yisrael.* The story is related to this *pasuk,* and the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim haKadosh thereon.

The Ohr HaChaim haKadosh asks a question: When Yaakov's children saw that Yaakov refused to stop mourning for Yosef, they were perplexed. They commented to themselves: Such behavior may be appropriate for a person who has just one son and that son dies, or perhaps even someone who just has a few children – then perhaps a father might go into a deep and inconsolable mourning after witnessing the (almost) total devastation of his family.

The Ohr HaChaim wonders what it was that Yaakov's children said to him to try to comfort him and concludes that they did not say

anything. Rather, they did something which they thought should provide a source of comfort to Yaakov by itself: "All of his sons and daughters arose to comfort him…" They assumed that the very gathering together of the large family including the many surviving children and grandchildren who were still part of Yaakov's legacy would itself bring their father a source of consolation and comfort. They came as eleven remaining sons, and an equal number of daughters (for with each Tribe, according to the Medrash, a twin daughter was born). Imagine the scene. Yaakov is there, inconsolable. He can't find *nechama*.

The family suggest to one another: Do you know what we will do? We will gather everyone together. All the sons, all the daughters, all the grandchildren. Yaakov will look up at this throng of people, and that will be his *nechama*. A person with such a large family should not be so distressed over the disappearance of just one of his sons.

The plan did not work. Yaakov refused to be comforted even by this scene. Yosef was clearly Yaakov's favorite son. Yaakov saw in him something that he did not see in any of the other children, and even the large remaining family could not compensate for the loss of the irreplaceable eldest son of his beloved wife Rochel.

This was part of a story told by Rabbi Oelbaum at an Agudah Convention: There was a Rav in Eretz Yisrael who spoke between Mincha and Ma'ariv during the week of Parshas VaYeshev. The Rav repeated this interpretation of the Ohr HaChaim haKadosh, and then he concluded: "And this is the way the *Ribono shel Olam* feels. There are thousands and thousands of people who are religiously observant Jews, and who are learning Torah. Especially in*Eretz Yisrael*, there are large and growing communities full of *Shomrei Torah* and *Lomdei Torah* – tens of thousands of people! But the *Ribono shel Olam* looks and sees how many sons are lost and how many daughters are lost. Therefore, the fact that there are tens of thousands of people learning and being *Shomrei Torah*

u'Mitzvos does not console Him. The *Ribono shel Olam* weeps for every Jew that is not *Shomer Torah u'Mitzvos*.

That was the Rav's drasha in *Eretz Yisrael* for Parshas VaYeshev. Just like Yaakov wept and kept on weeping for his son Yosef because he was lost, so too the Almighty weeps for every Jew who is lost.

There was a Jew in shul that evening, apparently a neighbor of the Rav, who was not a *Shomer Mitzvos*. Despite the Rav's many attempts to be *mekarev* this person and to have influence on him, nothing helped. That night, this Jew came to shul because he had *Yahrtzeit,* and he heard the Rav's drasha that the *Ribono shel Olam* weeps over every Jew that is "lost" like Yaakov wept over Yosef. He came over to the Rav after Ma'ariv and asked "Do you mean that the *Ribono shel Olam* cries for me, that he weeps over me because I am not a *Shomer Mitzvah*?"

The Rav said, "Yes, precisely. The *Ribono shel Olam* cries profusely over every lost Jew, and you are such a lost Jew. *Hashem* considers every Jew to be one of his children, and just like Yaakov would not be consoled over one of his children who was lost, that is the way it is with *Hashem's* mourning over his lost children. He keeps on weeping."

That apparently touched this *Yahrtzeit* observer in the right place, and he became a *Chozer B'Teshuva*. Little by little, he found the way back home. He started becoming a *Shomer Shabbos,* and today he is already a full *Shomer Torah U'MItzvos*.

"Take pride in the fact that you were handpicked by the Creator of the world to accomplish a mission that can be fulfilled by no one else but you - with all your uniqueness." ~ Based on the teachings of Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe (1914-2005)

Sometimes It Is Better Not To Say "Please"

At the end of the parsha, Yosef is in prison. He interprets the dream of one of Pharaoh's advisers. He asks this advisor for a favor: (V'asisa nah imadi chessed) "When you will be released from prison, please intercede with Pharaoh to have me released as well." Rashi says regarding the words "V'Asisa nah…." that the word "nah" indicates a request (please).

This seems strange. Someone who is already up to Parshas VaYeshev should already know that the meaning of the word "Nah" is "please." Why is Rashi telling us this again? Rashi already mentioned it in connection with "Kach nah es bincha" (Please take your son) [Bereishis 22:2]. And Rashi says it earlier in this parsha in connection with Tamar "Haker nah" (Please recognize…) [Bereishis 38:25]

The Shemen haTov answers, based on Chazal's criticism of Yosef for — based on his spiritual level — putting too much faith in the Wine Butler (Sar haMashkim): by mentioning twice the expression "remember me (to Pharaoh)" Yosef had to spend two more years in prison.

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik once met Rav Shimon Shkop and asked, "If Yosef would have only mentioned 'remember me' once to the Sar HaMashkim, how many additional years would he have had to spend in prison?" Rav Shimon responded that since Chazal say that he had to spend two years in prison for mentioning it twice, most likely he would have had to spend one year if he had mentioned it once. Rav Chaim said "No. For mentioning it once, there would have been no punishment at all." Mentioning it once would have been legitimate "hishtadlus" [making appropriate effort to take care of oneself]. Saying it twice shows a lack of faith in G-d by overdoing the hishtadlus. That lack of faith encompasses both of Yosef's requests and such both are deserving of punishment.

Similarly, the Shemen haTov says that the addition of the word "nah" (please) indicates that Yosef was becoming too reliant on the Sar HaMashkim and having too much faith in the Sar HaMashkim's ability to save him and not having enough faith in the Almighty's ability to save him. This is why Rashi once again emphasizes the meaning of the word Nah in this pasuk. It was an unnecessary request.

Lesson of כִּי אִם-זְכַרְתַּנִי – So That You Will Remember Me

Rav Akiva Eiger asks two questions on this week's parsha.

Yosef is languishing away in prison. The *sar haofim* (baker) and the *sar hamashkim* (wine butler) each have dreams. They tell their dreams to Yosef, who provides them with the correct interpretations. The reason the *sar hamashkim* was thrown into prison was that he had unwittingly served Pharaoh a cup of wine into which a fly had fallen. Yosef interpreted his dream, saying "…In another three days, Pharaoh will count you and will restore you to your post and you will place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as was the former practice when you were his cupbearer (**כַּמִּשְׁפָּט הָרִאשׁוֹן, אֲשֶׁר הָיִיתָ מַשְׁקֵהוּ**)." (Bereshis 40:13).

Rav Akiva Eiger asks why Yosef needs to emphasize "as was the former practice when you were his cupbearer?"

In other words, imagine if the Secretary of the Treasury is fired. One night he has a dream. A dream interpreter says, "Guess what? You are going to be the Secretary of the Treasury again." Does the dream interpreter need to state the job description of the Secretary of Treasury? There is no need to describe the role of Secretary of the Treasury!

Why would it not have been sufficient for Yosef to just tell the *sar hamashkim* that Pharaoh will give him back his job? Period. Why does

Yosef need to go on to say "And you will place Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just like you did originally?"

Rav Akiva Eiger asks a second question about the words "**כִּי אִם-זְכַרְתַּנִי**" (at which time, if you would think of me…) Yosef's intention is surely to say "And by the way, remember me." How should that be expressed? Yosef should have just said "*u'zechartani*" (and remember me). The expression "***ki im zechartani***" is peculiar. It almost seems to say "**SO THAT** you can remember me."

Rav Akiva Eiger answers: If Yosef would have just told the *sar hamashkim* that he will get his job back, the *sar hamashkim* would have been a nervous wreck. He would be petrified that the same thing might happen again. If it happened to him once that a fly fell into the wine, what is to prevent that from happening again? He would be thinking to himself, "The next time if there is a fly in the wine, I will not be merely given a jail sentence. I will lose my head!"

The *sar hamashkim* would be so jittery about carrying out his duties that the wine would be spilled all over Pharaoh's lap! He would be a nervous wreck! So, Yosef told him that he does not need to worry at all. I want to tell you that you did nothing wrong. It was not your fault. Every time you served Pharaoh a goblet, you checked to make sure there was not a fly in there. Do you know why this happened? It happened because it was the hand of G-d. It happened because the *Ribono shel Olam* wants you to remember me – "**כִּי אִם-זְכַרְתַּנִי**."

Therefore, not only are you going to get your job back, but "you will place Pharaoh's cup into his hand" – *ka'mishpat harishon* – JUST LIKE YOU USED TO. You used to be calm, cool, and collected when you served Pharaoh his wine, and that is how you will be once again. You will go back to your *sar hamashkim* role and perform it well because the only reason *Hashem* made the fly go into Pharaoh's cup is so that you will be able to remember me and get me out of here.

A Lesson From the Story of Yosef and Potiphar's Wife

Yosef was serving in the house of Potiphar. Potiphar's wife had her eyes on Yosef. She tried to lead him astray on a daily basis, but Yosef refused. "And it was on that day that he entered the house to do his work – and not one of the men of the household was there in the house…" (Bereshis 39:11).

Rashi quotes a Gemara (Sotah 36b) that the image of Yosef's father Yaakov appeared to him in the window and told him, "If you do this, you will forever be cut off from me and my entire family." That stopped Yosef.

The Chasam Sofer asks a question in Parshas Vayechi that I had never previously seen. Yosef calms his brothers (after Yaakov's death), by telling them that he is not angry at them. They planned evil against him, but Hashem worked it out for good. This was all part of the Divine plan that Yosef should save the world from famine.

The Chasam Sofer asks: We know that Yosef was saved from the wiles of Potiphar's wife by his father's image appearing to him from the window. However, when the ten brothers wanted to sell Yosef, why didn't *they* see the image of their father in the window?

Yosef was one son who was about to do something wrong. Hashem miraculously helped him resist doing so, by showing him the image of his father in the window. Why didn't *Hashem* do the same for the ten brothers, as they were about to sell Yosef?

The Chasam Sofer answers: Yosef himself had this very question. He asked himself, why me? Why didn't *Hashem* do this for my brothers as well, and save them from the grievous *aveira* of selling their brother into slavery?

Yosef's conclusion was that *Hashem* wanted them to send him to Mitzrayim. This was all part of a Divine Plan. Clearly, *Hashem* did not want to intervene and save Yosef from going down to Mitzrayim. The Grand Plan was that Yosef should be brought down to Mitzrayim and

eventually be able to sustain not only his family but the entire world as well.

Therefore, when the brothers came to Yosef after Yaakov's death and were afraid that Yosef would take revenge on them, he told them not to worry. "I know this was not your fault. Maybe you should not have done it, but it was all part of the Ribono shel Olam's calculations."

The Ramban writes in this week's parsha *HaGezeira Emes v'ha'Charitzus Sheker* (loosely translated, what G-d wants to happen is going to happen and all the machinations of human beings is not going to matter a whit). We don't know or understand why *Hashem* wants certain things to happen. In the case of Yosef's sale to Mitzrayim, in hindsight, Yosef felt he knew why it happened.

That is why Yosef could deal generously with his brothers. He had this question about the miraculous appearance of his father in the window, which stopped him from committing the *aveira*. That did not happen to stop his brothers from committing their *aveira*. This was the proof to him that his sale into slavery was ultimately the Will of G-d.



רחל מיתה

Yosef had a second dream – '*I dreamed another dream, and behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were prostrating themselves to me.*' (37:9)

וַיְסַפֵּר אֶל־אָבִיו וְאֶל־אֶחָיו וַיִּגְעַר־בּוֹ אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חָלָמְתָּ הֲבוֹא נָבוֹא אֲנִי וְאִמְּךָ וְאַחֶיךָ לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְךָ אָרְצָה – '*And he told [it] to his father and to his brothers, and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Will we come I, **your mother**, and your brothers to prostrate ourselves to you to the ground?*" (37:10)

Yaakov rebuked Yosef as it was blatantly not true as Rochel had already died! – See Rashi - **וַהֲלֹא אִמְּךָ כְּבָר מֵתָה** - *'Isn't your mother (Rachel) already dead?'*

This is hinted to in the words of the pasuk themselves…. **וַיְסַפֵּר אֶל־אָבִיו וְאֶל־אֶחָיו וַיִּגְעַר־בּוֹ אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חָלָמְתָּ הֲבוֹא נָבוֹא אֲנִי וְאִמְּךָ וַאֲחֶיךָ לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְךָ אָרְצָה** - **רחל מיתה**

Conserving Energy

Someone came to the **Chazon Ish** seeking advice. He inquired what he should do "if such and such a thing will happen." The Chazon Ish advised that the question was currently not relevant so there was no need to respond at present. "If such a situation will arise, come back and I will advise you what to do at that time."

The person persisted, "But theoretically speaking, what should I do under such and such circumstances?"

The Chazon Ish responded, "Do you think that when I give advice to people, it just rolls off the tip of my tongue? When I give advice, I think about it, I carefully analyze the situation, I invest my time and energy in the problem, I use my intelligence and common sense to come up with appropriate advice. If I do not need to make the withdrawal of energies and talents from my limited warehouse of such resources, I do not want to.

Working for the Tzibur [community] is a noble thing, but it takes a toll. If those strengths are needed, I am happy to make that effort. If they are not really needed, I must conserve my strength."

"When a person praises Hashem, Hashem praises the person." ~ Reb Noson of Nemirov (1780-1844)



The parsha is the beginning of Klal Yisrael's descent into Mitzrayim, which is followed by years of slavery.



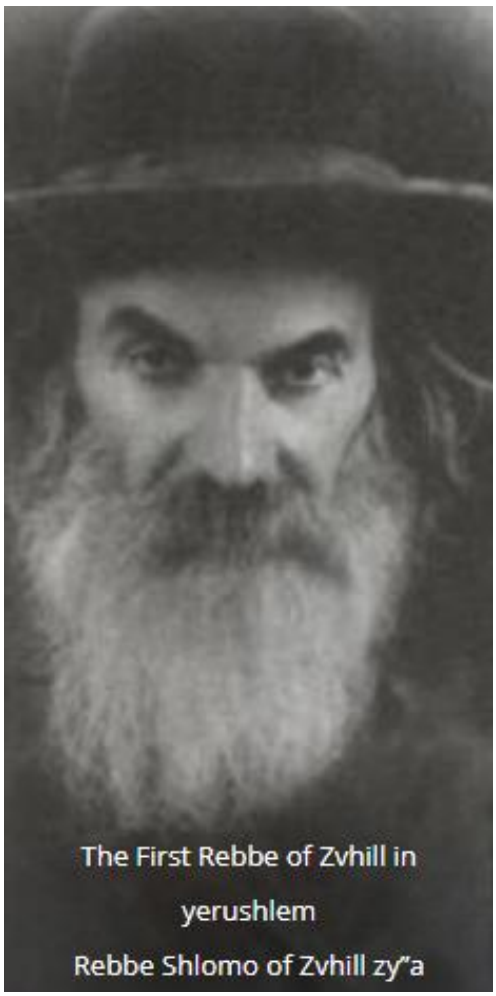
The brothers decide to kill Yoseph Haztadik. They are persuaded by Reuven not to do so but rather throw him into a pit. Reuven leaves for a few minutes, but when he returns to the pit, it is empty! – What happened?

Yosef was sold to some merchants who went down to Mitzrayim – And that's the beginning of Klal Yisrael's exile in Egypt. And the rest as they say 'is history'.

Where did Reuven go? What happened? Why didn't he guard the pit? He could have avoided all of this.

Rashi tells us where Reuven went. **עָסוּק הָיָה בְּשַׂקּוֹ וּבְתַעֲנִיתוֹ עַל שֶׁבִּלְבֵּל יְצוּעֵי אָבִיו** – *'He was busy with his sackcloth and his fasting for disarranging his father's bed.'* 37:29. He was busy fasting and doing teshuvah for many of his previous aveiros.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe says in his Lekutei Sichos something absolutely phenomenal: He says that Yosef hatzadik was not sold to go down to Mitzrayim by bad people, but rather because of his brother who was working on his own Yiddishkeit. The beginning of the exile was caused by holy people, who were busy with their own ruchnius. [They should have been there for their brother!]


The First Rebbe of Zvhill in yerushlem
Rebbe Shlomo of Zvhill zy"a

Rebbe Shlomo "Shlomke" of Zvhill, was walking to shul on erev Yom Kippur with his kittle on. He noticed that the sewage pipe in the street had burst. He rolled up his sleeves and got to work in fixing it and clearing up the mess. One of his chassidim walked past and noticed the rebbe holding a sewage pipe! – He's all went and dirty!

"Rebbe, how can you do this? It's right before Kol Nidrei. It's right before Yom Kippur? – Is this really appropriate?"

The Rebbe calmly responded, "I'm doing just as the Kohen Gadol did in the Kodesh Hakedoshim."

The chassid understood the message. The Kohen Gadol wasn't just busy with his own avodah but rather got his own hands dirty with the blood of the korbonos for the sake of Klal Yisrael.

The greatest chessed is not necessarily advancing your own Yiddishkeit but rather helping others with theirs.

Rabboisai, there are many Yiddishe children around the world who are in a pit. Yes, it's great to be busy with our own lives and our own Avodas Hashem, but stop for a moment and think – "What can we do for those that need us?"

Have an amazing Shabbos.

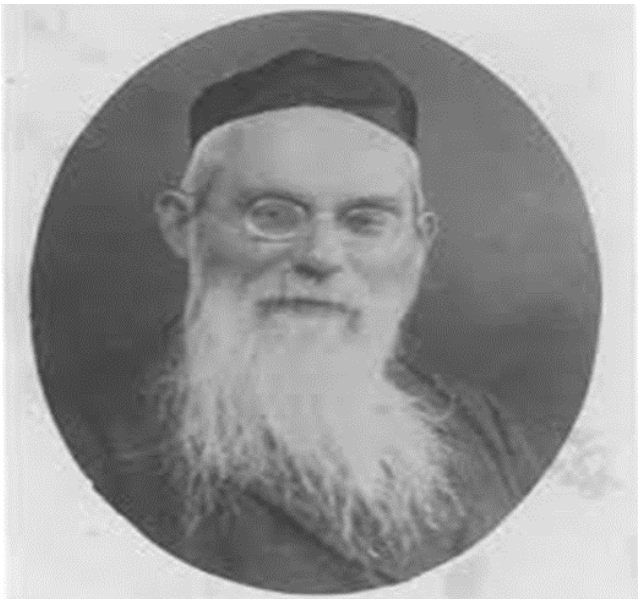
Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport - Whiter Than Milk



Rabbi Shalom Schwadron points out that the entire miraculous unfolding of events in the upcoming Torah portions is entirely predicated on one chance encounter. The accurate interpretation by Yosef of the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker in prison set in motion a chain of events which altered the course of Jewish history. It led to Yosef's release from jail, his appointment as second-in-command in Egypt, the fulfilment of his dreams about his family bowing down to him, his emotional reunion with his brothers and eventually his father, and the descent of the Jewish people to Egypt where they were ultimately enslaved by Pharaoh and redeemed by Moshe.

However, the pivotal episode of Yosef interpreting their dreams wouldn't have even occurred were it not for one seemingly trivial exchange. Yosef woke up one morning and noticed that his fellow prisoners appeared aggrieved and upset. He chose to initiate a conversation which would literally change the future of all mankind, asking them quite simply, "What's wrong?" (Gen. 40:6-7)

וַיָּבֹא אֲלֵיהֶם יוֹסֵף בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּרְא אֹתָם וְהִנָּם זֹעֲפִים... וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־סְרִיסֵי פַרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בְּמִשְׁמַר בֵּית אֲדֹנָיו לֵאמֹר מַדּוּעַ פְּנֵיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוֹם *And Joseph came to them in the morning, and he saw them and behold, they were troubled. And he asked Pharaoh's chamberlains who were with him in the prison of his master's house, saying, "Why are your faces sad today?"*



The Alter of Slabodka once gave a discourse on the topic of greeting others kindly and showing an interest in their welfare. He noted that if a person stood next to the synagogue door and poured a glass of milk for each person who passed by everybody would rightfully declare him to be a person who does great acts of kindness.



However, the Talmud (Ketubot 111b) derives from Genesis 49:12 that showing another person the white of one's teeth with a warm smile is an even greater act of kindness than giving him milk.

So often, we pass somebody who looks like he could use a kind word, a warm smile, and a little extra attention, yet the evil inclination discourages us from stopping to waste our valuable time on such inconsequential matters. The next time this happens, which will likely be tomorrow, we should remember the lesson of Yosef that nothing that a person does is ever minor, and one has no idea what cosmic chain of events he could set in motion with just a few "trivial" words.

Saved by the Tzitzis



The Noam Megadim (1740-1809) asks on **וינס ויצא החוצה** ; he fled and went outside, that **ויצא** is extra as it suffices to say **וינס החוצה** ; he fled outside?

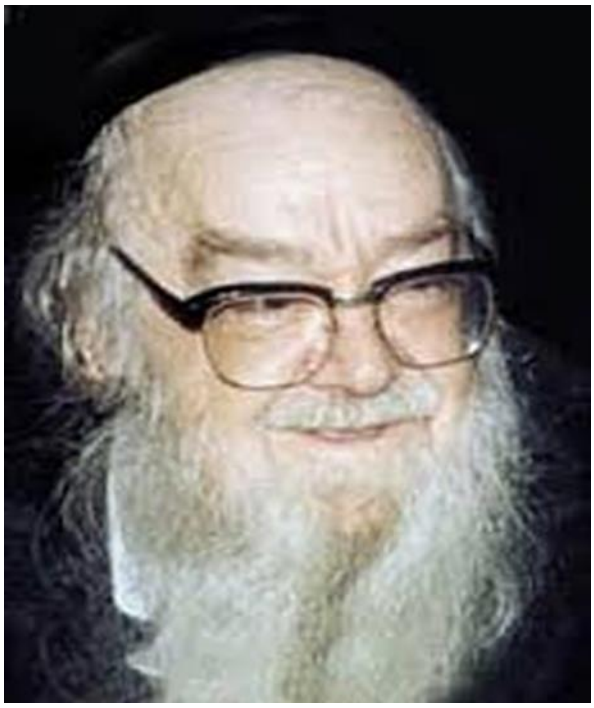
In explaining the custom that a Kalla sends a Tallis with 32 strings to the Chosson on the day of the wedding, the **Ohr Hameir** says it is based on the **Arizal** that that this Mitzva is a Segula to save one from promiscuity. A hint to this is found in **נאף אשה חסר לב**; one who is promiscuous lacks understanding, as he is **חסר לב** - lacking the 32 strings of Tzitzis since **לב** has a Gematria of 32.

From the word **ויצא**, we see that Yosef was saved because of the Mitzva of Tzitzis as is depicted in the following: **וינס** - Yosef fled from the sin through **ויצא החוצה** - the Tzitzis that one wears outside his garment as the Halacha is that one should wear his Tzitzis outward.

It comes as no surprise that **יוסף** has a Gematria of 156. This is the number we get with Tzitzis when we add up the winds of the strings on the four corners. Each corner of the Tzitzis has 39 winds- 7,8,11 and 13. Multiplying 39 (winds) by 4 (corners) we come to a total of 156!

"Don't be quick to judge others. We are all broken in different ways; and compassion is the glue that can put us back together." ~ Based on the teachings of the Bnei Yissaschar, Reb Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov (1783-1841).

The remarkable story of Yosef being sold into slavery is replete with many nuances and distinctions that require a great deal of studying and comprehension. On a basic level, when the brothers saw Yosef coming to them near Shechem, they convened a Beis Din and judged him on the spot. They decided to kill him as a "Rodef." However, Reuven, the oldest brother stepped in and rescued him. He literally gave Yosef back his life, by suggesting that they sell him instead of kill him.



R' Sholom Schwadron zt"l, the renowned Maggid of Jerusalem, was once asked a question: When a person kills another human being ר"ל, he removes his soul from his body. Is there any way for a person to inject a soul into another human being? R' Sholom smiled at the question and replied, "Of course there is. In fact, I once did it myself!" The questioner looked stunned and R' Sholom explained. "I was once spending a beautiful and peaceful Shabbos at my daughter's home in Kiryat Gat. Suddenly, in the middle of the Friday night seudah, we heard a knock on the door and the Gabbai from the local shul was standing there. He walked in and said, 'Rebbi, we just heard that the Maggid is in town and it would be our honor if he could come and deliver a derasha in shul tonight after the seudah?'" R' Sholom said, "Well, he was quite insistent, and I couldn't say no, so I agreed to come after the meal. I hadn't prepared anything specific to speak about, but I realized the moment I came into the shul that this 'Derasha' did not require pilpul or lomdus. Maybe a cute vort, a story, a mashal, and the people would appreciate it very much. So that is what I did!"

The shul was packed when R' Sholom arrived as everyone wanted to hear a good vort. He said over something nice on the parsha and then,

he turned to someone sitting next to him and asked a question. "Why is it that lately it has become popular to make a big lavish Bat Mitzvah party? Throughout the years, it was the custom to make a festive seudah for a Bar Mitzvah, when a boy turned thirteen years old. But when did this start that people go out and make huge Bat Mitzvah parties too?" He looked around in his well-known style and said, "I will tell you. You see, for all the years, a Bar Mitzvah boy was celebrated since he was now entering a stage of life where he was commanded to perform special mitzvos. He now puts on Tefillin, learns Torah, etc. A girl, however, is not commanded to do these mitzvos, so people would make a boy a party but not a girl.



Unfortunately, today, even the boys are not fulfilling mitzvos. Nebech, so many young boys do not follow in the ways of our forefathers and do not keep the mitzvos the way they should. When the girls saw that the boys are not doing mitzvos, they figured, 'Well, they are no different than us. So why should they get a big fancy Bar Mitzvah party when they don't do mitzvos - we should also get a big fancy Bat Mitzvah party! Why should we be any different than them!'" The Maggid paused as he retold the story. Then he continued. "A number of years later, I was once again in Kiryat Gat and a man came over to me. 'You don't know me,' he said, 'but I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. You see, I was there on that Friday night when the Maggid spoke in shul. My family and I were not religious at the time. But when I heard you say that girls are demanding a Bat Mitzvah party just like boys, since they feel that just as the boys don't do mitzvos and get a party, they should too, it struck a chord within me.

My son had recently turned thirteen and we did indeed make him a grand Bar Mitzvah party. But for what? Did he do anything to be celebrated? Does he keep any mitzvos, does he put on Tefillin, does he learn Torah, to make him deserving of being called a 'Bar Mitzvah'?

I had never thought of it that way before and I decided that my son should start wearing Tefillin. I bought him a pair of Tefillin and I insisted that he put them on every day. My son complied, and after a while, he began doing more and more mitzvos. Soon, he wanted to switch to the religious school. He eventually became fully observant, and he 'shlepped' us all along with him. Today, I am happy to say that my entire family is scrupulously religious and we fulfil all the mitzvos!'"

R' Sholom now turned to the original questioner and said, "You know how one can take another person's soul and remove it from his body. But now you know how you can take a 'soulless' person and inject him with true, pure Ruchniyos!"

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt- The cause

At times, people may be the cause of what happens to them. For example, if one asks another to watch a video with him, it may be because he felt he is the right address for that. Another example is with time- the more you value it, the more others value your time.

The clothing we wear affects us. When a soldier puts on his uniform even when he is off duty, he still feels a sense of empowerment. Another example is- those who may wear certain clothes- for example a hat and jacket in the street- as a protection from looking at the improper. **ר' יוחנן** would call his clothing that which honour him- **מכבדותי מאניה**

Our clothes also impact the way others view us. People view those who wear black and white in a certain light and expect certain

behaviour from them. On the other hand, those who dress as a punk, others may cross the street when approaching them.

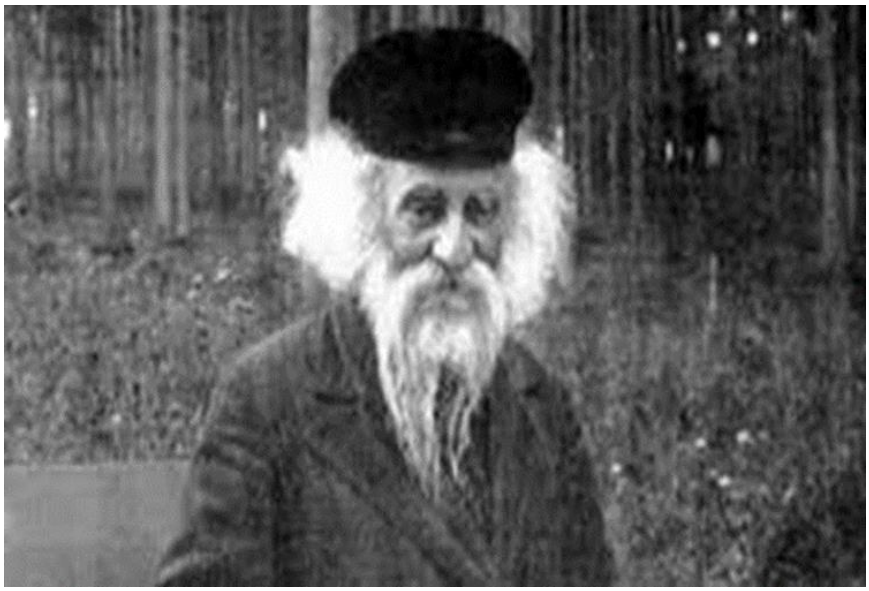


R' Meir of Premishlan explains the way of Yaakov was not to change at all in the clothing of a traditional Jew- not to fashion himself according to the time. This was in contrast to Yosef who would hide internal righteousness with external beauty as he would fix his hair and groom his eyes for beauty. Thus, **אשת פוטיפר** ; the wife of Potifar approached him since she thought through his external conduct he wouldn't refuse her. This is the meaning in **ותתפשהו בבגדו** ; the wife of **פוטיפר** grabbed the garment of Yosef as the clothing he wore caused this incident.

Once Yosef saw how far this could go, he came to the recognition that his father's way is better as it wouldn't bring to such a test. **נראית לו דמות דיוקנו של אביו** ; the image of his father appeared to him, means the way of the traditional Jew- in clothing and conduct. **נראית** means, now he found favour in that type of dress as in **אני את רואה דברי אדמון**

I see the words of Admon being correct. Now we can comprehend **ויעזב בגדו**- he left that type of dress behind. This also explains the continuation of the Pasuk **וינס ויצא החוצה** as **ויצא** is an acronym of **וירא יוסף צורת אביו** ; *Yosef saw the form of his father, as this is why he fled outside.* In this light the **Yalkut Reuvani** explains **ויהי יוסף בן- ה- ו- ה, 26** and **יוסף- את ה'** – that is, combining the Gematria of **156** we come to a total of 182- that of **יעקב**. Yosef overcame his

Yetzer Hara, thanks to the י- ה- ו- ה as in **שויתי ה׳ לנגדי תמיד** ; *I have set Hashem before me always*- through the image of his father.



The story is told of the **Rugatchover Gaon** (late 1800's) who didn't allow pictures to be taken of him. They once asked permission to take a picture of him since in the future, there may be Jews who wouldn't know how a Jew should look. Permission was granted and this is one of the rare pictures we have of the Rugatchover.

Peninim on the Torah – פנינים על התורה

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם ***But Reuben heard, and he saved him from their hand[s]*** *37:21*



Two of Yosef's brothers attempted to save him from fate: Reuven and Yehudah. Yet, it is only Reuven who has been recognised as the one who made the attempt, and it is he alone who has received credit for his effort. Why? Chazal (Makkos 10a) explain; he was the first to initiate the rescue of Yosef. Yehudah made the attempt by convincing them to sell Yosef. Should he not also have received credit for his good intentions?

The Ponevezher Rav, Horav Yosef Kahaneman, ZT"L, teaches us a profound lesson concerning the true meaning of "saving a Jew." Regarding Reuven, the Torah writes that his goal was to save Yosef from the hands of his brothers, "in order to return him to his father." Reuven's goal was not simply saving a life; it was to return Yosef to his idyllic state of ruchniyos – spirituality before the kidnapping. Yosef had been ensconced in Yaakov's bais hamedrash, studying Torah with his father. This is where he belonged, and this is where Reuven sought to return him.

Concerning Yehudah, the Torah writes that his goal was to have him sold, rather than have him killed. True, this would have spared his life but what would his life have been without Torah? Undoubtedly, Yehudah was not overjoyed to see the saintly Yosef in the morally bankrupt environment of Egypt but at least Yosef would be alive. His concern was for Yosef's hatzalah gashmis – physical survival, while Reuven's concern was also for his hatzalah ruchnis – spiritual survival. Justifying Yehudah, he clearly read the situation differently than Reuven.

Surely, if Yehudah could have successfully returned Yosef to his father's embrace, he would have done so. He did what he felt he could do at the time. Nonetheless, the lesson is significant for all those involved in reaching out to those in need. While they certainly have physical or material issues which must be addressed, we may not ignore their spiritual needs. A hungry person is not concerned with Tefillin but the one who supplies him with his next meal must remember that his Jewish neshamah – soul is hungry as well.

"Press your lips together: don't be in a hurry to answer." ~~ Talmud, Avodah Zara 35a

Why יבמות ?

We know of the term יבום - levirate marriage. What about יבמות? This term would probably be unheard of if we didn't have a Mesachta in Shas by this name. Why is it called by this name? Wouldn't Mesachta יבום sound better?

R' Elazar Rokeach (1665-1742) points out there are two stories of יבום in Tanach- Rus and Tamar. For this reason, it is called יבמות since they both initiated, as יבמות is the feminine form. יבמות is also the plural form of יבום since we have two instances of it in the Torah- Rus and Tamar.

Let us break apart the word יבמות and we will see an allusion to those involved in these two episodes of יבום - Yehuda and Tamar, and Boaz and Rus. The letters- - are the acronym of יְהוּדָה, בֹּעַז, רוּת תָּמָר.

Adding up the letters of יבו from the word יבמות we come to a sum of 18- the Gematria of חי. The two remaining letters spell מת. This hints to- that through יבום, one brings back (continues) life to the deceased.

Lastly, this Mitzva helps insure the sanctity of שמירת הברית. Consequently, ברית is an acronym for בֹּועַז, רוּת יְהוּדָה, תָּמָר.

Sing a Shir Chadash to Hashem Each Day

The time of tefillah is supposed to be a time of pleasure and closeness to Hashem for each one of us. But some struggle to 'connect' to tefillah, and as a result, instead of davening being what it is supposed to be – a time of pleasure and closeness to Hashem, it is a burden and a bother. It is therefore no wonder that they murmur the words of davening as if they are on automatic pilot, without feeling the loftiness and sweetness of each word.

One possible reason for this is that the words of tefillah are a fixed nusach that repeats itself each day, Shacharis, Minchah and Maariv.

But we can change this way of thinking: a 'fixed nusach' doesn't have to also be 'boring' chalilah! Even if it was instituted for us to daven specific words, we have the ability, and the obligation, to infuse it with new meaning every day. After all, the meals that we eat each day are also fixed, yet, we still find new flavour in them each day.

We say in Krias Shema "Vehayu hadevarim ha'eileh asher Anochi metzavecha hayom." Rashi explains (Devarim 6:6): Each day, the divrei Torah and mitzvos should be like new in our eyes – as if we received them 'hayom' today. That is how we have to approach each tefillah anew.

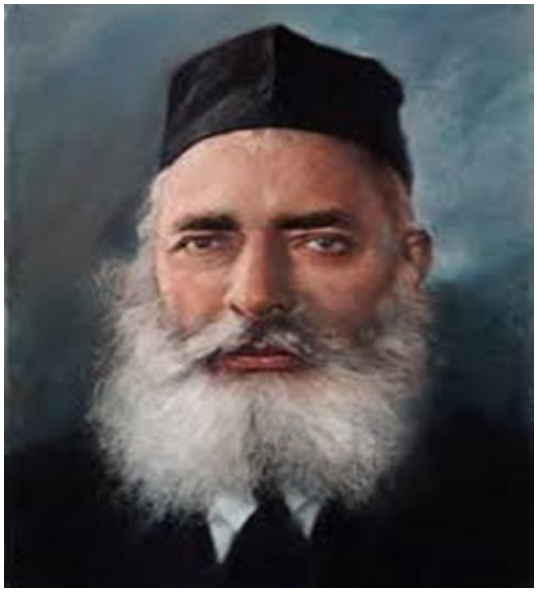
This change is not easy, and requires effort, but it is not for naught that Chazal call tefillah "avodas halev" (Taanis 2a), because it takes effort and investment. We have to arouse our hearts to think about the chassadim of Hashem, to recognize our obligation to thank Him, and to internalize how much we need His help every single step of the way. By thinking this, our tefillos will look different. Tefillah is not merely a mitzvah, it is what gives us the merit to exist in this world, because with our nature as human beings, we are constantly susceptible to the dangers of the times, so how can we not plead for our lives?! (**Yaakov Dov Marmorstein**)

Concepts in Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

Parshas Vayeshev is unique in that it seems that everyone is making fundamental mistakes. Why did Yaakov make Yosef a special shirt to arouse the brothers' jealousy and hatred? Why did Yosef repeat his dreams to Yaakov Avinu which caused his brothers to hate him even more? Why did Yaakov send Yosef alone to Shechem to look for his brothers when he knew it was a dangerous mission since they hated him? On and on, we seemingly find "mistakes" in this parsha by the likes of Yaakov, Reuven, Yehuda, Yosef ...



The Maharal asks this question and points out that this confluence of errors was not a collection of random mistakes; rather, it was all part of Hashem's overall plan to ensure that the promise made at the Bris Bein Habesarim will play out properly. This was the only way possible to get the entire family to leave Canaan and dwell in Mitzrayim. We think these were mistakes, but they were not mistakes at all! From this parsha we learn that even when we make mistakes; we say the wrong thing, we cause embarrassment or financial loss, turning relatives against each other, or loss of shidduchim, we must realize that these actions might look like mistakes but they are really not. They are all part of Hashem's Master plan.



A story is told of a talmid in the Mir Yeshivah who went on a date and made some critical errors which ruined the shidduch. The talmid told over the details to the mashgiach, **R' Yeruchem zt"l**, adding that he felt he caused the other side to withdraw from the shidduch. R' Yerucham listened intently to the whole episode and then said, "Perhaps you feel you made mistakes, but this is not so. It was Hashem who wanted you to think you made the mistake. Really, you should say gam zu l'tova and realize that life goes on with all the berachos of Hashem for the true shidduch that has been waiting for you for years!" May we all be zoche to recognize the Yad Hashem in everything we do and know that He is guiding us through thick and thin.

Staying Upbeat



Yosef was in such pain as he was exiled among Egyptians and away from his father's house and his brothers. Still, he sought ways to keep the sadness away. The **מאור ושמש** tells us that he diverted his mind from his worry and pain and was constantly happy in order to serve Hashem with happiness. In order to be upbeat, he ate, drank and curled his hair, as he wanted to remain happy despite all that befell him.

The phrase **משנכנס אב ממעטין בשמחה** can be understood as through happiness, one can diminish worry and pain. In this light, we can understand the words of the Midrash **גבר קפוז**- that Yosef was happy although he was in pain. This is the meaning in **ויהי איש מצליח** although he was in pain, as **ויהי** is an expression of pain, nevertheless **איש מצליח**; he became a successful man because of his happiness and alacrity.

Advice given to lift us up is to hear something like a joke which can cheer us up and as the Gemara tells us Rabba would begin his Shiur with **מילתא דבדיחותא**; something humorous and the students would laugh.

Eating delicious food or drink can also put us in good spirits. Another option is taking care of ourselves and the like. Being in a neat and clean environment may also help. Music is another thing that lifts people up when they are feeling down. In fact, the **Shevet Halevi** writes regarding one who listens to music to get rid of his depression that it can be considered a Mitzva.





The Sefer Maharil tells us that they testify about Rabbeinu Tam that when he wanted to learn the main point of a Halacha Chamura he would put a pile of gold to make him happy and his mind would be expanded. He would then learn with strength.

At times we may be in need of a vacation. This is not a waste of time as it can help us grow further. We must realize that doing kindness to ourselves is also kindness. With this we can fulfil **גמל נפשו איש חסד** ; a man of kindness brings good upon himself.

Get The Maximum



There was a fisherman who when he would catch fish would keep only the small ones. When he was asked why he did this, he replied because he has a small frying pan. This, of course, sounds absurd as he should get a bigger frying pan.

We say we don't have time, money and so on. In life, we need to think big and stop limiting

ourselves! We can ask Hashem for anything as there is no limit as it says **הרחב פיך ואמלאהו**; open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

As children of the president (Hashem), we have the right to ask Him for unlimited blessings. In fact, as long as we have gratitude, Hashem loves to hear us make such requests and He responds to them positively. After all, it is inappropriate for a child of the president to live in a tattered old apartment or drive around in a junky car. It is no more difficult for Hashem to provide us with a new car or fix the old one.

We can bring a large bowl to the faucet and fill it with water or we can bring a small shot glass to fill. However, it would be wise to use as large container as possible, even a huge tank. The words of Tefila are containers for Hashem's bounty. The more we ask, the more we can receive. Through davening, we become containers for His blessing. The longer and more detailed our list of requests, the larger and more abundant will be the containers we create for those blessings.

Torah Tavlin



Rabbi Moshe ben Eliezer shlit'a (Ramb'a) would say: **ועשה לו כתנת פסים** - Rashi in Chumash defines **כתונות פסים** as a woollen garment. He also quotes the Medrash that **פסים** refers to Yosef's troubles and is an acronym for **פוטיפר סוחרים ישמעאלים מדינים** - the ones who caused him the most grief. However, Rashi in the Gemara (**שבת י:**) brings a new explanation in the name of **Rabbeinu Yitzchok Halevi**, that **כתונות פסים** refers to **פס ידו** the

material around the cuffs of his coat. It seems from this that Yaakov only added special cuffs to Yosef's coat, not an entirely new coat. Perhaps this is the source why many Rebbes have felt cuffs on their coats!"



R' Yitzchok Zev Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l (Brisker Rav) would say: אֵין שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר רֹאֶה אֶת־כָּל־מְאוּמָה בְּיָדוֹ בַּאֲשֶׁר ה' אִתּוֹ - 39:23

The prison warden did not find anything for which to accuse Yosef, for Hashem was with him. Yosef was entirely innocent. Why did he need special assistance to be found not guilty? Because, without the special siyata dishmaya that he merited, the warden would have found ways to trip him up at every step. Only due to 'Hashem was with him,' that the warden did not invent any false reports with which to provoke him."

Throughout the entire parsha, we continuously read how Yosef, the favoured son of Yaakov Avinu, suffered horrible humiliation, debasement, and extreme degradation. From the moment he was whisked away from his home and family to the abject slavery of an Egyptian master, finding himself thrown into jail for no fault of his own, it would have been logical for Yosef to become absorbed in his own pain, angry at the world. But Yosef did not become bitter. He remained sensitive to others and to his Divine mission in life. Not only did he perceive the anguish of Pharaoh's servants, but he also reached out to help them. To Yosef, the fact that Hashem had

arranged for him to notice someone in need indicated that it was his duty to help.





In his inimitable style, **Rabbi Chanoch Teller** vividly relates a story that he personally witnessed, which took place in his neighbourhood in Jerusalem. It was erev Yom Kippur, and as is the custom, men and boys flock to the nearby mikveh to prepare for the holy day. As Rabbi Teller tells it: In a mikveh, nothing is concealed! A young man by the name of Jamie, a newcomer to this mikveh, was a student at the nearby Ohr Somayach Yeshivah. No one actually knew him but with a ponytail and an earring, it was safe to assume that he was a recent Baal Teshuvah, or at the very least, in the process of becoming one.

There was yet one other identifying mark that set Jamie apart, a dead give-away that he would have done anything to eradicate at that moment. His tattoos. All he could do was spread his hands over himself to cover his shame. His attempts at concealment, however, proved to be ironically effective at accentuating the very thing he wished to hide. Jamie gingerly made his way through the crowded room, arms folded over his biceps. It didn't take a rocket scientist to realize what this beginner to Judaism was hiding.

Many of the mikveh regulars, gawked at him, insensitive to his predicament; Jamie met no one's gaze. And then it happened: just a few feet from the water, Jamie lost his footing and slipped on the wet floor. In a reflex reaction, he lunged for the railing to avoid a collision with the mikveh's steps. The muffled voices and cheery

greetings came to an abrupt halt as all those present fell silent. Jamie's biceps, decorated with gaudy tattoos, were exposed to public view, tattoos he had once proudly displayed not only as examples of the most artistic and skilful workmanship of the famed tattoo parlours of Hong Kong, Singapore, and other points east, but as a symbol of his toughness.

Now, his shame was magnified. For long seconds a roaring silence enveloped the room. In a room that was loud and jovial just a mini-second ago, one could now hear the proverbial pin drop; imagine a boisterous erev Yom Kippur mikveh reduced to a tomb-like absence of sound.

Jamie's flailing hands reached out and his fingers thankfully found purchase on the metal banister that leads down into the water. He contemplated if breaking his fall by exposing his tattoos was a provident move. His mind wrestled with his instinct. Perhaps tumbling into the water and never emerging was the preferred route - anything not to suffer this humiliation.

The awful silence intensified, and the air became even heavier than before. Just then, an elderly man made his way towards the sacrificial goat as he held onto the railing. The slip-slap of his rubber bathing thongs thwacking against the damp marble floor created an eerie effect upon the throng waiting to resume breathing. Suddenly, Jamie felt the cold, wizened hand of the septuagenarian grip his shoulder. Slowly, hesitantly, he looked up at the stranger.

Jamie saw something flickering far back in those moist deep eyes which revealed the sensitivity of a Torah scholar, and all at once his fear left him. In heavily Yiddish-accented English the elderly man pronounced, "Look here, my boy, I also have a tattoo. In case I should ever forget what those monsters had planned for me." He pointed to the row of numbers etched into his skin, an everlasting symbol of the Nazi method of shame and dehumanization for millions of Jews. "It seems we've both come a long way."

Stretching out both hands, Jamie's saviour feebly attempted to help him straighten up, the spell of silence that had held them captive now broken. Jamie smiled gratefully and nodded to the old man, who patted him on his hands. And with that, the erev Yom Kippur sounds of the bustling mikveh resumed as one after another called out to each other - and to Jamie - "G'mar Chasimah Tova!"

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman 37:10

וַיִּגְעַר־בּוֹ אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חָלָמְתָּ



When Yosef comes to his father and brothers and tells them about the dream he had about the sun, moon and 11 stars all bowing down to him, Yaakov became angry with him! Yaakov said, "What kind of dream is this? Do you think that me, your mother and your 11 brothers are going to bow down to you?" Rashi makes a few points on this posuk, most notably that Rochel died already - there is no way this dream can come true because your mother cannot bow down to you! Interestingly, if we examine the letters of the words, **אֲשֶׁר חָלָמְתָּ הֲבוֹא**, we find that it spells out **רחל מתה** - Rochel died! This is one of the famous "codes" in the Torah where we can learn out the deeper meaning of the words from the letters of the Torah themselves.

Yaakov Avinu is rebuking his son Yosef in front of his brothers because although he knew that this dream would become a reality, he wanted to avoid the brothers from being angry and jealous of Yosef. However, they were jealous and the posuk says, **וְאָבִיו שָׁמַר אֶת־הַדָּבָר**- Yaakov watched over this thing! Rashi tells us that **שומר** -

"watching" something means to wait and anticipate a future event! Yaakov knew that Yosef's dream was a prophecy, and it would come true, but he rebuked Yosef and implied that his dream was so farfetched, it doesn't make sense. Your mother died already - surely this cannot come true!

Why did he say this? In order to remove some of the hatred and jealousy from the brothers' hearts toward Yosef! What a powerful lesson we learn from Yaakov Avinu and how important it is to try and create good feelings between brothers and do anything to remove jealousy, even if it means bending the truth! The hatred and jealousy between these brothers brought untold tragedy to Klal Yisroel throughout the generations. We must do all we can to eradicate jealousy and hatred from among our fellow Jewish brethren, and herald in Moshiach when we will all finally live together in peace and harmony.

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

37:15 וַיִּמְצָאֵהוּ אִישׁ וְהִנֵּה תֹעֶה בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּשְׁאָלֵהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ

When Yosef was sent out to search for his brothers and met an angel **הָאִישׁ** on the way to Shechem, the malach asked him a question. It was a simple, two-word inquiry, but it spoke volumes to Yosef in his fragile situation, and it should reverberate in our collective hearts and minds as a constant reminder to reassess our own situation and renew our own goals.

The angel asked: **מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ** - "What are you looking for?" Of course, the angel was sent from Heaven and most assuredly already knew the answer to such a simple question, but nevertheless, it was a question to be pondered. **The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l** explains that in order to succeed in life, a person must know what he is looking for. In life, the going gets tough, there are bumps along the way, and often it just seems overwhelming. If a person is not focused on his

ultimate goal, he can easily lose his motivation to continue. On the flip side, when a person is met with success, whether it is financial, academic, or in any other area of life - if he allows his success to "go to his head," he will lose sight of his goal, which will ultimately lead to his downfall. He must remain focused on his true purpose in life in order to reach the great heights of success.





Rabbi Orlovsky shlit'a once said: "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there!" **R' Y. Frand shlit'a** once quoted a friend who said that today, lasers have revolutionized the world of medicine, technology and even national defence. A laser is a simple beam of light, but it is concentrated to such a high degree, and it is so powerful, that it can cut through a diamond! A regular beam of light tends to diffuse and disperse and does not have this power. It is like one who doesn't know what he really wants out of life - just going every which way the wind blows him. One must constantly ask himself these timeless words: **מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ** - What do I really want out of life - and with Hashem's help he will succeed!

The Chafetz Chaim was once taking some wealthy men on a tour of his yeshivah in Radin, when one of the visitors commented to him, "You are producing shnorrers here."

The Chafetz Chaim was enraged. "You are shnorring from them!" he rebuked the man. "Everything you have is from them!"



Chacham Rav Yehoshua Shimon Chayim Obadia zt"l says: "What was the purpose of Yosef's second dream? Once he saw that the bundles all bowed down to him, why was it necessary for him to see the celestial spheres also bowing to him? According to the **Yalkut**, when Yehoshua bin Nun ordered the sun to stand still in the sky, it refused to comply, arguing that it was bigger and greater than he. Yehoshua replied, 'You are a bad servant. Did not my forefather (Yosef) already foresee the sun, moon and stars bowing to him?' To this, the sun was silent and stood still. It is clear, then, that the true purpose of the second dream was not for Yosef per se, but for his descendant, Yehoshua. When he issued a command, the sun, moon and 12 stars - 12 shevatim - all complied."



Chacham Rav Yosef Chayim of Baghdad zt"l would say: **ויהי ביום השלישי יום הלדת את פרעה** - In Medrash Sechel Tov it is written: 'Most people are fond of the repayment day, which corresponds to one's birthday, and celebrate with a festive meal.' Every year, on the day of one's birth, his mazel is strong and successful. On Rav Elazar ben Azaryah's 18th birthday, a miracle occurred, and 18 rows of white hair grew on his beard as befitting his status. Thus, it is customary for one to make his birthday into a Yom Tov for himself."

One of the greatest Chassidic Rebbes was the famed R' Aharon Hagadol (the Great) of Karlin zt"l. The story of his birth reflects back to an incident that took place with his father, Reb Yaakov, on the night of Yom Kippur. Reb Yaakov was the chazzan in the local synagogue. One year, after leading the Kol Nidrei and Maariv prayers, Reb Yaakov got caught up in the intensity of the night and his silent Shemona Esrai during Maariv lasted a few minutes longer than usual.

Some of the congregants were unhappy with the length of the tefillah and the moment Reb Yaakov stepped back three steps, one man walked over and slapped him across the face! "How dare you make us wait!" said the man in a fit of arrogance. Some of the community leaders rushed to Reb Yaakov's defence but he just waved them away, and in his sweet cantorial voice, began to sing the words of the Yom Kippur piyutim. Even after davening, Reb Yaakov just smiled and wished everyone "A Gut Yom Tov" - even the man who had slapped him, as if nothing had happened. One of the wealthy members approached him and asked if he could buy the zechus of not responding to the insult off Reb Yaakov, but he just shrugged insisting that he had already forgiven the man. That night, Reb Yaakov dreamt that he would merit a child who would "light up the world" - and his son did just so!

From among the many accolades attributed to Tamar, none is greater than the fact that she remained silent in the face of certain death, rather than cause embarrassment and harm to Yehuda. From her, we derive the Talmudic principle: "*It is better for a person to be cast into a fiery furnace than to embarrass his fellow in public.*" *(Sotah 10b)* One who is silent in the face of insults and does not respond or hurt another with his words, will merit great things in his or her lifetime.

The wife of Potifar used every method possible to trick Yosef. The Talmud in Sota states that one day, in a moment of weakness, Yosef made the fateful decision to give in to her wishes. Just as he was about to commit a sin, an image of Yaakov his father, appeared to him, and he was able to resist his urge and refrain from sin.

The Torah clearly indicates that Yaakov thought that Yosef was dead. The brothers had convinced their father that he had been savagely killed by a wild animal. Therefore, the question is: how could Yaakov have known to send such a message to his son, to dissuade him from sin?



R' Simcha Bunim Berger shlit'a in the name of his Rebbi, **R' Moshe Shapiro shlit'a**, explains that the image that Yosef saw was not sent from an external source to aid him, as we might assume. Rather, the image came from deep within Yosef himself. Yosef realized that committing this sin would tarnish his legacy and the legacy of his family, thereby diminishing the treasured relationship that he had with Hashem and his father. It was the - the image of his father, of his history and of his destiny, that reminded him that this sin would be too onerous to bear. Yaakov had successfully left an everlasting impression upon his son.

It is no coincidence that the holiday of Chanukah falls on the days when we read of Yosef and his trials. The miracle that we celebrate by lighting the Menorah is all about a small flask of oil. That small flask is a symbol to the Jews of that time - and all future generations - that there will always be a continuity of holiness and purity unaffected by the evil in the world around us. As Yaakov had deeply influenced his son Yosef with the courage to act properly in

the most difficult of times, the flask of oil with the Kohen Gadol's seal continues to leave an impression on Jewish people throughout history.

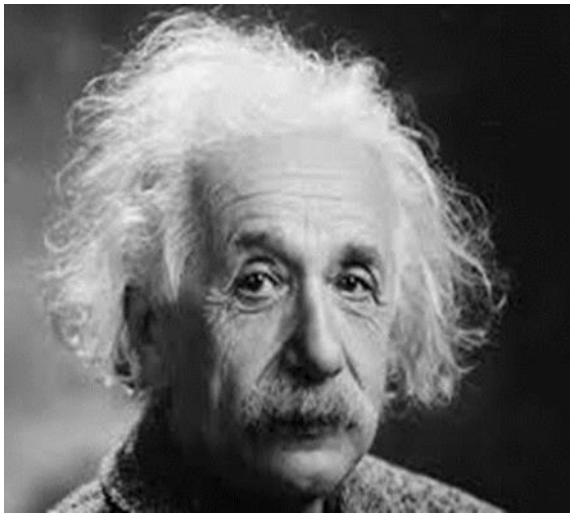


Rabbeinu Elazar M'Ghermaizha ZT"L (Sefer Rokeach) writes: "Parshas Vayeshev contains 112 posukim. It is interesting to note that all except for eight posukim begin with the letter 'Vav.' The reason for this is because the letter 'Vav' is symbolic of the expression ויי (woe), which is indicative of sorrow and pain.

In this parsha, we find numerous sorrowful experiences, including the kidnapping and sale of Yosef, the death of Yehuda's wife and two sons, the nefarious advances of Yosef's master's wife and his fall from their good graces, being thrown into prison and being forgotten there for two years. The eight posukim that do not begin with this letter allude to the eight days of Bris Milah, since Yosef was saved from a terrible sin through the mitzvah of Milah."

R' Eliezer Papu ZT"L (Pele Yoetz) would say: "It is so important that a person talks with care. Because before you say them, your words are your prisoners; once you've said them, you are their prisoners!"

וַיִּשְׁאָלֵהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ ***And the man asked him, saying, "What are you looking for?"*** *37;15*



Albert Einstein was once traveling by train when the conductor came down the aisle punching the tickets of every passenger. Einstein reached into his vest pocket but he couldn't find his ticket. He reached into his trouser pocket but it wasn't there either. He looked in his briefcase and reached inside the seat cushions beside him but he still couldn't find it. The conductor said, "You are Dr. Einstein, correct?" Einstein nodded sheepishly. "We all know who you are," said the conductor, "I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it." Einstein nodded appreciatively. The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees frantically looking under the seat for his ticket. The conductor rushed back and said, "Dr. Einstein, don't worry, I know who you are. It's no problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one." Einstein looked at him and said, ***"Young man, I, too, know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going!"***

When Yosef was lost trying to find his brothers, the Angel Gavriel met him and asked him, "What do you seek?" **The Kotzker Rebbe ZT"L** says that the angel was teaching Yosef, as well as the rest of us, a lesson for life. When a person loses his way on the path of life, it is of utmost importance that he stops, re-evaluates his situation and asks himself, "What exactly am I seeking?" It is not enough to look to others for answers; a person must seek for himself. As the saying goes: By knowing what to look for, you're already halfway there to finding it.



R' Yehudah Mandelkorn ZT"L, the former Menahel of Neveh Zion in Jerusalem, would recount an amazing story about the effectiveness of a good education and good educators on the minds and hearts of children. There was once a class of students who were so unruly that they literally burned out two different teachers. One teacher took early retirement and the other decided to get out of teaching altogether. This class was so bad that substitute teachers began to refuse to take it. So the district called a teacher who had applied for a job but hadn't made the cut that year. They asked the woman if she would be willing to come in and finish out the year in return for the promise of a full-time position the next year. She eagerly accepted.

The principal decided not to warn the teacher about the class, afraid that she would be scared off if she heard what she was up against. The new teacher took over her class and the principal avoided her for fear that she, too, would issue a sharp tongue-lashing directed at him before running out kicking and screaming. But for some reason, this did not happen. After the new teacher had been on the job for close to a month, the principal sat in on a class to see how things were going. To his amazement, the students were well-behaved and enthusiastic. The teacher retained full control over her charges and the kids were engaged and excited to learn.

When class was over and the students had filed out of the classroom, the principal stayed behind to congratulate the teacher on a job well done. She thanked him for his kind words but insisted that it was he who deserved thanks for giving her such a special class for her first assignment. She had been concerned, she admitted to

him, that as a rookie teacher, she would have drawn one of the tougher classes which would have seriously tested her mettle as an educator. She was quite thankful to him for giving her such a great bunch of kids. The principal hemmed and hawed and told her that he really didn't deserve any thanks. After a moment, she laughed and told him, "You see, Sir, I discovered your little secret on my first day here. I looked in the desk drawer and found the list of the students' IQ scores. I knew I had a challenging group of kids here, so bright and rambunctious, that I would really have to work hard to make school interesting for them because they are so intelligent." She slid the drawer open and the principal saw the list with the students' names and the numbers 136, 145, 127, 128, and so on, written next to the names. She picked up the paper and with a knowing smile, handed it to the principal.



The principal studied the paper for a moment, trying to remember why he had put that paper in the desk. Then, suddenly, it came to him. He exclaimed, "Those aren't their IQ scores - those are their locker numbers!" Too late. The teacher had already expected the students to be bright and gifted and they had responded with energy and eagerness to her positive view and her general impression that they were assertive and intelligent.

There's a message here for all of us, says **R' Y. Frand Shlit'a**, as mechanchim and, even more importantly, as parents. Put faith into your children or students, show them that you have expectations from them and that you respect them, and they will become great.

Maharal MiPrague - Yosef Sits In Jail An Additional Two Years

Rashi says (Vayeishev 40:23) that Yosef was punished with an extra two years in jail because he relied on the Sar HaMashkin to be the Shaliach for a miraculous redemption. The Maharal explains why Yosef received precisely a two-year sentence.

The Maharal says that this was Mida K'Neged Mida. For a year Yosef waited expectantly for the Sar HaMashkin to repay his debt of gratitude and help free him. When the year was over Yosef gave up. If he hadn't done anything for a full year, surely he never will. We see this in the Gemara (Brachos 658b) that if a person sees his friend after not seeing him for a full year, he makes a bracha of Michayeh HaMeisim since after a full year he is like the dead, who we stop focusing on after a year. "Vayishkacheihu" or he forgot him, says the Maharal is gematria "Shana" or one year.

Hashem made the Sar HaMashin forget for only one year. After that it was perfectly natural for him to forget without any divine interference. Because Yosef waited for one year, he was punished for one year, leaving him there two years longer.



וַיַּחַלְמוּ חֲלוֹם שְׁנֵיהֶם אִישׁ חֲלֹמוֹ בְּלַיְלָה אֶחָד 40:5

This story was told over by the legendary mechanech and founder of the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, **R' Nochum Zev Dessler ZT"L**, at the Sheva Berachos of a grandson who married a granddaughter of **R' Elyah Lopian ZT"L**. It is well known that R' Elyah Lopian merited unique Hashgacha Pratis and he would often have dreams that warned and protected him from danger as well as from issues that might have cause him to miss a mitzvah.

For example, R' Elyah was extremely vigilant to ensure that no bugs ever found their way into his food. In one instance, R' Elyah was eating breakfast at the home of his daughter and in the middle of

the meal, he dozed off. He awoke suddenly and asked his daughter to check his food for bugs. To her surprised reaction, he explained that during his brief nap, he dreamed that someone was holding a basket and banging on it, causing flies and bugs to fall out of it. His daughter immediately checked the food and found that indeed, it had tiny bugs.

R' Nochum Zev (Velvel) related that when he was a young boy growing up in London, England, in the early 1930's, his family and the Lopian family lived near each other in the same neighbourhood. Nochum Velvel was very friendly with R' Elyah's son, Yisroel Nochum, and they would frequent each other's homes.

Once when Nochum Velvel was on the way to his friend's house, he was walking across a large avenue. Just as the boy was stepping off the curb on the street corner, a car sped by and nearly hit him. The automobile missed Nochum Velvel by little more than a hairsbreadth and the boy was quite shaken up. He couldn't walk for a few moments until he collected himself, before eventually continuing on to his friend's home. The little boy must have still been pale from the fright when he arrived at the Lopian home minutes later. He knocked on the door and to his surprise, R' Elyah himself opened the door and immediately asked if everything was alright.

The great Rav's face read grave concern for the boy and his tone of voice reflected a certain anxiety as well. Nochum Velvel was greatly taken aback by the fact that R' Elyah seemed to have been waiting for him. He had never taken the time to speak to his son's friend and surely never opened the door for him, for he was always deeply involved in his learning or preparing for a shiur.

As R' Elyah gazed at him waiting for a response to his question, Nochum Velvel, young, shy and embarrassed by the attention focused on him, mumbled that everything was fine, Boruch Hashem. But R' Elyah would not let the matter go and persisted in his line of questioning. Looking into the boy's frightened face, he again

inquired, "Are you sure everything is alright? Did anything happen to you on the way to our home?"

This time, Nochum Velvel did admit that something had happened. He explained to the elderly sage that just as he was crossing one of the streets to come there, a car flew past him nearly running him over. Thankfully, he was not hurt. R' Elyah nodded his head as if coming to a new realization. "Boruch Hashem, the danger is over," exclaimed R' Elyah, and Nochum Velvel was struck by the manner in which he said the words - as if he was expecting something terrible to happen.

He asked R' Elyah what he meant, and the Rav answered that the previous night, he had a dream in which he saw young Nochum Velvel, his son's friend, badly injured in a car accident. "You should know," said R' Elyah with obvious relief in his voice, "that I have been praying for your safety all day long, up until this very moment." R' Nochum Velvel concluded his story with a follow-up incident.



When he returned home that afternoon, he headed straight to speak with his father, **R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler ZT"L**, author of Michtav M'Eliyahu. He told him what had nearly happened to him and how R' Elyah received him at the door, and what he had told him. R' Eliyahu took his son's hand in both of his and told him with great emotion, "My dear son, I had the very same dream about you last night and I've been fasting from then till now. I was so worried about what was going to happen to you." R' Nochum Velvel concluded, ***"Two great Tzaddikim dreamed the same dream - and I am alive today because of R' Elyah's prayers and my father's fasting."***

Concepts in Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

וַיָּנָס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה וַתִּשָּׂא אֵשֶׁת־אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ אֶל־יוֹסֵף וַתֹּאמֶר שִׁכְבָה עִמִּי וַיְמָאֵן 39:7-12

A famous question is posed by Chazal regarding how Yosef HaTzaddik was able to overcome the overtures made to him by the wife of Potiphar. He was a young, innocent slave in a foreign land, with no relatives and no one to look after him. How was he able to conquer his Yetzer Hara and remain pure?

The Seforim tell us that without Zechus Avos it would have been nearly impossible for Yosef to overcome this nisayon but since he did have the merit and protection of his Avos, in the form of **דמות דיוקנו של אביו**- the image of his father appearing before him at exactly the right moment, this gave him the koach to just say NO - **וימאן** - without any reason or explanation. The word **וימאן** literally means "he refused." I wanted to say that the word also tells us WHY Yosef refused. The letters of **וימאן** spell out **וַיִּרְא יוֹסֵף מַרְאֵה אֲבִיו נִגְדּוֹ** - "Yosef saw the vision of his father before him." Additionally, the posuk states: **וַיָּנָס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה** - "He fled and went out to the outside." It seems that the word **וַיֵּצֵא** is superfluous.

The word **וַיֵּצֵא** stands for **וַיִּרְא יוֹסֵף צוּרַת אֲבִיו**. In other words **וַיָּנָס** - "he fled" - why? Because **וַיֵּצֵא** - he saw his father's image.

For this reason, Chazal say that the trop of the word **וַיְמָאֵן** is a shalsheles (which is three times a pazer). If a person looks three generations back to his parents and grandparents, and three generations forward, to his children and grandchildren, he will always be able to conquer his yetzer hara. As we say in Kedusha: **המשלשים (שלשלת) לך קדושה** - if you will have these three, you will live a life of kedusha.



37:26 וַיֹּ֤אמֶר יְהוּדָה֙ אֶל־אֶחָ֔יו מַה־בֶּ֥צַע כִּי נַהֲרֹ֖ג אֶת־אָחִ֑ינוּ וְכִסִּ֖ינוּ אֶת־דָּמֽוֹ

There is a puzzling Medrash Pliah which comments on the words of the Navi (ישעיה א-טו): *This is what Yehudah said (by* **מכירת יוסף***) to his brothers;* **מה בצע** *- "What profit is there if we kill our brother?"*



R'Shalom Lakanievsky ZT"L (Mefaneach Nelamim) provides a fascinating explanation for this Medrash Pliah, according to the famous dictum of Chazal that the Avos instituted the three daily prayers. In Sefer Olelos Ephraim, **R' Ephraim Luntzitz ZT"L** writes that we find this idea hinted in the names of the Avos themselves. The letter **ב** of **אַבְרָהָם** refers to **בֹּקֶר** the morning, when we daven Shacharis, the letter **צ** of **יִצְחָק** stands for **צָהֳרַיִם** - the afternoon, when we daven Mincha, and **ע** of **יַעֲקֹב** is for **עֶרֶב** - the evening, when we daven Maariv. All three letters spell out the word **בצע**.

Now we can explain what the Medrash means: "*When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you ... your hands are full of blood.*" The Navi brings a message that Hashem will not accept the prayers of someone who has killed another person, for Hashem will "hide" Himself from assisting the perpetrator. This is what Yehudah said to his brothers: "What will be the benefit of our prayers in the morning, afternoon and evening **בצע** if we kill our brother here today, because Hashem will not accept our prayers!"



R' Boruch Epstein ZT"L (Torah Temimah) would say: "When Reuven attempted to save his brother Yosef's life by having him thrown into a pit instead of being killed outright, the Torah treats him like a hero. The Medrash writes: *'Had Reuven known the Torah would articulate the fact that he tried to save Yosef, he would have hoisted his brother on his shoulders and brought him to his father.'*

We see from here that it is a mitzvah to publicize the good deeds of another Jew (*Teshuvos HaRashba*) and even in halacha we find that one who gives charity is permitted to have his name publicly displayed for all to see and people should not take issue with it."



The Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson ZT"L (Likutei Sichos) would say: "Yosef had two dreams: one about physical matters (binding sheaves) and one about spiritual matters (the heavenly bodies; sun, moon and stars). Nevertheless, both dreams shared the exact same message. This teaches us that a Jew's physical and spiritual affairs should not be separated from each other, each having its own separate 'message.' Rather, a person should align his physical and spiritual affairs to complement one another. For example, a person's physical activities, such as eating and drinking should be done for the sake of heaven, in order to better serve Hashem."

וַיִּשְׁלָחֵהוּ מֵעֵמֶק חֶבְרוֹן וַיָּבֹא שְׁכֶמָה 37:14

The Rokeach writes that Parshas Vayeshev contains 112 posukim just as Perek 92 of Tehillim, **מזמור שיר ליום השבת** contains 112 words. **R' Matisyahu Solomon Shlit'a** explains the significance of this correlation. In Parshas Vayeshev there appears to be many great people making "mistakes." How could Yaakov show favouritism to Yosef ? How could the shevatim accuse and sell their own brother down to Egypt? How could Yehudah get involved with Tamar? The answer is hinted to us in the words, "And he (Yaakov) sent him (Yosef) from the valley of Chevron." Rashi points out that Chevron is not a valley but a mountain. Rather, the word עֵמֶק should be interpreted homiletically as "deep counsel" and Chevron is the burial place of Avraham. The understanding then is that Yaakov sent Yosef based on "the counsel of Avraham." This was Hashem's way of carrying out the **ברית בין הבתרים** the promise that Avraham's children will be slaves in Egypt.

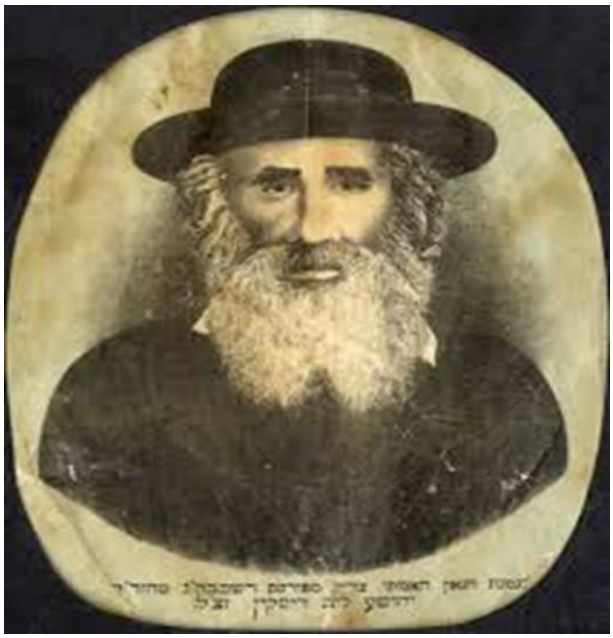


All the "mistakes" of the righteous in this parsha are not "mistakes" at all. They are simply Hashem's way of moving His pawns to carry out His master plan. Nothing happens by chance. Every single movement is a Divine manipulation in order for the purpose of the world to come to fruition. Chazal tell us that Hashem showed Adam HaRishon the future events of the world.

Every incident, past and present, was shown to Adam with a clear understanding of the big picture of world history. With great emotion, Adam sang 112 words declaring the same awe of hashgacha pratis as the 112 posukim in Vayeshev. Although often times we

wonder about the "mistakes" that occur in the world, let us remember that EVERYTHING is part of the Master Plan of the Master of the World!

Torah Tavlin



When **R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin ZT"L** moved to Yerushalayim in 5638 (1878) from Brisk, he began delivering a weekly parsha shiur every Motzei Shabbos. During the shiur, his personal shamash would bring him a cup of tea with sugar which the Rav required for additional energy. It happened once that the shamash mistakenly put salt in the cup instead of sugar, and the Rav started to drink the tea - without any reaction. R' Yehoshua Leib's wife happened to be in the kitchen and noticed that the shamash was putting salt into the cups of tea he was preparing.



In a frenzy, she ran to her husband and exclaimed, "Stop, there's salt in your tea! It is quite dangerous for you and the Torah says **ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם** - *one must guard his health*. How can you endanger yourself by sitting there and drinking tea?" Later, the Rav told her privately, "Had I even slightly reacted to the salt in my tea, everyone would have realized what had happened, and the shamash would have been publicly shamed. If Chazal say that one must cast himself into a furnace to avoid publicly

embarrassing another person, then certainly I am required to drink that cup of tea!"

From the incident of Yehudah and Tamar, Chazal learn that one must let himself be thrown into a fiery furnace rather than publicly shame another. ***Rabbeinu Yonah*** *explains that one who commits murder is at least aware of the severity of his act. One who publicly embarrasses another isn't always aware and will not feel remorse over his actions. Also, the pain of embarrassment is worse than the pain of death since killing another is a momentary experience while shaming a person can have lasting effects as he has to live and suffer from the shame caused him.*



Torah Gems

וַיְהִי ה' אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרִי 39:2

The L-rd was with Joseph, and he was a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master.

The Torah categorizes this posuk into three stages: **וַיְהִי** ֿ And behold, Hashem was with Yosef; **וַיְהִי** ֿAnd behold, Yosef was successful; ֿ **וַיְהִי** And behold, Yosef was in his master's home. This last stage - Yosef in his master's home - seems to be out of place. In fact, the order of the posuk should have taken on the chronological order of events: First, Yosef arrived in his master's home, and then, because Hashem was with him, he became successful.

R' Yirmiyahu Flansberg ZT"L (Divrei Yirmiyahu), provides a deep and inspiring understanding. Yosef had every reason to be upset, depressed, down on his luck - after all, he was just a kid when he was whisked away from everything that he knew and loved. But Yosef also felt the Divine Presence "pulling strings" for him. The moment he arrived at the home of Potiphar, he felt as if Hashem was lifting him up, guiding him in his way and ultimately seeing to his success in

all matters. Thus, before anything else, וַיְהִי ה' אֶת־יוֹסֵף- ***"Hashem was with Yosef"*** - Yosef felt Hashem in his every action.



As a result, this caused him to be a true אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ- "a man of success" - not just physically, but emotionally. Yosef portrayed himself as a "success." With such a mindset, Potiphar recognized the greatness of the lad in front of him and thus brought him in to work for him. He would never have done so, had Yosef been sad and depressed. In these days, when parnassah is not easy to come by, a Jew needs to recognize that in every action he does, Hashem is right there with him, in a "joint venture" and it is Hashem who will ultimately see to his success. Not the other way around! If one cannot find a job, know and believe that Hashem is with you, and you will find employment! If one has no money, remember that Hashem wants you to succeed, to be an אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ and soon, you will find what you need! It is up to you; it is your own mindset that will make you flourish!

R' Daniel Marinover Shlit'a would say:



"Yaakov knew that the brothers 'hated' Yosef and were jealous of him. He also knew that they could be violent - as in the case of Shimon and Levi in Shechem. Why, then, did he send Yosef out to check on his brothers all alone?

Because Yaakov knew that Reuven, his bechor, was a 'protector' who would not let anything bad

happen to Yosef, since the normal manner in most homes is for the oldest child to take care of the younger ones and if something happens, the older one gets the blame. Knowing that Reuven would not want to get blamed , he trusted that Reuven would ensure that nothing bad would happen to Yosef. Unfortunately, it was exactly at that time that Reuven was not out in the field with his brothers and was not able to protect Yosef after they threw him in the pit."



The Power of Words

One does not realize the power of one's words and its effect on others, and often even a small and innocent comment can generate shockwaves and repercussions that last for days, months - even generations to come. On a typical weekday afternoon, the congregants would gather to daven Mincha, listen to a short dvar Torah from the Rav, and then daven Maariv before retiring to their homes.

It was one such afternoon in the early days of winter and the rabbi began his prepared remarks with an excited outburst. "Rabbosai, **the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh** tells us something amazing in the area of human emotions. The Torah writes that after Yosef was torn away from his family and sold off to slavery by an unknown entity, Yaakov Avinu was shown his unique coat of many colors splashed with the blood of a goat. Immediately assuming it was the blood of his child and that his precious son Yosef was dead, he wailed and mourned inconsolably for many days.

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the rest of Yosef's children were unsure how to respond. Why should their father act so inconsolably over one son, when he had so many other sons, daughters and grandchildren still alive? It was then that they realized that the secret to 'cheering' up their father was to surround him with all of his 'assets' - his wealth of sons and grandsons, the beauty and grandeur of their large family, the endless nachas and happiness

that they hoped - and in fact - did bring to their patriarch Yaakov; this was what would cheer him up and console him over the loss of a single son.

Alas, it was not to be, for although Yaakov loved all of his children, the loss of his most beloved Yosef was a dagger to his heart and he felt the grievous hurt and pain for many years to come." The rabbi looked thoughtfully at his congregation and said, "The thought occurred to me that this reaction is very much in line with the way the Almighty reacts when one of His children is lost to Him. When a single Jew turns away from the path of Torah and acts as if he is 'dead' to his G-d, he does not realize how 'inconsolable' Hakadosh Boruch Hu is over the loss. He mourns for the length of days - not just for a single soul - but for all the future souls that were to come out from him.

It is then up to us - His remaining children - to band together and surround Him, to strengthen ourselves in Torah and redouble our efforts in mitzvah observance, so as to ease His suffering. By showing Him that we will bring Him nachas, joy and a firm commitment to Torah, Hashem will be comforted. And yet, just as Yaakov refused to be consoled over Yosef, Hashem is still in pain over the loss of each and every soul - that is how much each individual Jew means to Him!" It wasn't until the following day that the rabbi realized the effects of his words.



A man who had grown up in the community but had long ago strayed from the path of Torah and religious observance, came to visit the rabbi in his home. He was wearing a Tallis, a kippah and carried a siddur in his hands - three things he had not been

seen doing for many, many years. The rabbi was surprised at the sight of this man - and even more so when he began to explain. "Dear rabbi, I have not seen the inside of a synagogue in so many years that I almost forgot what it looked like. However, yesterday, for the first time in decades, I decided to honour the memory of my deceased father and say the kaddish prayer for him by the afternoon prayers. I don't know why, and I cannot explain it - but something drew me into the synagogue yesterday where I heard your little speech about the importance of every Jewish soul in the eyes of the Almighty." The man had tears in his eyes as his emotions got the better of him. "I never looked at it quite the way you put it yesterday. I believed that since I turned away from G-d, He would want to have nothing more to do with me. But after a night of soul-searching, I recognized that you were right and I was wrong! I now know that I, too, am precious in the eyes of Hashem, and as such, I want to start showing Him why He was right for not giving up on me!" The man became a sincere Baal Teshuvah and is now - and for all time - a great source of pride and nachas to his Father up in Heaven.

37:15 וַיִּמְצָאֵהוּ אִישׁ וְהִנֵּה תֹעֶה בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּשְׁאָלֵהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ



Yosef is sent by his father to visit his brothers, who are tending the family's sheep in the open pasture. He cannot seem to find them until **a mysterious stranger** finds Yosef and tells him where he can locate his brothers. Because of the intervention of this unknown אִישׁ- the rest of the story unfolds. The brother's sell Yosef; a 22-year separation from his father; his torturous Egyptian existence, culminating in triumph as viceroy of Egypt; the reuniting and reconciliation of Bnei

Yaakov. All this would not have occurred without the appearance of this stranger. So ... who was he?

Rashi believes that the stranger was the Angel Gavriel, sent by Hashem to influence the course of events. However, the Ramban disagrees: *"It was prepared for him (Yosef) a human guide, unbeknownst to him, in order to lead him into the hands (of his brothers). This is to teach us that man's diligence is futile, and only Hashem's decree is valid. This is the teaching of Chazal that the man was an 'Angel' - meaning he was fulfilling Hashem's mission, for His decrees are always realized."* Ramban teaches us that all of the "chance" occurrences that life brings us, all of the strangers we may encounter, are to be viewed as "angels," seen in the perspective of our relationship to our Creator.

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

"Yehuda, who sanctified the name of Heaven in public merited that he is called by a name entirely based on the Name of Hakodosh Boruch Hu." (The name **יהודה**, contains all four letters of the Shem Havayah of Hakodosh Boruch Hu).

Yosef Hatzaddik

Chazal tell us that the greatness of Yosef Hatzaddik was established when he was a lowly slave in Egypt and confronted by the wife of Potiphar. Although he was given every opportunity to sin and his master's wife could have even helped his situation had he gone along with her wishes, he immediately and adamantly refused her. Yosef was protected by his father Yaakov, who suddenly appeared to him in a vision. When he looked up and recognized the **דמות דיוקנו** - Comparative likeness, of his father, he held himself back from sinning!

The Sages laud him for this great act, and he is hereby given the honorary title of "Yosef Hatzaddik." But we remain with a question: If Yosef saw the image of his holy father, of course he is not going to sin! How could he with such an image in mind? If so, why is he called a Tzaddik from this episode? He should be called a Tzaddik if his father's image did NOT appear to him and he still overcame the test!



R' Simcha Sheps ZT"L explains that when a person is exceedingly careful in a certain area of Avodas Hashem and adamantly refuses to be swayed, Hashem will send that person extra special protection. Hashem will turn over heaven and earth if need be, to make sure the person doesn't fall!

This is what happened with Yosef. It wasn't his father's image that miraculously saved him; it was his own excellence in the area of Tznius and Kedushas Haguf that allowed him to merit Hashem's protection against sinning, by showing him his father's image! Thus, it was due to his own righteousness in Avodas Hashem, that is he known to all future generations as Yosef Hatzaddik!

Torah Gems

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זְקֻנִים הוּא לוֹ וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים 37:3

The Torah tells us that Yosef was favoured by his father and was presented with a **כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים**, a fine woollen coat of many colours. Rashi quotes the Medrash, that the letters that make up the word **פַּסִּים** - represent the four groups of people to whom Yosef was sold: **פוטיפר סוחרים ישמאלים מדינים**.





This was obviously not Yaakov's intent, says **R' Simcha Bunim Berger ZT"L**, as he wished to bestow honour upon his distinguished son for his special qualities. Instead, it turned into the disgrace of slavery. This same coat brought Yaakov, and his entire family, pain and suffering.

Chazal say that a parent should not show favouritism towards any of his children. There was, however, a positive aspect to the **כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים**, and its intended purpose was ultimately realized. Although initially, it may seem like it was the source of pain and turmoil, yet Yosef was able to turn the situation into a kiddush Hashem.

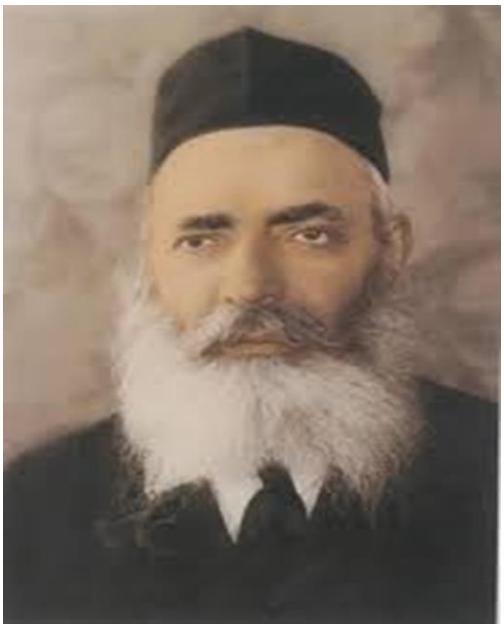
Indeed, from the moment the coat was removed from Yosef's body, he found himself in a pit at the mercy of people who wished him harm. Yosef was then handed over to the very people the coat (that was just removed) represents. Through this process, he rose to leadership. He was able to carry on as Yosef HaTzadik even though he was alone as a slave among people whose values were far below his. In the end, what Yaakov bestowed upon Yosef was the ability to achieve glory. He became second in command in Egypt and controlled all the region's resources. Yosef made the ultimate kiddush Hashem in saving the world from famine and death. Chazal have a saying: **מני מכבדותא** (clothing give honour). There is a saying: "clothes make the man," - in this case it was true! The honour Yaakov tried to bestow on Yosef was not received .... but ultimately achieved!

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זְקֻנִים הוּא לוֹ 37:3



After the death of the holy **Tzemach Tzedek, R' Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch ZT"L**, a dispute broke out as to which of his sons should succeed him as Rebbe. Although **R' Yehudah Leib ZT"L** was the older brother and a great tzaddik in his own right, **R' Shmuel ZT"L**, the youngest of seven brothers, was renowned for his genius and incredible grasp of all facets of the Torah. Eventually, the matter was brought to a Din Torah. R' Shmuel dazzled all those present with his articulate displays of logic and brilliance, carefully crafting his arguments and deftly staking his claim. Everyone was amazed at this young man's sheer brilliance, none more so than his own brother, R' Yehudah Leib. "When did you become such a genius?" asked the older brother. "You are still so young, yet you maintain such a vast storehouse of knowledge, both of the revealed and the hidden aspects of the Torah." R' Shmuel, later to be known as the **Rebbe Maharash**, replied, "My brother, you are old with your years. But I am older since I have taken the Tatteh's years as well!"

A **בן זקונים** is not simply a child born to elderly parents. Such a child also has the unique ability to imbibe his parents' "years" - their wisdom, experience and knowledge, and make it his own. Thus, **Targum Yonason** famously translates **בן זקונים** and describes the young boy Yosef, as **בר חכים** - "a wise son." Yosef managed to take the **זקונים** - the elderly years of Yaakov and turn them into knowledge which made him wiser than all his brothers.



From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

The famous Medrash states: "Yaakov Avinu wished to live in tranquillity in this world; the anger (hardships) of Yosef was thrust upon him." Yaakov was not meant to experience tranquillity in this world. Why not? Why shouldn't Hashem "Fargin" Yaakov some peace and quiet? What would have been so terrible had he enjoyed tranquillity and serenity?

R' Yeruchem Levovitz ZT"L explains that the purpose of life is to grow from every situation. For one to reach his personal shleimus, he must pass the tests, nisyonos, that Hashem throws at him.

If he fails these tests, Hashem will send him the same tests in different forms, so avoiding the issue will not accomplish anything. Rather than seeking tranquillity in his life, Yaakov should have asked Hashem - as Dovid Hamelech did - to give him the strength, wisdom and wherewithal to overcome the difficult tribulations that inevitably crop up, in order to be able to serve Hashem properly.

Our job is not to focus on how we feel about a situation, but rather to view each and every issue in life as a tool for growth. This way, we can actualize our potential and accomplish our goals - which is why we are here in the first place! So the next time you find yourself in a frustrating, upsetting or angering situation, STOP, CALM DOWN, and FOCUS on the source of your angst. Then, visualize it as an opportunity, a GIFT that Hashem is sending you, to work on yourself and overcome this nisayon. Remember, the purpose of life is not to relax, but to grow. So set your sights high to achieve your lofty goals, because in the long run, a person's ALTITUDE in life, is determined by his ATTITUDE in life!

Rabbi Benzion Klatzko - My Dear Student



For several years, I have had the humbling and eye-opening opportunity of taking college-age students to Poland. Our visit incorporates up-close views of the harrowing experiences and tragedies of the Holocaust, and offers inspiration and encouragement that will hopefully leave the students inspired to carry on the torch of Jewish destiny and tradition.

Some time before one of these trips, a dear student of mine, who had sadly lost her mother just months before, got engaged. Unfortunately, this was not the only tragic incident she had experienced in her life thus far, but one of many. I therefore knew that it would be most meaningful if I would attend her *vort* in Brooklyn, which I happily did.

Months later, I received a call from her. "Rabbi Klatzko!" this same girl exclaimed in a chipper tone. "Are you available next Thursday?" The truth was that I wasn't. "Well, I will be in Poland with a group of students," I replied. "Oh…" mellowed out her voice. "What is 'oh'?" I asked, getting the sense that something was amiss. "I am getting married next Thursday." I was caught off guard. For one, I hadn't received any invitation, and moreover, even if I had, a trip to Poland had already been scheduled. Fifty students had signed up and thousands of dollars had been laid out. "I am so, so sorry," I said, nearly choking on my words, "but I cannot cancel the trip. If I can make it up to you though, I would really love you and your *chassan* to come to my house the first Shabbos I return home…" The phone conversation soon thereafter ended, but I was just about broken. I knew how much it would have meant for her if I would attend the

wedding, but it was simply impossible for me to be in two places at once.

The following day, her *chassan* called me. "Rabbi Klatzko, I could be mistaken, but I'm not sure if my *kallah* was clear. She was hoping that you and your wife would walk her down to the *chuppa*." My heart immediately dropped. I then realized what we were dealing with. Her mother had passed away, and she was therefore not merely asking me to attend the wedding, but fill the special role of walking her to the *chuppa*. I was torn. I sincerely wished to be there for her, but I also needed to be there for my other students on their trip. It would not be fair to them to cancel anything. And so, reluctantly, I reiterated to the *chassan* how much I would have loved to be at the wedding, yet I was deeply sorry I would be unable to make it.

A few days later, there I was in the Majdanek Concentration Camp in Poland. Standing in the same place that so many of our brothers and sisters once did, I and all the students were shaken to the core. Our hearts dropped as did tears from our eyes, leaving our cheeks wet and cool. The tour guide then spoke up. "You cannot imagine how many parents cried for the loss of their children here, and how many children cried for the loss of their parents here."

It then, suddenly, hit me. There I stood, at the very place where young children who would never again see their parents shed endless tears. And thousands of miles away was my own student, who as well cried over the loss of her mother as she prepared to walk to her *chuppa*. "How could I not be there for her?" I asked myself. If I were to leave her alone and disappointed, I would be failing to act on the lesson I stood to learn from that concentration camp. And so, later that evening, I stood up in front of the students and said, "Dear students, I hope you will understand, but I will need to leave you for a short while. I am going to fly back to Brooklyn on the next flight and walk one of my students down to her *chuppa*. I will soon return after the wedding. I am doing this because I must be there

for her." And that is exactly what I did. Some time later, one of the students who had gone along on the trip approached me. "Rabbi Klatzko, I just wanted to tell you that you leaving to attend that wedding was the biggest lesson you taught us this trip. It demonstrated the importance and extent we are to care for our fellow brothers and sisters. That is something we will never forgot."

That trip was one which I too will never forget. Not just the flight to Poland, but the flight from Poland. It forced to me to realize that our mission to eternalizing the legacy of our nation is championed when we not merely learn about the past but live the past. As I heard how children cried for their parents, I realized that the same was happening for my student in the present. And I would only be fulfilling my responsibility as a teacher, a role model and a Jew were I to be there for my student. If I had only traveled all the way to Poland for that one lesson, it would have been all worth it. Yes indeed.



R' Yisroel Baal Shem Tov ZT"L would say: "There are three mitzvos which are worthwhile even if one performed them without kavanah: ***Learning Torah*** - because regardless of one's intention, he has acquired greater Torah knowledge; ***Tzedakah*** - because whether he wanted to or not, the poor have benefited; and ***Mikveh*** - because there is no way to emerge from it without becoming pure!"



R' Simcha Zissel Ziv ZT"L (Alter Kelm) said: "It is equally wrong for a wealthy person to feel superior and speak condescendingly to others because of his wealth, as it is wrong for a poor person to feel inferior and speak submissively because of his lack of money. Both wealth and poverty are circumstances given by Hashem, that provide tests and are not reflections of a person's value."



R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad ZT"L (Ben Ish Chai) said: "The posuk tells us that when the brothers saw Yosef approaching from afar, they decided right then and there to kill him. But by the time he reached them, the plan had changed, and they ended up selling him. We learn two things from this: First, never give up - when all seems lost, one never knows what might happen or how things could change in an instant. Second, when one comes to a decision in haste, wait a few moments and rethink the issue. You never know how the decision may be altered with a clearer mind."



R' Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai ZT"L (Chid"a) would say: הבור ריק אין בו מים - 'The pit was empty, water was not in it.' Yosef was thrown into a pit that had no water, although it did contain snakes and scorpions (Medrash). How did Chazal know that the pit contained snakes and scorpions?

From the letters of the words **אין בו**- 'not in it.' These five letters are the **ראשי תבות** for the words, **אַבל נַחשים וְעקרבים יֵש בַּו** - 'but snakes and scorpions were in it.'"

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זְקֻנִים הוּא לוֹ וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים

"Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his sons since he was a child of his old age, and he made him a fine woolen tunic." *(37:3)*

The Gemara (Shabbat 10a) teaches: "One should never single out one of his children for favouritism, for as a result of the two selaim of silk that Yaakov (Yisrael) gave Yosef, the brothers became jealous and one thing led to another until eventually they were exiled to Egypt." Commentaries ask: Was not the exile to Egypt already foretold in a prophecy to Avraham? How then can Yaakov's favoritism be blamed for causing the exile?

R' Eliyahu of Vilna z"l (1720-1797; the Vilna Gaon) explains: Yaakov's favouritism was not the ultimate cause of the exile. However, we are taught, "G-d brings about good through good and bad through bad." Thus, from the fact that Yaakov's favoritism was

used by G-d as a catalyst or a tool to bring about the exile, we learn that favouritism is bad (Perushei Ha'GRA: Chad Gadya)

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זְקֻנִים הוּא לוֹ וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים

"Now Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his sons since he was a child of his old age, and he made him a ketonet pasim / fine woolen tunic." *(37:3)*

Rabbeinu Machir z"l Hy"d (14th century) writes: "Pasim" is an acronym for the four individuals or groups that persecuted Yosef: Potiphar, the socharim / merchants, the Yishmaelim, and the Midyanim. (Avkat Rocheil)



R' Raphael Emanuel Chai Riki z"l (1688-1743; author of Mishnat Chassidim and other works) offers another interpretation: "Pasim" is an acronym for the four dreamers who changes Yosef's life: Pharaoh; the Salai / basket-man, an allusion to the baker who dreamed that birds were eating bread out of a basket on his head; Yosef himself; and the Mashkeh / cupbearer. The reason the baker is referred to anonymously as the "basket-man" and not by his occupation of "baker" is because his dream foreshadowed his disappearance from the world, i.e., his death. (Chosheiv Machashavot)

Instead of giving others a piece of your mind, give them a piece of your heart!

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein -The Most Important Words



The Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (3:18) tells us, *"He [Rabbi Akiva] used to say: Beloved is man who was created in the image of G-d. It is an even greater love that it was made known to him that he was created in the image of G-d."* What does this mean?

Imagine a poor man who has a bank account with just a few dollars deposited. He has not looked if he has made any money in thirty years. One day, a friend of his secretly goes to his bank and deposits one million dollars into his account. The poor man, however, has no idea that his friend just made him a millionaire. He still roams the streets and wears dirty clothing. He never considers checking his account because he never dreams that someone would ever give him so much money. Now comes the question. Is this man a millionaire? He has no idea he has the money, he is living like a beggar and he will continue to live like a beggar for the rest of his life. The answer is that he may be worth a million dollars, but he is mentally a poor man.

The Mishnah teaches that Hashem not only showed us His love because He created us in His image, but he displayed extra love by telling us that He did so. If G-d would have created us with the potential of reaching such lofty spiritual levels, but never informed us of such potential, we would never live up to that greatness.The same is true, continues the Mishnah, about the Jewish people at large. "The Jewish nation is beloved by G-d for they are called His children. It is an even greater love that it was made known to them that they are His children." It makes the greatest difference when we are not only loved, but are told that we are loved.

A number of years ago, a very affluent, elderly gentleman approached me after I had spoken in Florida. I took one look at him and noticed that his eyes were full of tears. "Rabbi Wallerstein," he said, "let me tell you something. My mother had eight children before the Holocaust. But then, so abruptly, she lost them all along with her husband. Her entire family was gone. She was devastated.

"Following the war, she came to America and married my father and had me. I was raised as a single child, but that only went so far. Never in my entire life did I ever hear my mother tell me, 'I love you.' I always wished to hear those loving words escape from her mouth, but they never did. "Three days before she passed away, I sat with her in the hospital. Unexpectedly, she turned to me and said, 'Hershel, there is something I never told you.' As she said those words, I leaned over in my seat, waiting so eagerly to hear what she had to say. 'Hershel, I am so proud of you.'

"Rabbi Wallerstein," the man continued, "there was one day in my life where I made close to one hundred million dollars on a deal. I thought it was the most important day of my life. But in fact, it was nothing compared to the day my mother told me, 'I am so proud of you.' Those few words which my mother uttered to me before she passed away were more valuable than anything else I've ever had in my life. That was my biggest and best day of my life.

"Whenever you get up to speak," this man said to me, "tell mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers to tell their children and grandchildren that they are proud of them and they love them. When children know that, then no matter what happens in a child's life, those feelings will warm their heart and carry them through."

R' Akiva, the author of this Mishnah, lived a very difficult life and experienced an even more painful death at the hands of the Romans. Yet he is the one who tells us about love. "You want to know what love is?" says R' Akiva. "Love is when you tell somebody how you feel about them."

The most important words which can be said to a spouse, a child or a grandchild are "I love you" and "I'm proud of you." Especially in a marriage, even if your spouse knows that you love them, it makes all the difference when you express it to them. When a wife tells her husband, "I am so proud of you. You work so hard for our family and we all so greatly appreciate it," he skips into his car and heads off to work elated and energized. And when a husband tells his wife, "Thank you for everything you do for our family; I love you," she feels happy, cared for, valued and beloved.

The same is with our children. When a parent's love and belief in their child is felt so deeply, the child is capable of weathering any challenge which comes his or her way. Just consider the life of Yosef HaTzaddik.

Nobody in the entire Torah had a better reason to give up on life than Yosef. First, his brothers tried to kill him. Then they sold him into slavery into the lowliest land of Egypt and into the most decadent home of Potiphar and his wife, who libelled him. Yosef is all by himself without any care or support and nobody knows where he is. Yet, despite all odds stacked against him, he didn't give way to the pressures and advances of Potiphar's wife. "Va'y'maein Yosef," "But Yosef adamantly refused…" He emphatically rejected anything and everything Potiphar's wife did to try to seduce him. But how did he do it? How was he able to repulse her so firmly with unwavering resolve when nothing was going for him?

In Parshas Vayeshev, there is one other instance where the word Va'y'maein is used. "Va'y'maein l'hisnachem," "And Yaakov refused to be comforted…" Yaakov Avinu refused to believe his sons when they returned with a jacket full of blood and reported that Yosef had been attacked by an animal and torn to pieces. "I invested so much into Yosef, and now you are telling me he is dead! I won't believe it until you show me his dead body!" Yaakov would not give in to believing that Yosef was dead.

And there was Yosef, hundreds of miles away, alone, lonely, and facing threats from the wife of Potiphar. But, he did have one thing. He had the knowledge that his father believed in him and loved him. "I know that my father, Yaakov, will never give up on me! I don't know what my brothers are telling him, but I do know that until I am dead and he sees my body, he will refuse to be comforted!" The Va'y'maein expressed by Yaakov was echoed by Yosef because Yosef knew that if his father refused to be comforted, he could refuse to give way to any pressures and challenges he faced in life.

Parent and grandparents must never underestimate how important it is for a child to hear the words, "I love you." Let your children know, "No matter how far away you are and how deep you are in your darkest corner and darkest moment, you have a mother and father who will never, ever give up on you." When a child hears those words, you can rest assured that the child will make it. They will come out from underneath against all odds and weather through the toughest and roughest of life's challenges. And it is all because their parents love them, believe in them, and refuse to give up on them no matter what ever happens.



Rabbi Avraham Nissanian - Never Falling

The Gemara (Berachos 4b) makes an insightful observation that we likely would have otherwise missed. Why are all letters of the Hebrew alphabet present in the acrostic recital of the Ashrei prayer except the letter nun? Why is that the only letter which is omitted?

The Gemara explains that it is because the letter nun contains an allusion to the downfall of the Jewish people, as referenced in the

Pasuk, "She has fallen and will no longer rise, the maiden of Israel" (Amos 5:2). In deference to this verse, the prayer of Ashrei follows with the letter sameach after the letter mem and omits the nun. Yet, what oddly stands out upon considering the implication of the Gemara is the poetic hymn sang every Friday night, Eishes Chayil. Calling upon the virtues and qualities of the Jewish wife, the husband of the home serenades his wife with praise after praise. However, in Eishes Chayil, unlike Ashrei, the letter nun is included. The question thus begs: are there no fallings and descents in the life of the Jewish wife? How can it be that we include the letter nun?



For 365 days a year, a wife stands at her husband's side, and all the while looks after the house and the children. As the hymn describes, in her incredible strength, she diligently performs countless household tasks, prepares clothing and provisions for her children, and arises early before dawn and cares for the poor. The true Eishes Chayil accomplishes the extraordinary.

Yet amidst such beautiful accolades praising the Jewish wife, the hymn adds in the line, "Distinctive in the councils is her husband, when he sits with the elders of the land." In this acrostic of the letter nun, its author, Shlomo Hamelech, highlights the husband. But it is puzzling. The entire Eishes Chayil is devoted to singing the praises of the wife, and now suddenly, it switches to speak of the husband's stature and position? What place does he have?

The answer to this conundrum is the answer to the original question. It is no coincidence that the husband of the Eishes Chayil is specifically alluded to in the letter nun. It is because he is the one who gives her strength, encourages her, and fortifies her. When she needs him, he hurries home from his work with the prominent elders

and stands by her side. The Eishes Chayil may be on the verge of falling, but she never completely falls, for her husband is always there to pick her up.

The letter nun thus alludes to the wife and her husband's support. Despite being a hard-working, distinguished individual in the workplace, the husband knows where his true priorities and deepest love lies. And that is with his wife and his home. They are what he rushes home from work to take care of. And it is precisely that devotion and dedication which uplifts and carries the Eishes Chayil all the days of her life, and never allows her to falter.



Rabbi YY Jacobson - Moments of Opportunity

While Moshe was a poor man, he immensely loved one holiday: Sukkos. For six months in advance, he would set aside a large sum of money and anticipate the day when he would be able to buy a beautiful *esrog*. But one year, matters didn't work out quite as expected.

It had been a cold winter and most, if not all, of the *esrogim* trees had withered away due to frost, causing the budding *esrogim* to shrivel. The one *esrog* which was made available to the city came from a man who was selling it for five-thousand rubles. But Moshe was far from being able to afford it. With no other resort, Moshe came to terms with the unfortunate fact that this would be his first Sukkos without a beautiful *esrog*.



It was the morning before the first night of Sukkos. As Moshe removed his *tallis* and unwrapped his *tefillin*, he began thinking to himself, "How can I go through a Sukkos without an *esrog*? It can't be! But where will I find five-thousand rubles?" Moshe was at a lost with what to do. But, shortly thereafter, he came up with the following idea.

"When will I next need my *tefillin*? In a week from now. Let me therefore sell my *tefillin* now and then purchase a beautiful *esrog* with the money!" Sold by the idea, Moshe immediately set out to buy a beautiful *esrog* from the neighboring town, after which he happily returned home.

As we walked through the front door of his house, he ran into the kitchen to meet his wife and relay the wonderful news. But, she was nowhere to be found at the moment. Figuring that she must be out of the house and would soon be returning, Moshe placed the *esrog* on the counter for his wife to see immediately upon entering the kitchen. And with that, Moshe headed outside to finish constructing his sukkah.

Some time later, after Moshe's wife returned home, Moshe finished working on the sukkah and reentered the house. And there, in the kitchen, he met his wife. "Hinda!" Moshe yelled. "You won't believe it, I bought an *esrog*!" Hinda was quite surprised. "Where did you ever find the money to do so?" "Well," Moshe exclaimed, "I sold my *tefillin* and went to the neighboring town and purchased the most exquisite *esrog* I could find!" Hinda was now even more surprised. "You sold your *tefillin*? Why did you do that? Your *tefillin* you will

need for the rest of your life; you only need an *esrog* for seven days! What are you going to do about your *tefillin* in a week's time?"

"Hinda," began Moshe, "I'll tell you the truth. After I finished putting my *tefillin* on today, I said to myself, 'For the next week, I don't wear *tefillin*. The mitzvah of the day is instead that of the *esrog*. I want to perform the mitzvah of the day.' I therefore sold my *tefillin* and bought the *esrog*. After Sukkos, I will worry about *tefillin*.'

At this point, Hinda was somewhat placated. "Okay," she said, "let me see this beautiful *esrog*." "I left it on the counter," Moshe replied. "Where?" Hinda said. "Right here," Moshe reiterated, "on the kitchen counter. Didn't you see an *esrog* here?" Hinda gasped.

"I don't know how to say this," she said, "but I was just making a salad and needed lemon. I turned around and saw a nice big lemon resting on the counter. I took it and squeezed it into the salad bowl, but not enough juice was oozing out. I therefore decided to cut it into pieces and squeeze it out as much as I could. The remaining pieces went into the garbage. I'm so sorry, I didn't know it was your *esrog*. I didn't think we could afford one, and I was almost certain it was a lemon."

Moshe grew quiet, as tears streamed down his wife's eyes in regret. Slowly, he gathered himself together and gained his composure and approached Hinda. "Please look at me," he gently said. "I appreciate you and I Iove you." Hinda was confused. "You're not angry at me?" "My dear Hinda," said Moshe, "yesterday, the mitzvah of the day was putting on *tefillin*. Today, the mitzvah was buying an *esrog*. And now, the mitzvah of the moment is to be here for you, my wife, and to be kind to you."

From moment to moment in life, we are given new opportunities. At one point, the mitzvah is to pray, at another moment it is to help a fellow Jew, and at a third moment it is to be there for our spouse and be understanding and supportive. But what all these moments

have in common is that they are all ways of serving Hashem. No less dear in the eyes of Hashem is accepting a spouse's honest mistake of turning an esrog into lemon in a salad and remaining calm than is holding a beautiful precious esrog for its proper mitzvah. Both are ways of serving our Creator.

All we must ask ourselves, "What is my opportunity right now?" Sometimes, it is to go to great lengths to purchase a stunning *esrog* and other times, it is to be there for our wife or our husband or our friend. If we live our lives with this constant attitude, every moment we have is no less than a moment of beautiful service of Hashem.

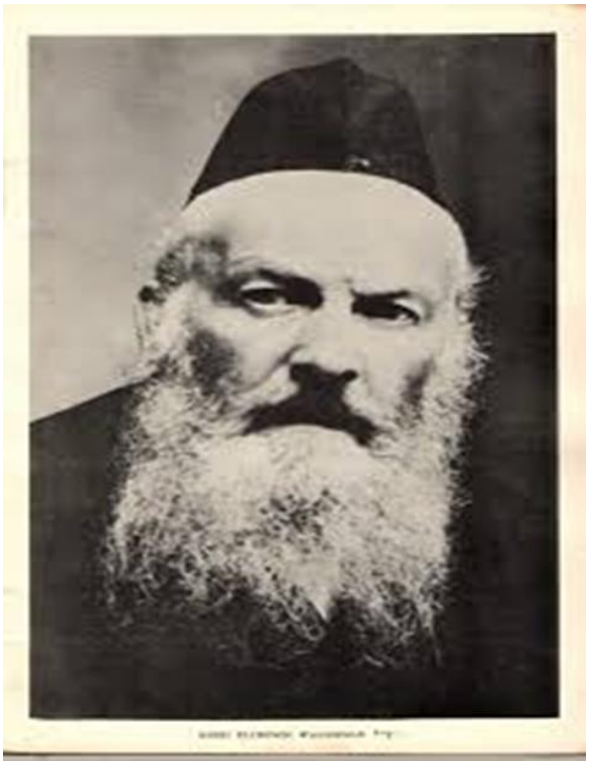
Rabbi J. Gewirtz- Migdal Ohr



At the age of 76, **Rabbi Shimon Schwab**, the late esteemed rabbi of the Washington Heights German-Jewish community became confined to a wheelchair. A grandson who would often wheel him around was amazed at Rabbi Schwab's ability to adapt. R' Schwab never complained about his predicament. He always wore a smile and was in a pleasant mood. "Opa," asked his grandson, "How could it be that you function now in a wheelchair the same way you functioned when you were able to walk? Don't you ever get upset and down about having to be in a wheelchair for the rest of your life?" "Tell me," said R' Schwab, "If someone gave you a million dollars and after a while asked you to give him back one hundred dollars, would you have any qualms about returning that amount?

The Master of the World has given me a fully functioning and healthy body for 76 years, a million dollars. Now He has decided to take away my ability to walk, for valid reasons known only to Him. Should I now complain because He has chosen to take back a hundred dollars?"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



Rav Simcha Wasserman once said a story about his father, **Rav Elchanan Wasserman**, the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivah Baranovich. "Once my father, zt"l, had to travel from Baranovich, and I was accompanying him to the train station. We were walking together, and I was carrying a small suitcase for him. My father was wearing new boots that my mother had bought for him, which he had refused to wear until my mother gave away his very old and worn shoes to the girl who carried the water buckets through the snow.

My mother explained to my father that the girl had no shoes and she really needed them, and it was only then that he agreed to wear the new ones. I could tell that something was bothering him.

After a while he said, 'These boots are troubling me.' My father never spoke without a specific reason, so I knew that I was about to learn something. He said, 'What is bothering me is that they have laces, and I estimate that it is going to cost me half a minute a day to tie and untie them when I put them on and take them off.' He was teaching me how valuable the gift of time is!"



Living Jewish

וַיְהִי־שָׁם בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר *And he was there in the prison* *(39:20)* The phrase "and he was" is used to indicate something that is consistent and without change. Joseph was the same righteous person in Potiphar's home as he was in prison, for "the righteous person is the foundation of the world" regardless of circumstance. (Sefat Emet)

Rav Ozer Alport - Parsha Points to Ponder

Rashi writes (37:3) that Yaakov loved Yosef more than his other sons because Yosef was born in his old age. According to this, why wasn't Binyomin, who was born later, even more beloved than Yosef? (Chizkuni, Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, Pirkei Torah)

The Chizkuni answers that because Yaakov's beloved wife Rochel died while giving birth to Binyomin, his love toward Binyomin was somewhat lessened.

Rav Mordechai Gifter derives from here that if our love for our children is dependent on our feelings toward our spouse, then how important it is for the sake of our children that we work hard to establish a loving relationship with our spouse. **Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi and the Maharal** explain that Binyomin was born 7 or 8 years after Yosef. During this time, Yaakov assumed that he wouldn't have any more children, and his extra love for Yosef as his last child



cemented and wasn't diminished even by the subsequent birth of Binyomin. Alternatively, the **Maharal** notes that Binyomin wasn't even 10 at this time, and his mind wasn't developed like his brothers. Among the sons who had already matured, Yosef was the youngest and received the most love.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn writes a story that took place a number of years ago in Brooklyn, New York. A very private, soft spoken gentleman, Mr. Blau, who always sat near the back of the Shul, told his Rav that he wanted to donate a Sefer Torah to the Shul. He said that he had hired a Sofer to write the Sefer Torah for him, and now the Torah was nearly complete.



The Rav was incredulous. Mr. Blau was not known to have substantial funds and the cost of a new Sefer Torah was more than $30,000! The Rav spoke to the Sofer and learned that Mr. Blau had indeed been paying small sums of money over the years, and he recently had made the last payment. The Sefer Torah would be finished in a few days.

That Shabbos the Rav announced the good news to the Shul, and everyone went over to Mr. Blau to wish him a 'Mazel Tov' and thank him for his generous gift to the Shul, and plans were made for the Hachnasas Sefer Torah. A few weeks later on a bright Sunday afternoon, the community gathered at Mr. Blau's home and escorted him as he carried the Sefer Torah from his home to the street where he walked under a Chupah to bring the Torah to the Shul.

There was dancing and singing, and a special meal was held in honor of the occasion. A few days later, a neighbour asked Mr. Blau if

there was a particular reason he decided to have the Sefer Torah written. At first he was hesitant to talk about it, but eventually he relented and told his heart-breaking story.

When Mr. Blau was only 16 years old, the Nazis took him, his parents, and his sisters from Lodz, their hometown in Poland, to one of the concentration camps. He was separated from his family, and he was placed in a slave labour barracks. One night as he was lying in bed, a Nazi soldier came in to check on the prisoners. He walked from bed to bed, and then he saw Mr. Blau.

Suddenly the Nazi lunged at Mr. Blau's feet, grabbed his leather boots and yelled, "These boots are mine now!" Mr. Blau was shocked. The leather boots had been given to him by his parents shortly before they had been captured by the Nazis. He treasured them because they were his last connection to his family. Mr. Blau was devastated.

The next morning, he went out of his barracks barefoot and found the soldier who had taken his boots. In desperation he ran over to him and begged, "Please give me a pair of shoes. I have nothing to wear on my feet. I'll freeze to death!" He did not dare to ask for his own boots back.

Much to his surprise, the soldier told him, "Wait here. I'll be back in a few minutes with some shoes for you." Mr. Blau shivered in the cold as he waited for the soldier to return. Soon the Nazi came back with a pair of shoes and gave them to the startled but grateful teenager. Mr. Blau went back to his barracks to put on the shoes. He looked them over carefully. They were made of wood, but he knew he would have to wear them regardless of what they were made of or how uncomfortable they would be.

As he was about to put his foot into the shoe, he looked into its instep and gasped. The instep was a piece of parchment from a Sefer Torah! He froze in terror. How could the Nazis be so heartless and cruel? How could he step down on the words that Hashem Himself

had told Moshe to write for all generations? But he knew he had no choice. There was nothing else to wear on his feet and it was either these shoes or frostbite and death. With a heart full of guilt, he put them on.

Years later, Mr. Blau said, "With every step I took in those shoes, I felt like I was trampling on Hashem's Sefer Torah. I swore to myself that if I ever got out of the camps alive, no matter how rich or poor I was, someday I would have a Sefer Torah written, and I would give back to Hashem the honour that I took from Him by trampling on His Torah. That's why I gave the Shul a Sefer Torah."

Rabbi Krohn concluded, "In his sincerity, Mr. Blau felt he was trampling on the Torah. Who could blame him? But what about us? We must ask ourselves, 'Are we in any way trampling on the Torah, Chas V'Shalom? Do we, unwillingly and sometimes even willingly, violate basic Mitzvos of Hashem's Torah, and in essence, trample on His words? Mr. Blau surely rectified his 'misdeed', and we should do no less!"

A Lesson in Not Looking Guilty by Benjamin A Rose

When the wife of Potifar tried to make overtures to Yosef, she grabbed Yosef's garment. Yosef left the garment in her hand and ran outside. The pasuk says, **וַיָּנָס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה** – "Yosef ran and went outside." Why the double verb "ran and went"? The pasuk should have just said, **וַיָּנָס הַחוּצָה** – "And he ran outside"?

The Kli Yakar answers that Yosef did not want to appear guilty to the people outside as if he was running away from someone. He therefore ran away while still inside the house. Once he got outside, he walked casually, in order not to attract attention. That is why the pasuk says **וַיָּנָס וַיֵּצֵא**– he ran at first and once outside he walked.

This is my baby!

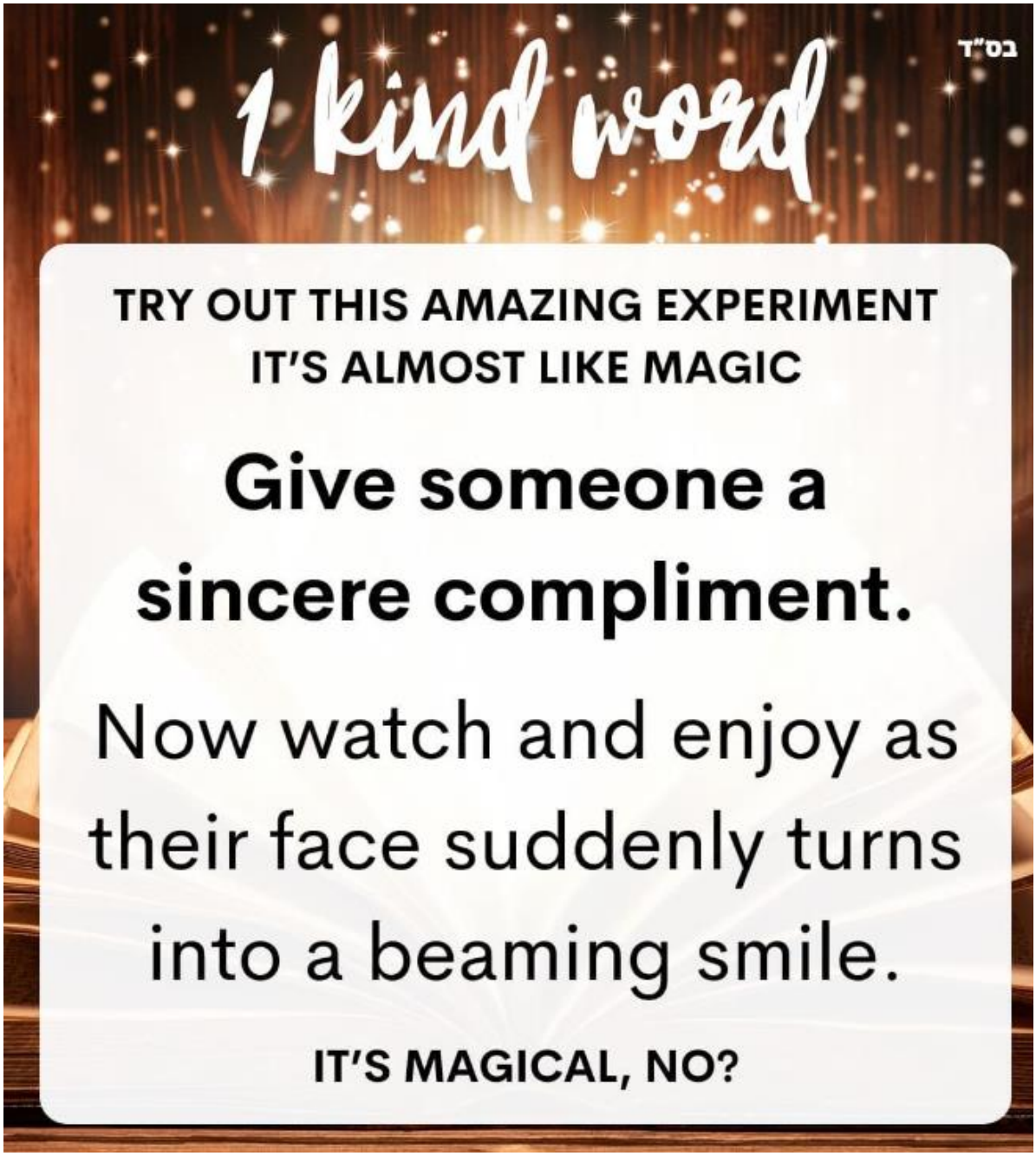
Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky writes: A man once approached my grandfather, **Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky**, of blessed memory, quite distraught. "I know this may not sound like a major problem," he began, "but my 17- year-old daughter is very upset with me. It has come to a point that she hardly talks to me. It began a few nights ago. My wife and I were with a number of old friends at a wedding when my daughter walked by. I introduced her to them by saying, 'This is my baby.' "I could see that at the moment she became very upset. Moments later she pulled me to aside and was crying. 'You still think I'm a baby!' she sobbed. 'I am almost eighteen already, and all you do is call me your baby! Won't I ever be a grown-up in your eyes?' Ever since then she doesn't want to talk to me." The man shrugged as he pleaded with the sage. "I really don't want to make this into a major issue, but I'm not sure how to resolve this. Perhaps the Rosh Yeshiva can guide me."



Reb Yaakov put his hand on the man's shoulder. "You live in Flatbush, don't you?" At the time Reb Yaakov was staying at his youngest son, Reb Avraham's home, and he invited the man to visit him there together with his daughter. He assured him that he would not discuss the incident but was confident that by the time the visit was over the matter would be resolved."

The next day the man and his daughter visited Reb Yaakov at Reb Avraham's home. Reb Yaakov invited the man and his daughter into the dining room where they discussed a variety of issues from schoolwork to life in pre- war Europe everything but the incident at the wedding. About 10 minutes

into the conversation, my uncle, Reb Avraham, came down the stairs. Reb Yaakov looked over to him and invited him to join the conversation. But first he introduced Reb Avraham to his guests. "This is my baby!" exclaimed the revered sage as he gave a warm hug to his 55-year-old son.



"A good intention is added as a good deed." ~~ The Zohar

Rav Shimshon Pincus - Bowing To Yosef Or To His Bundle?



In the second dream of Yosef the sun, moon, and the stars bowed down to Yosef. But in the first dream we find that the bundles of the Shevatim bowed down to Yosef's bundle and not to Yosef himself. Why?

Rav Shimshon Pincus answers that these dreams were all played out in the future in Mitzrayim. The first dream happened when the Shevatim came before Yosef when they came to buy food. They had no idea who Yosef was, so this was represented by them bowing down to his bundle. The second dream was after Yosef revealed himself and they came with Yaakov. At that point they bowed down to the person they knew was their younger brother Yosef.

Rav Pincus also suggests another answer. The first time they came, their mission was to get the food. They did not bow down to Yosef the person but rather to him as the master of the food. This is represented in the dream by them bowing to his bundle of wheat. When they came with Yaakov they bowed and showed respect to Yosef the king and bowed to him personally.

How To Make Your Child Smart

The pasuk says about Yosef that he was Yaakov's Ben Zikunim. Literally this means the child born in his old age. Yet Targum Unkelus chooses to veer from the literal meaning and translates it as "Bar Chakim", his wise son. Why does Unkelus do this?

The Chinuch Malchusi explains that the baby of the family usually gets the most love. The older children must endure the father's

vision and his desire to raise the ideal child, the child of his dreams. When they fall short, they pay the price and become a disappointment to their parents.

Not so the baby who is often treated more like a grandchild than a child, as he is overloaded with love and affection. Reality has set in, expectations are lowered, and age has softened the staff of the parents. The parents learn how to appreciate the good in the child, a thing that a well-seasoned parent no longer takes for granted.

In this environment the child can flourish. His mind is at ease and his emotional needs satisfied. "Do not hit a child too much", says Rabbeinu Gershon (Bava Basra 21a). "No one ever got smarter from being beaten." With love you can do so much more!

Bais HaLevi - Yehuda's Change Of Heart, The Dynamics Of The Death Sentence

"Ma Betza Ki Naharog Es Achinu V'Chisinu Es Damo" (Vayeishev 37:26), what would we gain by killing our brother and covering his blood, asked Yehuda? If the Shevatim tried Yosef on Halachic grounds, on what basis did Yehuda decide that Yosef should not die in the pit.

The Bais HaLevi says there are two reasons for punishment, revenge and/or as a deterrent to others from committing the same crime. If a punishment is meted out for revenge, then it can be done secretly, and you can settle the score without other people seeing. If it is done as deterrent then it must be done publicly in order for those who you are trying to deter, to see or at least hear about it.

One does not kill a brother for revenge. Even if he deserved it, a person overlooks his brother's wrongdoing and spares him out of mercy. However, if it is to teach the world a lesson, then a person can even kill his brother. That even a brother is not spared, is the biggest lesson of them all.

The Shevatim tried Yosef and found him guilty of Mored B'Malchus Yehuda. In their view, this crime would have history altering implications. By putting him to death it would serve as a lesson for all future generations.

For precisely this reason, explains the Bais HaLevi, Yehuda suggested that they take him out of the pit. "MaBetza Ki Naharog Es Achinu V'Chisinu Es Damo " (Vayeishev 37:26), what would we gain by killing our brother and covering his blood, asked Yehuda? To take revenge doesn't make sense because he is our brother. Furthermore because no one will ever find out about it, there is no lesson we will teach to the world in his death.

Chida - A Dead Giveaway, They Couldn't Even Say Yosef's Name

The Chida says that when the Shevatim showed Yaakov, Yosef's Kesones Pasim, Yaakov accused the Shevatim of killing him.

From where does he see this? - He explains that when you need to refer to your enemy you cannot even manage to say his name, and you use an indirect reference to him. When the Shevatim came to Yaakov they said, "Haker Na HaKesones Bincha; Identify the garment of your son," without mentioning Yosef's name.

Yaakov answered, "Tarof Toraf Yosef," literally, "Yosef was killed." The Chida says that it also means the name Yosef was omitted, and you refer to him only as "my son" without being able to utter his name. Therefore, you, his sworn enemies, must have murdered him yourselves.

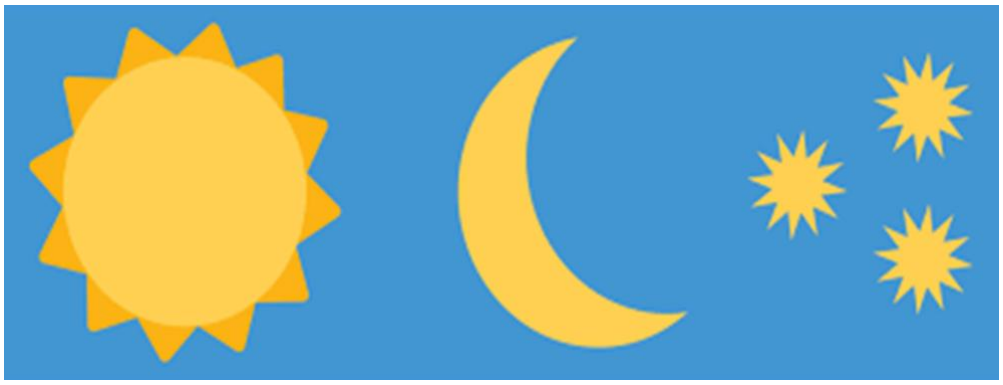
"A friendless man is like a right hand without the left." ~~ Mivchar Hapeninim.

How Many People Bowed To Yosef?



Yosef had 2 dreams. In his first dream he said," We were all binding sheaves in the middle of the field when my sheaf arose and stood, and your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf".

In his second dream he said, "Behold the sun the moon and the 11 stars bowed down to me. Why is the amount of people who were bowing to Yosef mentioned in the second dream (11 stars), as opposed to the first dream where it just says that the sheaves bowed, without specifying the number 11?



The Meforshim explain, Yosef's 1st dream was a Nevuah to the first time the Shvatim came down to Mitzrayim. During that trip, only 10 Shvatim bowed to Yosef since Binyamin stayed with his father Yaakov in Canaan. That is why the Torah does not mention the number of sheaves, since not all the Shvatim were present. The 2nd dream was a Nevuah to the second time they came down to Mitzrayim. Then Yaakov had sent Binyamin too. That is why the dream stated that all 11 stars bowed to Yosef.

A Wise Man would say: ***"Resentment is like taking poison and hoping the other person dies!"***

If Your Pit Is Empty, It Is A Bad Sign



Yosef was thrown into the pit. "VihaBor Rayk Ain Bo Mayim" - "The pit was empty there was no water inside. Rashi asks, if the pit was empty, obviously there wasn't any water inside! Why is it necessary to say," Ain Bo Mayim"? Rashi answers, "Mayim Ayn Bo Aval Nichashim ViAkrabim Yesh Bo" - "There wasn't water in the pit, but there were snakes and scorpions."

The Baalei Mussar explain this Chazal concerning Torah. The Gemara in Taanis says that Torah is compared to water. The pasuk is saying, "VihaBor Rayk Ain Bo Mayim" - if a person is empty without Torah (Mayim), "Nichashim ViAkrabim Yesh Bo" - you can be sure that he is filled with snakes and scorpions - Bad Middos and other Aveiros. A person cannot say , "I can still be a good Jew without learning Torah".

Rav Shloime Volbe - Stories Of Tzaddikim

Parshas Vayeishev is the beginning of a four parsha long story of Yaakov and his children. Rashi brings the Medrash which compares this to the very brief history given at the end of Parshas Vayishlach about Eisav and how he settled his land in Sai'ir. That which is Chashuv says the Medrash gets a great deal of attention while the rest is shortened. This is similar to the ten generations between Adam and Noach, says the Medrash, which are greatly condensed as the generations fly by with the mere mention of the link in the mesora and nothing else. That is until we get to Noach who has a whole parsha dedicated to him.

Rav Volbe says and astounding thing. We see from this Medrash that the Torah does not talk about the Mabul to tell us the story of which coincidentally Noach played a starring role. On the contrary, the only reason the Torah pays any attention to the Mabul was because it was the major part of the life story of the tzaddik Noach.

Maybe we can find a further illustration of Rav Volbe's point in the fact that we know there was a major flood that wiped out one-third of the world in the days of Enosh, yet not one word about it is mentioned anywhere in the Torah.

Yosef, The Good Looking Standard of Excellence

The gemara says that when you come to the Yom HaDin after you die you will have many excuses for your shortcomings. You were too poor and didn't have time to learn. To this Hashem will point to Hillel and ask "were your poorer than him?" You were too rich and were way too busy. No, try again. Look at Eliezer who was fabulously wealthy and made time to learn. You were too attractive, and temptation got to you. Sorry, Yosef was far better looking, and he managed.

Rav Yehuda Asad says this is pshat in the pasuk, "Rabos Machshavos B'Lev Ish" there are many ideas or excuses in a person's mind for not passing his tests in life. However, "Atzas Hashem Hee Sakum" Hashem's plan of testing you fairly will stand at the end. How? Hidden in the word "Hee" (Hey-Yud-Aleph) is the acronym for Hillel-Yosef-Eliezer). With them as examples all your sob stories and excuses will not pass muster.

Emunah is not merely believing that Hashem can help — it's living with the awareness that He is helping every moment. — Chazon Ish (Emunah u'Bitachon)

Climbing Higher

A talmid of **R' Noach Weinberg z"l,** founder of Aish HaTorah, recounted how one evening, R' Noach invited him home to help put up his sukkah and have dinner. When they got there, R' Noach's seven-year-old son was trying to climb a pipe in the corner of the living room. The boy was about six feet off the ground and not getting any higher.



Knowing what would happen in his home, the student braced himself as R' Noach approached the boy, sure that the child would get into trouble. But he was in for a surprise. R' Noach got right next to his son, bent over a bit and said, "Stand on my shoulders and I'll help you reach the ceiling." That's how R' Noach treated every Jew, and that's why he was a giant in Kiruv. He didn't scold; he humbled himself and helped everyone reach higher.

V'halachtah B'drachav - The Ways of Hashem

The *Chazon Ish* was known to be a pious and holy individual, and was a giant of *ruach* and of *chesed*. The *Chazon Ish* was once being observed by someone as he *davened* the weekday *Maariv Shemoneh Esrei*, and among the many things that stood out about the way this *gadol* said *Shemoneh Esrei* was the heartfelt sincerity that he put into the *brachah* of *Sim Shalom*. He put his entire being into saying this *brachah*. What was the meaning behind this?

The answer is that this *brachah* affords one the opportunity to ask for *shalom*, peace, for *Klal Yisroel*— for any and every time. One may

even ask for peace *at times of peace*! Why wait to ask only at times when there is strife?

In this *brachah* we ask for *tzedakah u'brachah*— everything good that life has to offer is included in the *brachah* of *Sim Shalom*! To the *Chazon Ish*, this *brachah* was an opportunity to *daven* for *Klal Yisroel* and have the good of everybody in mind.

Showing The Pinky During Hagbaah Of The Sefer Torah



It is from the Sefer Meam Loez (Ki Savo, 27:26) and Rabbi Hayyim Palagei in Lev Chaim, Orach Chaim (167:6) it is Sefardic in practice, since it was originally written in Ladino, now available in English and Hebrew as a translation, but most people do not know it, to be a Sefardic custom, and just saw others doing it and took it up too, not in a mocking way, as we know that "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery".

It is reported that both **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l**, as well as **Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv z"l**, are not in favour of the pinky/finger pointing.

As seen in a recent work entitled Halachically Speaking, by Rabbi Moishe Dovid Lebovits (volume II). He discusses there what to do during hagbah.

The custom you are talking about, is a Sepharadic custom. It is not Ashkenazic minhag. Ashkenazic minhag is, as brought down in the Rama in Shulchan Aruch, to bow toward the sefer Torah during hagbah.

For some reason, the pinky pointing has become a cute custom for some people. Maybe they picked it up in Eretz Yisroel, or in other places where they came in contact with Sepharadim. I guess it seems cute to them, but they should follow the Ashkenazic minhag if they are Ashkenazic Jews, which is more respectful to the holy Torah, instead of giving a finger to the sefer Torah.

In general, this is representative of a larger phenomenon, which is problematic, of people finding some custom which seems cute to them and adopting it, at the expense of their own tradition/mesorah. Not the way to go. Cuteness and style are not supposed to be the determining factors in minhogim.

It is probably easier and cuter to point a pinky than to bow.

Also, anything new has an attraction to some people. Bowing of that nature is done elsewhere in davening (e.g. modim, aleinu), so bowing another time has probably less attraction to bored people than a new practice of sticking out a finger.

Nevertheless, as stated earlier, the older minhag of bowing should be respected and followed. If the Shulchan Aruch says to do so, that it not a minor matter. It should be respected. Those that want to see it inside in the Shulchan Aruch are directed to Sh.Ar. Orach Chaim 134:2. **שו"ע אורח חיים - סימן קלד**

(ב) מראה פני כתיבת ס"ת לעם העומדים לימינו ולשמאלו, ומחזירו לפניו ולאחריו, <u>שמצוה על כל אנשים ונשים לראות הכתב ולכרוע</u>, ולומר: וזאת התורה וכו' תורת ה' תמימה וכו'

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

The *Steipler Gaon*, Rav Yaakov Kanievsky, *z"tl*, is the father of ***HaGaon* Rav Chaim Kanievsky, *z"tl***. Once, a man was visiting the *Steipler*, and asked him at what point one stops *davening* for the well-being of a child? "Is there any specific time when the child is 'on his own'? Perhaps when the child gets married or has children of his own?"

The *Steipler* responded, "I cannot answer that question. My Chaim'l is fifty-four years old and I'm still *davening* for him!"

The *Steipler taught* that one never stops *davening* for the success and happiness of their children.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

Rabbi Yosef Eisen, *Shlit"a*, taught that after *Havdalah*, as we put all the Shabbos things away, we should try to appreciate how special Shabbos is and thank Hashem for this tremendous gift.

Just like we would thank someone who gave us a present, we should certainly thank Hashem with love for the special day He gave us. Rather than feeling sad that Shabbos is over, we should look forward to, and prepare for, the *next* Shabbos.

The tasks we do after Shabbos are part of *kavod Shabbos*. This will truly show Hashem that we cherish the gift of Shabbos, because we prepare for it so far in advance. Instead of thinking that we are putting Shabbos away, we should think that we are preparing everything to be used again in just a few short days!

"Don't threaten a child: Either punish him or forgive him. " ~~ Talmud

Parshah Thoughts by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

At the end of this week's *parshah*, Yosef interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker while in jail (40:1-19). What did Yosef see in these dreams that made him interpret that the baker would die and the butler would live?



Rav Elchanan Wasserman explains that in the baker's dream, he was only an observer— he was inactive. One who is inactive, it is as if he is dead, without any growth opportunity. However, the butler, on the other hand, was busy in his dream. This is what implied that he would live.

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

The *parshah* begins, ***Va'yeishev Yaakov, and Yaakov settled*** (37:1). *Rashi* quotes a *Medrash* which says that Yaakov wanted to rest peacefully, but Hashem didn't grant him this opportunity. It seems a bit odd that Hashem wouldn't want Yaakov to live in peace.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, elaborated on the meaning of this point. *Of course,* Hashem wanted him to be happy! However, Yaakov thought that he didn't have to be concerned anymore about the *chinuch*, education, of his children, as they were already older and grown up. Hashem was teaching him that care and concern for a child's growth doesn't ever stop, no matter what the age.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

Dr. Kook, a known doctor in Yerushalayim, told about an amazing encounter he had with the *Gaon*, **Rav Aharon Cohen**, one of the *Roshei Yeshivah* of Chevron. Rav Aharon once had a deep wound in his shoulder which was not healing on its own, and Dr. Kook decided that it needed an operation in order to heal. However, Rav Aharon was a very weak and frail man, and Dr. Kook was in a dilemma about how to operate on him. He was afraid to use anesthesia due to his frailty, but if he wouldn't, Rav Aharon would suffer terrible pain during the operation.

Dr. Kook discussed the matter with Rav Aharon, and Rav Aharon immediately said, "There is no need to use anesthesia. Just tell me when you begin to operate, and everything will be fine."

Dr. Kook acquiesced, and later recounted what had occurred during the operation. "I informed Rav Aharon when I began the operation, and after I had finished operating, Rav Aharon asked me if I had finished.

Until today, I can't believe how a person could be capable of withstanding such pain without reacting at all! I asked the Rav how he was able to do it, and he said that by only thinking about words of Torah, he was able to immerse himself in learning so deeply, that he couldn't feel a thing. He even had to ask if the operation was finished!" (***Sha'al Avicha V'Yagedcha***)

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface *R' Shmuel Winzelberg*

וישב יעקב בארץ מגורי אביו בארץ כנען (לז:א)

And Yaakov settled in the land of his father's travels, in the land of Canaan. (37:1) The Chida explains that all of Yaakov's troubles are hinted at in the word **וישב** . If you take the second letter of the names of **יוֵסף, דִינה, עֵשו, לָבן** , they spell out **וישב**

The Chida asks, why specifically the second letter?

He answers, because of the hatred of Eisav who was always afraid that Yaakov would rule over him and he would be secondary. Yaakov therefore told him, "You have nothing to worry about. Look how many troubles came upon me." (***Siyach Aharon***).

Meshech Chochma - Yosef's Earn Credibility From The Sar HaOfim's Execution

The Medrash says that Hashem creates anger between masters and their servants to bring greatness to tzadikim. Paroh got angry at the Sar HaMashkim and Sar HaOfim to bring greatness to Yosef. Bigson and Seresh got angry at Achashveirosh to raise Mordechai to greatness. The Meshech Chochma asks why did Hashem need to involve the Sar HaOfim who was hanged, he only needed the Sar HaMashkim who would eventually go on to tell Paroh about Yosef?



He answers that if it was only the Sar HaMashkim, he would have seen Yosef's interpretation of the dream as self-serving. If indeed it meant that the Sar HaMashkim would be reinstated, Yosef would look like a genius. if he would be executed, then no one would know the difference. Yosef had nothing to lose. However, if he was just guessing, it would have been very foolish to tell the Sar HaOfim that he will be killed. Had he not been killed and instead reinstated like the Sar HaMashkim, he certainly would have taken revenge on Yosef for his frightful interpretation. To prove Yosef's power of interpreting dreams Hashem sent both Sarim.

Rav Boruch Of Mezhibuzh - Destiny Gnawed at Yosef

Rashi says (Vayeishev 39:1) that Potifar's wife pursued Yosef L'Shem Shamayim since she saw that she would have children from him. At the end Yosef married her daughter. **The Chiddushei HaRim** brings in the name of **Rav Boruch Of Mezhibuzh** that Yosef must have seen this same destiny in the stars, and therefore, struggled to stay away from her, as his mind kept telling him that it is a mitzva to be with her.

If Yosef was not sure what the right thing to do was, on what basis did he refuse her day after day and choose to ignore the voices urging him to be with her? The pasuk tells us (39:10), "Vayehi Kidabra El Yosef Yom Yom," these thoughts tortured him every day. Rav Boruch explains that the Yetzer Tov tells a person the right thing to do and then leaves him alone. The Yetzer Hara, however, is much more persistent. He does not take no for an answer and will hound you until the end.

When Yosef saw that this dilemma was ripping him apart each day, he realized that this Nudnik could only be the Yetzer Hara and not the Yetzer Tov. Therefore, the pasuk continues, "V'Lo Shama Eileha." Because it nudged every day, that is how he knew the real identity of these thoughts and refused to heed them.

Bais HaLevi - Your Wallet Takes a Bow

After hearing Yosef's dream how the brothers' bushels of wheat bowed to Yosef's, the pasuk says that the brothers hated him. After the second dream where the stars which represented the brothers, bowed to the sun which was Yosef, it says that they became jealous of him. What's the difference?

The Bais HaLevi explains that a person's wealth does not make him a better person than the poor man, it merely makes him richer. There is an expression, says the Bais HaLevi, where the poor man

tells the rich man, "My bank account is humbled by your bank account and my wallet by your wallet, but I am not humbled by you." The first dream was about wealth represented by wheat. Yosef prophesized that he would support the Shevatim who would come to him for food. The Shevatim did not bow down to Yosef only their bushels did. They were not jealous, only hateful about the idea.

The stars and the constellation represent spirituality and the underpinnings of the world. When they heard that Yosef will be the spiritual centre and they would be satellites in his orbit, only then did they become jealous. Spirtuality is the essence of a person and determines who he really is.

Rav Dov Yaffa tells a story that illustrates this point. A man once came to **Rav Aharon Leib Steinman** at the insistence of his wife who was worried that if they bought a new luxury car he would be the envy of his neighbours. Rav Aharon Leib asked him, "Have you mastered all of Shas yet?" "No" replied the man. "If so" said Rav Aharon Leib, "what is there to be jealous of?"

Getting Married at 17 - The Age Yosef Was Sold

The Rambam writes (Hilchas Ishus), a man should get married at the age of 17. The Magid Mishnah asks from the Mishnah In Avos that says, "Ben Shmoneh Esreh LiChupah" - a man should get married at the age of 18? How can the Rambam write 17? The Magid Mishnah anwers, when the Mishnah says that one should get marries at 18, it means in the 18th year of his life..., which is after his 17th birthday. The Mishnah is therefore saying the same as the Rambam.

Sefer Gan Raveh brings a proof to the opinion of the Rambam. The pasuk in Parshas VaYigash lists the 10 sons of Binyamin. One of his sons was called Chupim. Targum Yonason Ben Uziel explains, all the names of Binyamin's sons were named after an episode that connected to his brother Yosef. He named his son Chupim - because

Yosef was sold at the time that he was fit for Chuppah - fit to get married. We know, in Parshas VaYeishev the pasuk clearly states that Yosef was sold at the age of 17 ("Yosef Ben Shva Esreh Shana"). How then can Yonason Ben Uziel say that Yosef was at the age of marriage when he was sold? It must be that Yonason Ben Uziel agrees with the Rambam that "Ben Shmoneh Esreh LiChupah" means at the age of 17... in the 18th year!



Proving The Shvatim Had Nothing Against Yosef Personally

All the Meforshim write that the Shvatim had absolutely no jealously or hatred towards Yosef personally. Rather it was purely a pursuit of justice. "Yet," says **Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky** (Emes L'Yaakov) "many people believe these Peirushim are just a coverup, to spare the Shvatim a bad name."

Rav Yaakov says that if one looks carefully at the psukim it is obvious that this is so. At first the Torah tells us that they decided to kill him. If this was about revenge, why as soon as Reuven said that they should not kill him but rather throw him into the pit, did they unanimously agree? "The truth is," says Rav Yaakov, "that personal feelings notwithstanding, they paskened that Yosef was Chayav Misa and were obliged to carry out the verdict. However, when Reuven said that throwing him in the Bor without killing him is sufficient in place of death, they were all very happy not to have to kill him."

When Yehuda found an angle to carry out the verdict by taking him out of the pit, and instead sell him, again there was no hesitation and they all agreed. Furthermore, after seeing Yaakov's pain, they even blamed Yehuda because had he found a psak that would allow them to spare Yosef altogether, they would have surely listened. "All this," says Rav Yaakov, "is a proof of the Shvatim acting purely L'Shem Shamayim without any personal feelings of hatred mixed in."



Ponevezher Rov - Reuven the Hero, Yehuda the Fall Guy

Both Reuven and Yehuda spared Yosef from death. First Reuven suggested that rather than killing Yosef and throwing his body in a pit, they throw him in and leave it to Hashem to kill him.

Later, when he was in the pit and sure to die a painful death, Yehuda suggests they spare his life and sell him to the passing caravan. Reuven was considered a hero, while Yehuda is singled out from the rest of the brothers, who didn't show any second thoughts about killing Yosef, and blamed for Yosef's plight. Why?

The Lisitcha Elyon brings from the Ponevezher Rov that there was a big difference between what Yehuda did and what Reuven did. "Reuven," says the pasuk, "saved Yosef, LiHashivo El Aviv, to return him to his father, so that he can continue to learn Torah and thrive at his father's side. Yehuda had no grand ambitions for Yosef other than to spare his life. Yehuda's idea of salvation was to sell him as a slave to Mitzrayim which was the most promiscuous society at the time. Yehuda may have saved Yosef's physical life, but he more than buried any spiritual life that Yosef had in him. This is not called salvation. This is murder."

With this understanding, the Ponovezher Rov explains the enigmatic Medrash in Shir HaShirim which says, "HaDudaim Nasnu Reich Zeh Maaseh Reuven; Reuven's saving of Yosef is like frangrant flowers."

"V'Al Pisacheinu Kol Megadim Zeh Ner Chanukah; On our doorstep are delicacies," this is Ner Chanukah. What is the connection between the two? He explains that just like Reuven's saving of Yosef was a salvation of his spiritual life, so, too, Chanukah was a salvation of Bnei Yisrael's spiritual existence, as the Yevanim did not aim to kill us, but rather obliterate our religious practice.

Rav Shimon Schwab - Why Was Yosef Always Busy Combing His Hair?

"V'Hu Naar," (Vayeishev 37:2) Rashi says that this means Yosef was acting like a Naar always fixing his hair to look nice. Rav Shimon Schwab asks, "How could this be? Yosef was a tzaddik and the prized child of his Holy father, Yaakov. How could he have a weakness for something so trivial like playing with his hair?"

Rashi again says the same thing later on when Yosef was promoted in Potifar's house; he again starts to play with his hair and forgets that his father is suffering because of his unexplained disappearance. Is this the "Nazir Echav" that the Torah talks about?

Rav Schwab answers that we find the Torah also calls Shechem ben Chamor a "Naar". Yet we know Shechem was the oldest and most important person in the kingdom after his father. There Rav Schwab therefore concludes, that "Naar" does not mean young, but rather impatient like young people. It means acting on impulse without thoroughly thinking things through. This is what Shechem was guilty of.

Yosef had two dreams that told him he would be King. The Halacha is that a King must be freshly groomed every day as the pasuk says (Yeshaya 33:17), "Melech B'Yafyo Techezena Einecha; A King should be seen in his glory." Yosef acted impatiently and on impulse when at the young age of seventeen he already behaved as if his dreams of Kingdom materialized. Similarly, in Potifar's house, as soon as he was promoted and sensed an ascent to leadership, he once again jumped too fast and began to take an interest in his regal appearance. For this the Torah calls him a "Naar" as he should have waited for the right time and not jumped at the first sniff of power.

Rav Shimon Schwab - Yehuda's Good Friend The Adulami

When Yehuda got back home from the episode with Tamar he needed to send the goat's he promised Tamar and to retrieve his possessions that he left with her as a guarantee. The torah says (38:20) he sent it with "his friend the Adulami". We already know that Chira the Adulami was his friend (38:12). Why does the torah make sure to point out again that he sent it with his friend?

Rav Shimon Schwab in Mayan Bais HaShoeva answers that the definition of a friend is someone who you can turn to and tell him about your big mistakes and aveiros. Someone you can count on to encourage you and get you out of your mess and back on the right track. That is the meaning of the pasuk in Mishlei (27:10) "Rei'acha V'Rei'a Avicha Al Taazov", your friend and your father's friend, meaning your Tatte in Himmel, do not abandon. A real friend of yours is also a friend of Hashem. After coming home and realizing his mistake, Yehuda was fortunate to have a good friend to turn to.

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

"ויחלם עוד חלום אחר ויספר אתו לאחיו" "And he dreamt another dream [about the sun, moon and stars bowing to him] and he told it to his brothers." (37:9) Yosef's brothers hated him after he told them the first dream. Why did he continue to antagonize them by relating his other dream?

The *Gemara (Berachot* 55b) states that we dream at night what we think about during the day.

In relating the first dream, Yosef told his brothers about the material success and wealth he anticipated. Though they all worked together in the field, he would become richer, and they would bow to him. When the brothers heard this, they hated him because they

figured that the dream depicted what he thought about during the day.

Yosef was eager to prove to his brothers that the first dream was an act of Heaven and not related to his daytime thinking. Therefore, he told them of the second dream, which was about an impossibility (how could his mother who died bow to him?). He hoped they would believe that just as he did not think about this during the day, he also did not think about the contents of the first dream during the day.

The brothers realized that his dreams were valid and that they were a signal from Heaven. Therefore, upon hearing the second dream, they became jealous of him. (**אור החיים**)

Vedibarta Bam

"ויאמר יהודה...מה בצע כי נהרג את אחינו" *"Yehudah said... 'what will we gain if we slay our brother?'"* (37:26)

What was Yehudah alluding to with the word "**בצע**" — "gain"?

The word "**בצע**" *(betza)* is an acronym for **בקר** (morning), **צהרים** (afternoon), and **ערבית** (evening). These are the three times a day when a Jew is required to pray to Hashem.

Yehudah told his brothers, "If we kill our brother, Yosef, our hands will be covered with blood and no longer will we be able to pray to Hashem."

The letters of the word "**בצע**" are also the second letters of the names of our Patriarchs **אברהם, יצחק, יעקב**. Yehudah told his brothers, "If we commit the crime of killing our brother, we will be detaching ourselves from the ways of our ancestors Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov and lose the merits they afford their descendants." (**מנחם יצחק - תורת שלמה**)

Vedibarta Bam

ויספר אל אביו ואל אחיו ויגער בו אביו ויאמר לו מה החלום הזה אשר חלמת

"He related the dream to his father and brothers; His father scolded him saying, 'What is this dream that you dreamt!?'"

(37:10) It would have been sufficient to say, "What is this dream!?" What is the reason for the apparently superfluous words *"asher chalamta"* — "that you dreamt"?

A story is told of a man who came to *shul* one morning and told his friend that he had dreamt that he was becoming the Rebbe of a group of *chassidim.* His friend said to him, "You fool! If the *chassidim* would have dreamt that you were becoming their Rebbe, the dream would have some meaning. But if it was you who dreamt and not they, of what significance is it?"



Yaakov knew very well that Yosef's dreams had profound meaning, and he was also keenly aware of his brothers' jealousy and hatred towards him. In an attempt to reduce their animosity, he said to Yosef, "Of what meaning could this dream be, *asher chalamta* — if *you* were the one who dreamt? Had your brothers or I dreamt that you would rule over us, then we would be worried and concerned. However, if *you* dreamt of ruling over us and *we* did not dream this, then obviously your dream was an expression of your own foolish thoughts and of no significance!" (**תפוחי חיים**)

Vedibarta Bam

הכר נא הכתנת בנך היא אם לא ויכירה ויאמר כתנת בני חיה רעה אכלתהו טרף טרף יוסף ***"'Recognize please if this is your son's shirt.' He recognized it and said, 'It is the shirt of my son; a savage beast devoured him! Yosef has surely been torn to bits!'"*** **(37:32-33)**

How did Yaakov know an animal killed Yosef and not a person?



Pharaoh wanted to destroy the Jewish people, so he ordered the midwives to kill all the new-born male children. When he reprimanded them for not following his orders, they replied that the Jewish women are unique, "**כי חיות הנה**"

The *Gemara (Sotah* 11b) explains their answer to mean that the Jewish people are likened to "*chayot*" — animals — Yosef to an ox, Yehudah to a lion, Yissachar to donkey, etc., and, in general, the Jewish people as a whole are referred to as a lioness. Just as an animal does not need help in giving birth, so the Jewish mothers.

When the brothers asked Yaakov, "Is this *your son's* shirt?" it puzzled him very much that they did not refer to him by his name, "Yosef." This brought him to the conclusion that the brothers really hated Yosef, to the extent that they would not even mention his name.

Not wanting to accuse them openly, he said "a wild animal," alluding that *his children*, who are likened to different animals, must have killed him. He supported his theory by the fact that "**טרף טרף יוסף**" — "they tore up Yosef's [name]" — and did not mention Yosef's name when talking about him. (**כלי יקר - מעינה של תורה**)

Vedibarta Bam

"וימכרו את יוסף לישמעאלים בעשרים כסף" ***"They sold Yosef to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver."*** **(37:28)**

With the money they bought themselves shoes *(Targum Yonatan Ben Uziel)*. Why shoes?

The *Gemara (Berachot* 35b) states that it is forbidden to derive any pleasure from this world without reciting a *berachah*. Therefore, when one buys a new garment, one recites a *shehecheyanu*.

After receiving the money, the brothers were in a dilemma because they would have to make a *berachah* before enjoying any new thing they would buy. However, making a *berachah* over an item attained through wrongdoing is tantamount to blaspheming Hashem (Psalms 10:3).

Nevertheless, there is a *halachah* in the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim* 223:6) that on new shoes one need not make a *berachah* of *shehecheyanu*. Therefore, to circumvent the problem of a *berachah,* they had no other alternative but to buy shoes with the money. (**ילקוט האורים בשם אסיפת הכהן**)

"לכו ונמכרנו לישמעאלים וידנו אל תהי בו כי אחינו בשרנו הוא" ***"Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let not our hand be upon him; for our brother, he is our flesh."*** (37:27)

What is meant by the words, "he is our flesh"?

According to *Gemara* (*Niddah* 31a), there are three partners in the formation of man: Through Hashem, he receives a soul; through the father, the bones, nails, and brain; and through the mother, the skin and flesh.

When Leah was pregnant for the seventh time, after having already given birth to six sons, she "passed judgment on herself: 'If this one will be a male, then my sister Rachel will not even be like one of the

maidservants' [who had each given birth to two sons]" (Rashi 30:21). Miraculously, the male she carried was transferred to Rachel, and she gave birth to the female Rachel was carrying (*Niddah* 31b, Maharsha).

Since Yosef was originally carried by Leah, a common denominator shared by the majority of the brothers was that they were his brothers from the same mother. Thus, they all received their flesh from the same source. (**משך חכמה**)



וישמע ראובן ויצלהו מידם
***"Reuven heard and he saved him from their hands."* (37:21)**

What did Reuven hear that made him decide to save Yosef from the hands of his brothers?

The preceding *pasuk* relates that the brothers said, "Let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits, and we will say an evil beast ate him up, and **ונראה מה יהיו חלמתיו** — We will see what will become of his dreams." Rashi says that Rabbi Yitzchak interpreted these words not as a saying of the brothers, but that *Ruach Hakodesh* — the Holy Spirit — is saying this. Hashem was saying "You are planning to kill him; *we* shall see what will be with his dreams. Will your plan be realized and he will be dead, or will My words be fulfilled and his dreams will come true?"

The brothers did not hear this Holy Spirit, but Reuven did. Thus, he immediately decided that he was obligated to save Yosef and bring him back to Yaakov. (**פנינים יקרים**)

"וימאן" *"He refused [the request of Potifar's wife]."* (39:8)

Why is the cantillation (*trop*) on the word "**וימאן**" a *shalshelet*?

When Yosef came home, Potifar's wife tried to persuade him to violate the Torah. Before his eyes was the image of his father warning to him, "If you commit a sin your name will not be mentioned on the *choshen* — breastplate — worn by the *Kohen Gadol* (Sotah 36b)." So he flatly rejected her advances.

The cantillation of *shalshelet* indicates that the word should be sounded with a three-tiered tremolo tone. Accordingly, the word "**וימאן**" is an acronym for the *three* reasons Yosef turned down Potifar's wife:

"**וַיַּרְא יוֹסֵף מַרְאֵה אֲבִיו נִגְדּוֹ**" — "Yosef saw his father's image in front of him."

"**וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב מַחְשֶׁן אַתָּה נִמְחָק**" — "Yaakov said, 'Your name will be omitted from the breastplate.'"

"**וַיִּרָא יוֹסֵף מַטְמִא אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ**" — "Yosef was afraid he might defile his soul." (**שמעתי מהרב אלי' נחום ז"ל שקלאר**)

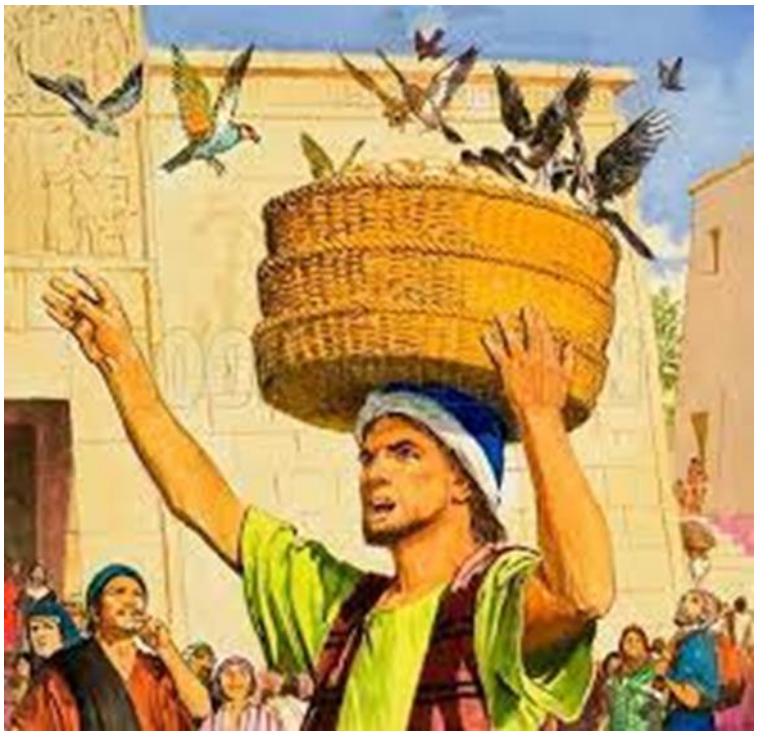
"ויעזב בגדו בידה וינס ויצא החוצה" "He left his garment with her and fled and went outside." (39:12)

The word "*vayeitzei*" (**ויצא**) seems extra. Should it not have just said, "**וינס החוצה**" — "and he fled outside"?

As Yosef entered the house of Potifar, he had a vision of his father standing before him. This prevented him from doing anything contrary to the Torah, and he quickly ran out of the house. The *pasuk* alludes to this with the word **ויצא** which is the acronym of "**וַיִּרְא יוֹסֵף צוּרַת אֲבִיו**" — "Yosef saw the countenance of his father." (**הפלאה שבערכין, על הערך דיוקן**)

Vedibarta Bam

וישב את שר המשקים על משקהו...ואת שר האפים תלה כאשר פתר להם יוסף
***"The butler was returned to his position, and the baker was hung in accordance with Yosef's interpretation."* (40:22- 23)**



What clue in their dreams led Yosef to this interpretation?

Yosef carefully studied their words. The butler said, "The cup of Pharaoh was in my hand; I took the grapes; I squeezed them; I placed the cup on Pharaoh's palm" (40:11). Yosef saw that the butler dreamt about doing things. Since one can only *do* things if he is alive, Yosef saw in his dream a sign of life.

The baker told Yosef, "On my head were baskets full of baked goods and a bird was eating from the baskets." The dream was lacking human activity. He did not say who baked the goods, who put the baskets on his head, nor did he do anything to chase the bird away. Moreover, a bird is usually afraid of a person and will not come near food which a person holds.

Yosef said to the baker, "You were carrying a basket of baked goods and a bird was eating from them. Obviously, the bird did not consider you to be alive. Consequently, your dream indicates that Pharaoh will soon put you to death." (**עיטורי תורה**)

"Visiting is like rain: prayed for when absent, but tiresome when overdone." ~~ Ibn Gabirol

Vedibarta Bam

"ולא זכר שר המשקים את יוסף וישכחהו" *"The butler did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him."* (40:23)

If he did not remember him, obviously he forgot him! Why the two expressions of forgetting: *"velozachar"* and *"vayishkacheihu"*?

Yosef originally asked the butler to mention him to Pharaoh. The ungrateful butler, whose life was saved through Yosef's interpretation, did not return the favour to Yosef.

In addition, the Torah tells us that *Yosef* immediately regretted asking the butler to do him a favour. *He* forgot about the butler entirely and put all his faith in Hashem. Thus, each one forgot about the other. (**בינה לעתים דרוש י"ח**)

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos



In *Kiddush* we say that Hashem gave us Shabbos with love. It is only because of the great affection that Hashem has for us that He chose to give us this special day. One aspect that gives honour to the mitzvah is to have a polished *Kiddush* cup.

Otzar HaShabbos cites the *Siddur* of Rabbi Shabsai that having a nice *kos* for *Kiddush* is *Hidur Mitzvah*, a way to beautify the mitzvah.

The *Mishnah Brurah* (182:1) says that by having a polished *Kiddush* cup, we show Hashem how much we love doing this mitzvah, and it also gives honour and praise to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

The *Rama* (271:10) says that if you look at the opening words of *Kiddush*: **יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי וַיְכֻלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם** you will see Hashem's Name spelled out in the first letter of each of the words.

Out of respect to Hashem's Name, even those whose custom is to recite *Kiddush* sitting down, stand while reciting the first four words.



L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss once related the following extraordinary story. In Tunisia, there was a much beloved chief rabbi named Rav Tzemach Tzorfasi, *zt"l*, who was a great *Tzaddik* and *masmid*, and was extremely diligent in his Torah study. Each night he would get up at midnight, sit on the floor and say *Tikun Chatzos* and mourn the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdash*, and then he would learn Torah until *Shacharis*.

One night as he started his learning, a gust of wind cam suddenly and blew out his candle, leaving him in complete darkness. He searched the entire house for an ember to relight the candle but he could not find one. Distraught that he would lose out on a night of learning, he remembered that the town bakery was open throughout the night, and surely they would have a fire going! He decided he would go there and get a torch so he could reignite his candle. Rav Tzemach headed to the bakery and he knocked loudly on the locked door, waking the night watchman who had fallen asleep. The startled man came to the door and upon seeing that it was the chief rabbi who was knocking, he hurriedly opened the heavy beam that bolted the door. Rav Tzemach asked him for a fire so he could light his candle to learn Torah, and the guard pleasantly gave him a torch and wished the Rabbi a good night.

Rav Tzemach started to head home when another sudden gust of wind blew out his torch! Undeterred, he turned right back to the bakery and once again, he knocked and woke up the guard. With a little reluctance, the guard lifted the heavy beam and opened the door for the Rav. Rav Tzemach apologized and explained that the

wind blew out his fire, so the guard relit the torch and bid him a good night.

Once again, the Rav headed home, and once again, just before reaching his home, another wind blew out the fire! For the third time, Rav Tzemach went back to the bakery. This time, the guard ignored the knocking and reasoned that it was almost morning anyway. However, the Rav persisted, determined not to lose a night's learning, and finally, the guard came to the door. He said through a hole, "Rabbi, it's the middle of the night and this beam is very heavy to lift!" Rav Tzemach apologized profusely and told the guard that for lifting the heavy beam so many times to help him study Torah, he should be blessed with as much gold as the weight of the heavy beam! The blessing stirred the guard because Rav Tzemach was known throughout the town for his powerful blessings, and he quickly opened the door, relit the torch, and escorted the Rabbi to his home.

On the very next day, a well-dressed man came in to the bakery and approached the guard. This man said he had heard that the watchman had a reliable reputation, and he asked the guard how much money he makes each day. He answered, five *riel* (the currency at that time in Tunisia), and the visitor told him that he needed a reliable man's help for a few days and offered to pay him 25 *riel* per day! The guard promptly accepted. The visitor took out a handkerchief and told the guard that he would need to be blindfolded, because the place he needed the help was in a secret location, and the watchman agreed.

They proceeded to travel several hours until the guard had the blindfold removed, and he found himself in front of a rickety cottage. When they entered, he saw a room filled with pictures on the walls. The well-dressed man walked over to one of them and moved it away and revealed a small hidden door from behind the frame. They walked through the door, and the guard gasped in amazement at what he saw. There were sacks and sacks of gleaming

gold coins. The man told him, "See those wooden chests in the corner? I need you to fill each of them with a certain amount of gold coins from the sacks."

The guard worked efficiently for five days and packed all the gold up as he was instructed. When he finished the job, he was paid very generously and was given a generous tip. Then he was blindfolded once again and brought back to the bakery.

A few weeks later, he heard a community officer announcing in the street that someone had passed away and left no relatives, and his small house was up for public auction. When he heard this, a far-fetched thought crossed the guard's mind. Could it be that the house being auctioned was none other than that the small cottage? Could this be the fulfilment of the Rabbi's blessing? He attended the auction and to his incredulity, it was indeed the rickety cottage that he worked in just a few weeks before! He proceeded to buy it with the money he had just earned when he packed the gold in the chests, and he hurried over to see the cottage. He entered the small room, moved the picture that was hiding the doorway, and entered the secret room. He stepped in and saw before him all the gold packed away in all the chests, now belonging entirely to him!

You might wonder how we know the details of this story. Towards the end of his life, Rav Tzemach moved to *Eretz Yisroel*. On his journey there, he stopped in Istanbul, and while resting, an Arab ruler passed by. He looked very intensely at Rav Tzemach and then suddenly fell to his feet and started kissing the Rav. He exclaimed, "Rav Tzorfasi! I am the night watchman from the bakery! Because of your blessings I am now a ruler and have my own palace!" He brought the Rabbi to his home and told him the entire story, and in gratitude, he gave Rav Tzemach enough money to live comfortably for the rest of his life in *Eretz Yisroel*!

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

In *Shalom Aleichem*, what is the reason that we sing the stanza of *Tzeischem L'Shalom* on *Shabbos* night? Didn't we just welcome the *Malachim* by saying *Shalom Aleichem* to them? Why are we telling them to leave? The *Shem M'Shmuel* (*Ki Savo*, p. 165) explains the reason based on the *Tikunei Zohar*. The *Neshamah Yeseirah*, the extra soul that we get each Shabbos, is escorted to us from *Shamayim* by two *Malachim*. When they see the other two *Malachim* who have walked us home from *shul*, they hand over the *Neshamah Yeseirah* to them and entrust it to them for the entire Shabbos. They then go back up to *Shamayim*. When we sing *Tzeischem L'Shalom*, we are saying farewell to these two *Malachim*, not the ones who came home from *shul* with us!



Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Next to **Rav Avigdor Miller's** seat in *shul*, he kept a bottle of water that he never drank from. Why did he keep it there? He would often talk about the amazing miracle of water, what it was composed of, and what it did for a person. He had purchased that bottle of water some fifty or sixty years prior, and he kept it at his side as a reminder of Hashem's constant miracles!

L'Maaseh

In the city of Antwerp, Belgium, there lived a Jewish man, who unfortunately turned away from the path of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*, and he did not keep *Shabbos*. As time went on, he felt feelings of remorse, and he began to keep *Mitzvos*. Slowly, he returned with complete *Teshuvah*, and though it was difficult for him, he accepted upon himself to keep *Shabbos* with its proper sanctity. This man had a busy store in the centre of the shopping district.

Once he returned to keeping *Shabbos*, he became accustomed to close his store early on Friday afternoons. He would announce in the store that the shoppers should make their final purchases, as the store was closing. Then he would close the store, pull the gates, and go prepare himself for the coming *Shabbos* Queen.

Over the course of *Shabbos*, he would keep busy learning *Torah* and other holy matters. A short while after he began to keep *Shabbos*, the gentile 'holiday season' approached. During this time many people did their shopping for the holiday. That year, the holiday was on a Sunday, and many non-Jewish, last-minute shoppers, rushed to the stores to make their purchases. This was a very profitable time of year for the storekeepers, as they would do a lot of business.

Naturally, that year the majority of purchases were being made on the Friday and *Shabbos* before the holiday, and it was a great challenge for this *Baal Teshuvah*, as his store was filled with many shoppers, and his business benefited from all the shoppers and the many purchases that they made. Still, he stood firm by the commitment he took upon himself, and on Friday afternoon, as the time he designated to close early for *Shabbos* approached, when the store was busy and filled with customers, he announced that everyone should make their final purchases, as the store was closing.

That evening, as he was going home from Shul after *Davening*, he noticed all the non-Jews walking about with their arms full of shopping bags and their many purchases, and his heart tightened

within him. He saw all the other stores open for business, and busy with crowds of customers, and he was pained by the large loss of income that he could have made on this *Shabbos*.

On his way he met one of his former friends who taunted him, "What's wrong with you?! You closed your store on a day like this?! People will get accustomed to shop by your competition!" When he began to explain that he started to keep *Shabbos*, his friend laughed at him and mocked him.

The man came home with a bitter heart, and he told his wife that it was very difficult for him to withstand this challenge and always battle his *Yeitzer Hara*. He told her, "I have therefore decided that at the *Shabbos Seudah*, I will drink several cups of strong vodka, which will put me in a deep sleep for many hours. This is how I will spend most of *Shabbos*, and the *Yeitzer Hara* will not be victorious in this difficult challenge!" He drank until he fell into a deep slumber.

The next morning, his wife did not wake him for *Davening*, and he continued to sleep until late afternoon on *Shabbos*. He awoke towards the evening, without any *Tefilah* or going to *Shul*, and with difficulty, he managed to go to *Shul* for *Minchah*.

After *Shabbos*, when the man thought about how he spent *Shabbos* in a deep sleep, without *Davening* or learning, with only complete emptiness, his heart broke within him. Is this how to spend *Shabbos Kodesh*? There is nothing more despicable than this! He was very upset with himself, and in his great anguish and pain, he went to visit the *Rav*. Perhaps he would have a way to correct the *Aveirah* of desecrating the honour of *Shabbos*.

The Rav of the city at that time was the *Tzadik*, **Rav Chaim Kreiswirth, *zt"l***. When the man came into the *Rav's* house, the atmosphere of *Shabbos Kodesh* still permeated the house.

The *Rav* had just returned from *Shul*, shining and glowing from the sanctity of *Shabbos*, many holy *Seforim* that he had learned over

Shabbos were still out on his desk, and the silver that was used on the holy day was still out. At the sight of all this, his heart tightened greatly within him. He thought to himself how his own *Shabbos* was so distant from this *Kedushah*!

The *Rav* greeted him warmly, and he asked the man what was bothering him. The man began to cry, and with a pain-filled heart he told the *Rav*, "I am so jealous of your *Shabbos*! Here was a *Shabbos* filled with *Torah* & *Kedushah*! How much joy and satisfaction there is for *Hashem* from your *Shabbos*! But as for me, I spent the entire *Shabbos* in bed. No *Torah*, no *Tefilah*, no learning, and no *Zemiros*. It was a *Shabbos* filled with sleep and emptiness. How my heart is filled with jealousy for your *Shabbos*!" The man cried and tears streamed from his eyes.

When his crying subsided, the *Rav* asked him why he had slept so much, and the man explained why he did what he did. When Rav Chaim heard this, his eyes lit up, and to the man's utter amazement, the *Rav* requested of him, "Please, I very much want to make an exchange with you! Let's exchange our *Shabbosos*. You take my *Shabbos* and give me your *Shabbos*. Your *Shabbos* is so much greater than mine! How you overpowered and withstood the challenge and difficulty of the *Yetzer Hara* this *Shabbos*, is worth beyond measure! It shines and illuminates in all the worlds! As *Chazal* teach us in *Masechta Avos* (5:22), according to the effort, so is the reward!"

The man then understood what had happened. That *Hashem* had specifically sent him this difficult challenge just when he had started keeping *Shabbos*, to help him stay committed, to save him, to strengthen his *Yiddishkeit*, and his *Shabbos Kodesh*.

The man became happy with his *Shabbos* and did not exchange it. He returned home happy after learning and appreciating the value of one Jewish person's service to *Hashem*!



Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

Da'as Zekeinim MiBa'alei Tosafos (39:2) quotes a fascinating *Medrash* which contrasts Yosef with most people. Most people think they need *Hashem* when they are down, suffering, or just trying to make ends meet. Once their life stabilizes or they garner wealth, they tend to quickly forget The Provider and feel as though they are all-capable. Yosef, on the other hand, had *Hashem* on his mind and speech no matter where he was.

When Yosef was a servant to Potifar he vocalized his relationship with *Hashem* (39:9). And when he became viceroy of Egypt he stressed his relationship with *Hashem* (42:18).

We have the opportunity to follow Yosef's path to always keep *Hashem* a part of our lives no matter what, and thereby, *Hashem* will show us that He is part of our lives.

Pearls of Wisdom… *A Word for the Ages*

Rav Simcha Wasserman once said a story about his father, **Rav Elchanan Wasserman**, the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Baranovich.

"Once my father, *zt"l*, had to travel from Baranovich, and I was accompanying him to the train station. We were walking together and I was carrying a small suitcase for him. My father was wearing new boots that my mother had bought for him, which he had refused to wear until my mother gave away his very old and worn shoes to the girl who carried the water buckets through the snow. My mother explained to my father that the girl had no shoes and she really needed them, and it was only then that he agreed to wear the new ones. I could tell that something was bothering him. After a while he said, 'These boots are troubling me.' My father never spoke without a specific reason, so I knew that I was about to learn something.

He said, 'What is bothering me is that they have laces, and I estimate that it is going to cost me half a minute a day to tie and untie them when I put them on and take them off.'

He was teaching me how valuable the gift of time is!"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin, *zt"l*, lived in Yerushalayim. Once, in his old age, a new *Shamash* came in the morning to walk with him to *Shul*. When Rav Yehoshua Leib emerged from his house, instead of setting out for *Shul*, he made his way to a stairway outside his house that led up to the roof. He climbed the stairs slowly and painfully, looked around for something, then came downstairs with a sigh.

The *Shamash* could not help but ask the Rav for the reason of his peculiar behavior. Rav Yehoshua Leib explained, "The first two *Batei Mikdash* were built by human hands, but the third *Bais HaMikdash* is going to descend from *Shamayim* in fire. That is something that could happen even overnight."

With tears in his eyes, Rav Yehoshua Leib concluded, "I wanted to check if the *Bais HaMikdash* came last night, but it didn't," and turned to start making his way to *Shul*.

L'Maaseh

Rabbi Yissoschar Frand relates a story: The *Yeshivah* in Volozhin was known as the "mother of all Lithuanian *Yeshivas*." There was a period in time when there was a question regarding who should head the *Yeshivah*.

The two candidates for the position were **Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (the *Netziv*)**, and **Rabbi Yosef Dov *HaLevi* Soloveitchik (the *Bais HaLevi*)**. This was such a world class issue, that it was taken

before a *Beis Din* of three distinguished *Rabbanim*. One of the members of the panel, after hearing both sides of the argument, commented, "It is *Parashas Vayeishev* this week." The other members of the panel looked at him incredulously, because in fact, it was not *Parashas Vayeishev* that week!

He explained himself, "Throughout the first eight *Parshios* of *Sefer Bereishis*, whenever I speak about the *Parshah*, I am able to speak about the hero and the villain of the *Parshah*. In *Bereishis*, it is Adam against the Snake; in *Noach*, it is Noach against the Generation of the Flood; in *Lech Lecha*, it is Avraham against Lot; in *Vayeira*, it is Yitzchak against Yishmael; in *Chayei Sara*, it is Avraham against Ephron; in *Toldos*, it is Yitzchak against Avimelech; in *Vayeitzei*, it is Yaakov against Lavan; and finally, in *Vayishlach*, it is Yaakov against Eisav.

In each *Parshah*, we have a hero and a villain, a good person and a bad person. However, in *Parashas Vayeishev*, it is Yosef against his brothers. This is not a question of a good person versus a bad person, as they are all *Tzadikim*.

Therefore, in this case, I have nothing to say. The question of who should be the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Volozhin, between the *Netziv* and the *Bais HaLevi*, is like the dispute between Yosef and his brothers. They are both qualified, and they are both perfectly righteous. This is the story of *Parashas Vayeishev*!"

A Wise Man would say: "If you look at what you have in life, you'll always have more. But if you only look at what you don't have in life, believe me, you'll never have enough."

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface R' Shmuel Winzelberg

והבור רק אין בו מים. וישבו לאכל לחם לז:כ ד-כה ***And the pit was empty, no water was in it. They sat to eat bread.*** *37:24-25*



Rashi explains: There was no water in it, but there were snakes and scorpions in it. The commentaries struggle to explain why *Chazal* said there was something else in the pit other than water.

This is derived from the wording of the *Pasuk* that follows. "The pit was empty; no water was in it ***Veyeishbo*** to eat bread. The *Pasuk* states, **אין בו מים. ויש בו**– 'the pit was empty, ***but something was in it'***, so we see that something was in the pit. (***The Chida quoted in Mesukim MiDvash***)

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS VAYEISHEV

How to Do Incredible Mitzvahs at Charity Auctions By Rabbi David Asher

About seven years ago, a man decided that he wanted to be more involved with Chesed and helping people, so he started doing small acts of kindness and called himself "The Mitzvah Man," so that others would know to call him if they needed help. If someone needed furniture moved, he would call him, and he would happily come. If someone needed a ride somewhere, he would call him, and he would happily come.

After more and more people found out about this Mitzvah Man, he couldn't keep up with all of the calls he was getting. Other people

volunteered to help as well, and before he knew it, it turned into an entire organization.

Now, seven years later, this organization helps more than twelve thousand people a year. The power of one man's desire to do good is amazing. Of course, to accomplish anything in this world, we need Hashem's help. The head of the organization told me that he has seen the Yad Hashem helping him with his Chesed countless times. He began to relate to me just a few episodes.



Six years ago, someone called him and asked for financial help. This person had a large family but couldn't afford a car, and it was really straining his Shalom Bayit. The head of the organization told him, "I wish I could help you, but this is beyond the scope of what we do. We don't have that kind of money available to buy cars."

But he felt terrible turning anybody away. He kept him in mind in case an opportunity would ever arise to help. Shortly after, he was at an auction for charity for the organization Eshel Shabbat, and someone approached him there to buy a car raffle ticket. At first, he wasn't interested, but then he said, "Maybe this is my opportunity to help that family." He told his daughter, who was standing right next to him, "I'm buying a ticket for the raffle, and if I win, I'm giving the car to a needy family." And when the drawing was held that night, the ticket pulled was his. He was so happy to call that family and tell them, "I got you a car."

Just two years after that, he found out about another family who was struggling who also needed a car. And he told some of the people from the organization, "I think I could help them." Again, the Eshel

Shabbat auction was coming up, and again he purchased a ticket for the car raffle. Amazingly, he won the raffle again for a second time and happily gave the car to that needy family.

Two years ago, someone approached him in dire need of financial help. He told the person, "It's not really what our organization does. There are other organizations for that. We don't have that kind of money to give away. We do acts of kindness." But again, he doesn't like to tell anybody no.

He said, "Let me see what I can do." And again he was at an auction, and he saw that the "split the pot raffle" was at $17,000. He said, "I'm going to buy one ticket and put their name on it." Before the drawing, he went over to the ten-year-old girl who was going to pick out the winner from a bowl with hundreds of names and asked her, "Please, before you pick the ticket, ask Hashem in public that you should pick out the name of a needy family." She did.

Almost miraculously, she picked out that one ticket with the name of the family that he bought. Nobody there knew who they were because he put the name of one person from the family on a ticket without their last name.

Everybody can make a big difference in this world. We all have unlimited potential. If we want to do good, we have Hashem there helping us. May we all be Zocheh to use our full potential.

Remember, you are Braver than you believe -Stronger than you seem- Smarter than you think -And loved by Hashem more than you know!

There is no coincidence in this world – Everything that transpires under the sun is part of Hashem's master plan.

Remembering Mama



Rabbi Eliezer Silver, zt"l

The Holocaust brought with it the unique situation that many Jewish children were actually saved from death by being placed in Christian orphanages. This was not specifically a missionary effort on the part of the churches. Rather, in an attempt to save the lives of their children, desperate parents chose this path.

The war ended and with it one chapter of the Nazi horrors. An organization was founded to find lost relatives and reunite shattered families. Slowly, news reached these rescue workers that many Jewish children were living in Christian orphanages. They weren't sure of the exact numbers but they knew that it was probably in the thousands.

Rabbi Eliezer Silver (president of Vaad Hatzalah Rescue Committee that he had formed in 1939 to save Jews from the Holocaust) traveled throughout Europe to find these children and return them to their people.

The rabbi went to the first orphanage on his list and asked to speak with the head Priest. He was received with a polite smile. "Of course," explained the priest, "we have nothing against returning the Jewish children to their parents, their family, or at least their people." Hardly had the rabbi expected his mission to be so easy.

"However," the priest continued, "how do you know which boy or girl is Jewish? We don't write down a child's origin or religion when they enter the orphanage."

"You can just give me the list of names," explained the rabbi. "I'll go over the list and if it is a Jewish last name I'll know that the child is a Jew. "

"No. We don't do things like that," scolded the priest. "We have to be very precise and careful. There can be no room for error here. I must have 100% assurance and no less."

"Let's look, for instance at the name 'Miller,'" continued the priest. "You would say right away that this is a Jewish sounding name. But there are many people who aren't Jewish but still have the last name, 'Miller.' The same is true with 'Reichman' and 'Deitsch.' These are popular names amongst the Germans and Polish. We cannot release children just because they have Jewish sounding names."

What could Rabbi Silver do? Most of the children were left in this and other orphanages when they were just toddlers, or younger. They certainly wouldn't be able to remember their origin.

"I am very sorry," said the priest with irritation, "but I have spent enough time with you already on this matter. I am willing to give you not more than three minutes of my time."

How could the rabbi possibly come up with a way to save all of these Jewish children in just three minutes? According to his information, there were dozens of Jewish children in this very orphanage. Quietly, Rabbi Silver asked, "Can I have our three minutes whenever I want?"

"Yes," came the reply.

"Good," sighed the rabbi in relief. "I will come just before the children go to bed."

"That will be at seven o'clock," the priest informed him. And with that, Rabbi Silver left until the evening.

The clock chimed seven times exactly and the children, who were used to their daily schedule, lay down in their beds in the large room.

Rabbi Silver entered. He stood up on a small chair in the center of the room and waited. Utter silence pervaded the room. From every corner, the eyes of young children stared at him.

And then, in a soft voice, the rabbi said just six words that could be heard throughout the room. "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad."

An instant later tender voices, whimpering, crying softly, "Mommy, Mommy," filled the room. Each child, in his own language, began searching for his mother. A mother who, years before, when she had put him down to sleep, and pulled the blanket snugly around him, and kissed him good night, had whispered quietly in his ears these dear words which lay at the foundation of our faith. Words that every Jewish child knew, "Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One."

The priest lowered his eyes in surrender. The rabbi had won. He had located the lost children. The few seconds that their mothers had set aside each evening before they went to sleep is what saved them from conversion and assimilation.

This scene, according to Rabbi Silver's granddaughter, Judy Silver-Shapiro, repeated itself in many orphanages and DP camps throughout post-war Europe. "Zaidi went to Catholic orphanages all over post-war Europe to rescue living Jewish children, and in the morning when the priests or nuns told him that there were no Jewish children, he decided to return at night when they were about to go to sleep. As he entered the large room of (non-existent) Jewish refugee children, he resolutely recited the Shema, and they all joined in the prayer. He told the priests at each orphanage that 'these are my children.' He left every single orphanage with Jewish children."

A similar story is told about Dayan Yishai Grunfeld, who walked through camps housing children who had been brought over to the

UK by an inter-denominational hospitality committee from the liberated countries of Europe.

Shared his son, Rabbi Rafael Grunfeld, "As my father walked through the camp - where he had been told that there was not a single Jewish child - he began to recite aloud 'Shema Yisrael' and 'Hamalach Hagoel.' All at once he was surrounded by hordes of little children. 'Mama, Mama,' they cried. 'Take us home to Mama.'

Reb Zusia's Confusion



The Rebbe, Reb Dov Ber of Mezritch, O"BM, was once approached by a chasid who had a very common problem.

"Rebbe," he pleaded. "I never seem to have enough. The more I get, the more I want. I know it is improper to think this way and I need help."

The Rebbe told the man to visit **Rebbe Zusia of Anipoli, O"BM**, telling him that "he can guide you with your difficulty."

As he approached Reb Zusia's residence, the man was shocked to the core when he saw a ramshackle wooden hut with boarded windows. Upon entering, the poverty was overwhelming.

The man figured, "surely this is a man who is in constant need. He hardly has what he needed and must grapple with new desires on a constant basis. He surely will be able to counsel me on my longing for the articles that I lack."

The man discussed his problem with Reb Zusia, but Reb Zusia looked at him in amazement. "What are you coming to me for?" he asked the man. "How can I advise you? I have absolutely everything I need!"

Rabbi Gifter Always Bought His Wife Flowers for Her Birthday By Naamah Green



In the days before Yom Kippur **Rabbi Mordechai Gifter** [October 15, 1915 - January 18, 2001). He was the rosh yeshiva of the Telz Yeshiva in Cleveland.] was really working hard on his spiritual growth. His children relate that he would sit at the table trembling from the fear of G-d's judgment and would not take part in idle chatter.

But his wife's birthday was in this same time period and buying flowers for her birthday was not something insignificant. He took it very seriously and every Yom Kippur eve he would make sure to buy her flowers in honour of her birthday.

When he completed his afternoon prayers before the festive meal before Yom Kippur he would ask a student to drive him to the florist and he'd come home with a bouquet of flowers for his wife. Every Yom Kippur the table was adorned with flowers for her.

When he became ill and needed a wheelchair to get around, he sent someone to buy the flowers and he made sure he held them while in his wheelchair and delivered them into his wife's hands. A year later when he was considerably weaker, he put the flowers on his lap and rolled in to give them to his wife.

When he could no longer move, she went out and bought silk flowers and she showed them to him telling him that she was continuing his noble custom of getting flowers for her birthday. The vase with the silk flowers still adorns the table. When the flowers get dusty his wife washes them so they're bright again for the past 15 years since Rabbi Gifter's death. May his memory be blessed.

Indian Chief By Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn

The following inspirational story illustrates one Jew's successful overcoming of struggles in life. In the 1960's Ben Richards (not his real name) grew up hating city live in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn. Ben was a voracious reader of nature books and he dreamed of living on a farm.

Ben's parents were Orthodox Jews, but Judaism had little meaning for Ben. He was a free spirit, with no desire to be encumbered by rules and regulations that controlled every aspect of his live. Still though, he sought the meaning of life.
So, at age 17 he left home and traveled 2,000 miles westward to live on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in the northwestern mountains of America in the area bordering Glacier National Park. While on the reservation, he enrolled in the local university and majored in wildlife biology.

However, Ben's primary studies were on the reservation. His primary teacher on the reservation was an old Indian man named Whitecalf. Ben stayed for a little while on that reservation, before leaving to join a different reservation in South Dakota. Ben spent several years on the reservation in South Dakota learning the ways of the Indians. Eventually, Ben was fluent in their language and customs. He even dressed in the traditional Indian garb.

Ben always strived to understand the deeper meaning of life. He looked for answers among the Indians. One day, Ben heard about a

woman who was said to possess higher spiritual powers. The woman was the matriarch of the Sioux Indian Society. Ben was convinced that this woman knew the meaning of life.

Eventually, after travelling several days over hills and across prairies, Ben reached the camp where the famous woman lived. Elva Onefeather, as she was known, lived in wretched conditions.

Ben approached her and began to ask about her Indian Heritage. She refused to answer him. *"You are not one of us,"* she said. *"You can never be like us, you don't belong here!"*

"But I have lived on reservations for years. I know your culture, I know your language, I practice your customs and I feel part of…" She interrupted him, *"If you were a Christian, I could understand. But you are a student of the Holy White Rock Man."* Ben assumed she was referring to Moshe Rabbeinu.

"You are not one of us," she admonished him. "*Go back to your roots. That is where you belong."* Ben was shocked. He was being rejected. After all the time and effort he had invested in this lifestyle. A revered member of the Indian community had labeled him an outsider. Was he now to go back to city life? To Jewish life?

The refection made him rethink his whole life. Within days, Ben packed his Chevy pick-up truck and together with his dog, began the long journey eastward.

He made his way to Brooklyn and began asking old acquaintances for names of people or organizations who might give him guidance. He was given a list of names and he consulted each of them.

Ben was disappointed once again. He went through name after name on the list, and he still did not feel that he could relate to anyone. He had one more name left on his list. If it did not work, he could go back west. The name was Rabbi Shlomo Friefeld (1926-1990), Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshiva "Shor Yoshuv" in Far Rockaway, New York.

Ben with his long ponytail and his dog, drove out to Far Rockaway in his old pick-up truck. He parked his truck on Central Avenue in front of the Yeshiva and headed inside where he soon met Rabbi Freifeld. Ben was immediately touched by the Rosh Yeshiva's kindness.

Rabbi Freifeld warmly welcomed Ben into his office. Ben told Rabbi Freifeld about his experiences on the Indian reservation. Ben was then taken aback by Rabbi Freifeld's queries. The Rabbi wanted to know how to hunt deer, how to determine the freshness of elk tracks. These were the last topics Ben ever thought he would be discussing with a Rabbi.

Their first conversation lasted for about 20 minutes, and it covered a wide range of subjects. As Ben left, Rabbi Freifeld noticed Ben's ponytail and said, "*Why are you hiding your hair in your shirt? Your hair is so beautiful!*" Ben left the office mesmerized. He wanted to come back. He needed to get to know this man.

Ben returned the next morning where he found the members of the yeshiva busy with a bris. Rabbi Freifeld managed to pick Ben out of the large crowd and motioned for him to come to the front. Ben was once again touched by the Rabbi's warmth.

Over the following few weeks, Ben and Rabbi Freifeld spoke for hours on end. They would usually speak in his office, which was bejeweled with thousands of sefarim on all aspects of Torah. Each of the bookshelves was filled to capacity. It was said that Rabbi Freifeld had 15,000 sefarim.

One afternoon as they spoke in the office, someone came in and told Rabbi Freifeld that he was need in the Beis Medrash . Rabbi Freifeld excused himself and told Ben that he would be back in a few moments.

Being alone in the office, Ben got up from his chair and began walking around gazing at the overflowing bookcases of seforim that Rabbi

Freifeld had. He walked near where Rabbi Freifeld had been sitting and noticed something unusual in the kneehole of the desk. There were a number of books lying on the floor! It did not make sense. These were all holy books - how could they possibly be on the floor? He bent down and picked them up.

It was then, when he picked up those books, did Ben's life change forever. Because the books on the floor were about American Indian culture and life on reservations!

"It was then," says Ben, *"that I realized how much Rabbi Freifeld really loved me."* Rabbi Freifeld was studying those books so that he could understand where Ben was coming from. By taking time to understand and not merely to be understood, Rabbi Freifeld validated Ben's concerns and quest for meaning in life.

Ben went on to study at the Yeshiva Shor Yoshuv for several years, where he developed into a remarkable *talmid chacham*, a incredible mentsch, and (in his mind) Rabbi Freifeld's most beloved talmid. (From "Reflections of the Maggid" Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn, p.215)

For Our Best By Rabbi David Ashear

The Sefer Ki Ata Imadi brings a story of a couple, Reuven and Gittel, who were hiding out in their attic during the Holocaust. One of their gentile neighbours supplied them with food, and another neighbour agreed to raise their two children as their own to protect them from the Nazis, yimach shemam.

Reuven and Gittel lived in constant fear and worried about their children's spirituality, growing up in a home devoid of religion.

One day they were told about a man named Stefan who was accepting money to smuggle families to Switzerland. Reuven risked his life to go meet Stefan at a coffee shop. He was told that each person would cost 15,000 francs. So for him, his wife and two children, it would be 60,000.

Stefan told him there was a train leaving next Thursday. If he could come up with the money by Wednesday, he'll take them. Reuven went home and told his wife, but they had no idea how they would come up with such an exorbitant amount of money. They sold everything they had including his wife's expensive jewelry, and they managed to come up with 50,000 francs.

They were hoping Stefan would take them for that, or at least allow them to owe the other 10,000. They had relatives in Switzerland who would gladly lend them the money. But the next Wednesday when Reuven went back to the coffee shop at the designated time and told Stefan that he had only 50,000 francs, Stefan said, "No way, I will not do it for one franc less than 60,000."

Reuven and Gittel thought they were getting out. They had so much hope, and now they were right back to where they were before. They strengthened each other in Emunah, however, accepting the will of Hashem, telling themselves, "If Hashem didn't allow us to leave now, then it is for our best to be here."

Baruch Hashem, they survived the war and were reunited with both of their children. Later, they found out that the people who Stefan took that Thursday were all caught, including him, and were all put to death, lo alenu.

The Sefer Ki Ata Imadi asks: If Hashem was going to save Reuven and his family anyway, why did He first give them false hope? Why did He make them sell all their possessions, when He knew they weren't going to use that money anyway?

We can never fully understand the ways of Hashem, but the rabbi suggested that sometimes Hashem wants to give a person a gift or a Yeshua , but at the moment the person is still not worthy of it. So, Hashem will put him in a situation that will require a lot of Emunah to accept, and if the person rises to the challenge and accepts the Will of Hashem lovingly, that will provide him with the merits necessary to receive the gift that Hashem wanted to give him.

Hashem wants to give people gifts sometimes, but in their current situation they're not worthy. So He gives them a difficulty to deal with. And when they accept it with Emunah, they become worthy of those gifts.

Of course, any difficulty anybody encounters was coming to him either way, it's just that Hashem times it to come at a time when the person needs the merits of Emunah. We never know exactly why anything happens; we don't know why each challenge is given. But we do know that responding with Emunah is the best possible response we can have and will definitely bring blessing one way or another.



Sir Moses Montefiore's Greatest Compliment

Once, while travelling Sir Moses Montefiore decided to get down from his carriage and walk, while his entourage followed some distance behind. Suddenly, some youngsters recognized him as a Jew. Not knowing that he was a distinguished knight of the realm, they began to hurl insults at Sir Moses. His attendants pounced upon the youngsters and wrestled them to the ground. The aides were about to administer a sound "thrashing" when Sir Moses hurried overs and said;

"Leave them alone. Let them stand up. Many people have given me great titles. They've called me 'Sir,' 'Your Excellency,' and 'Your Honour.' But no one has ever given me a royal title such as these boys have. They addressed me with the greatest title of all – they called me a Yehudi, a Jew!"

The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva Dances A Daring Dance



It was a cold snowy night in Manchester which made walking outside very difficult. The aging Manchester Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yehuda Zev Segal was outside on his way home when a car pulled up to drive him.

The driver told the Rosh Yeshiva that his wife had just given birth to a baby girl. The Rosh Yeshiva wished him a Mazal Tov and asked him how the mother and baby were doing. He said that they were both Boruch Hashem doing very well.

When the car stopped the Rosh Yeshiva got out into the snow covered street and started dancing with the father in the most unpleasant and unsafe conditions. The father asked the Rosh Yeshiva why he was endangering himself and dancing on the slippery street.

The Rosh Yeshiva answered that whenever he hears that a mother and child are healthy after childbirth, he is so consumed with Simcha and Shevach for Hashem that he needs to dance. And dance he did! (Heard from the baby's brother)

Hashem is not concerned with results: He is interested in our efforts. If a person tried hard, then they were successful, regardless of the outcome!

Rav Yaakov Edelstein - The Two Words He Wanted to Be Able to Speak

The Gaon and Tzaddik Rav Yaakov Edelstein was one of the most uniques Gedolim of our generation. He was one of the great luminaries of the generation yet he was the Rav of a modern secular Israeli city, Ramat HaSharon. He was one of the great Mekubalim of the Dor, having learned the secrets of Kabbalah from the sacred "shoemaker" of Bnei Brak, yet he was an approachable Litvishe Dayan and Posek.

The last two years of his life were difficult ones where a series of illnesses left him without the capability to speak, and he communicated by writing. At one point he recovered enough that his caregivers felt they can teach him how to speak again.

The therapist asked him to write down the two words that he wanted to start with. Rav Yaakov wrote "Amen" and "Todah". Two words that say it all, Bein Adam LaMakom and Bein Adam Lachaveiro.

The famous Ramban at the end of Parshas Bo says that the underlying reason for every mitzva, and the reason for the entire creation, is for man to acknowledge Hashem as his creator. Amen is a short two syllable word that simply and succinctly accomplishes this mission. With your little Amen you justify your existence and the existence of the entire universe.

The same goes with the word Todah. People crave recognition. By thanking someone you give him recognition that he is worth something and that you need him. Nothing can satisfy him more. You acknowledge his importance in your world and the world at large. It is the essence of Bein Adam LaChaveiro.

It takes a gaon and a tzaddik to come up with something so simple and so brilliant, even as he struggles on his sickbed. Yehi Zichro Baruch!

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik's Brisker Door

Rav Chaim Brisker was an incredible Ba'al Chesed. His home was totally hefker to all those who wanted to enter. People ate his food, took away his seforim, and even slept in his bed leaving him nowhere to sleep some nights.

His concern for other was so great that it didn't dawn on anyone that they were inconveniencing him, and they probably weren't. His house was the local hangout for anyone who had no where to go.

Someone once asked why he had a door on his house if it performed no function whatsoever, since it was always open. The answer was obvious. According to one Dei'a, in order to put a Mezuza in a doorway it needs a to have a door on it. The door is there just to make sure that the Mezuza is 100% L'Chatchila. Why else would someone have a door?

Torah wellsprings – Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

In the dream, the *sar ha'ofim*, carrying the loaves on his head, was obviously alive. Yet, we see that one can be alive and it is as if he is dead. Sadly, the same can be said about someone who keeps the mitzvos without joy.

For example, he lights the Chanukah *lecht*, says *Hallel* and *Al HaNissim*, but without *hislahavus* and joy. He is alive but his mitzvos are dead. We must perform the mitzvos energetically, joyously.

When we light the Chanukah *lecht*, say *Hallel* and *Al HaNissim*, and do all other mitzvos of Chanukah, let it be obvious that we are alive.

Example isn't another way to teach – it is the only way to teach.

Chabad.org

"אלה תולדות יעקב, יוסף" "These are the offspring of Yaakov: Joseph." (37:2)

What is the solution to the following riddle? Take what Yosef found, add to it his garments, then add to it his sale and add to this what was added to him, and you have *Chanukah*.

The Torah (*Bereishit* 39:4) says of Yosef that "*vayimtza Yosef chein*" — "Yosef found favour [in his — Potiphar's — eyes]."

When Pharaoh appointed Yosef as viceroy, it says "*veyalbeish oto bigdei sheish*" — "he dressed him in garments of fine linen" (41:42).

Yosef was sold to the Ishmaelites "*b'esrim Kesef*" — "for twenty pieces of silver" (37:28).

The *Gemara* (*Sotah* 10a) says that because Yosef sanctified the Name of Heaven in seclusion (he succeeded in withstanding Potiphar's wife's attempt to seduce him in the privacy of her home — ibid., 39:11,12), he merited that the letter "*hei*" from Hashem's Name be added to his name, as it is written (Psalms 81:6), "*eidut beyhosef samo*" (**עדות ביהוסף שמו**) — "He made a testimony for Yosef" [when he went out over the land of Egypt — his name is spelled with an extra "*hei*"].

If you take the *chein* — favour — that Yosef found **חן** add to it his garments — *sheish* — (**שש**), which in Hebrew also means six and the Hebrew numeral for six is *vav* — **ו** Add to this his sale, *esrim* — twenty — **כ.** Finally add what was added to his name **ה** = **חנוכה**. You have the word "*Chanukah*" in the name of Yosef, and it is all in the Torah portions of *Vayeishev* and *Mikeitz* the weeks when *Chanukah* occurs. (**ר' אברהם שמחה זצ"ל מבאראנוב**)

Divrei Torah Ba'er Heitev

This week, the week preceding Chanukah is also a week of great events. 18 Kislev 5572 is the Yohrtzeit of the Tzadik **Rav Boruch of Mezhebuzh ZY"A**, Grandson of the **Baal Shem Tov ZY"A** and 19 Kislev 5533 is the Yohrtzeit of **Reb Dov Ber the great Maggid of Mezeritch ZY"A**, Talmud of the **Heilige Baal Shem Tov ZY"A**.

The Beis Aharon of Karlin instructed his Chasidim to make a Siyum HaShas and a Seuda adjoining these two days "In order that it not be forgotten that there was these Tzadikim in the world".

Rav Osher Zilbershtien ZY"A, [Rov of Mezeritch before WWII, Los Angeles afterwards and Rebbe of my Grandfather **Rav Yonah Ganzweig ZY"A**], was troubled with the following question. Why is the Maggid of Mezeritch buried in Anapoli, and not in Mezeritch?

He found this story in the Pinkos Hakehilloh of the Chevroh Kadishoh of Anipoli. A plague was rampant in in Mezeritch. The army surrounded the area, Thoroughfare was prohibited, and a great penalty was placed upon anyone who would give refuge to one from the plagued area, in order to contain it.

The Tzadik Reb Zushoh of Anapoli ZY"A, was aware of the danger the Maggid was in and went and brought him to Anapoli where he was hidden. After a while, people snitched to the mayor of the city, and he summoned Rav Zushoh.

"I know you are a G-dly man and will not question your actions, but how do you take the responsibility for the welfare of our city Anapoli as thousands of people can become infected with the disease? If you will confirm to me in writing that no harm befalls, I will let you go, otherwise I shall punish you."

To this Rav Zushoh wrote, "I Meshulem Zusia confirm that from today 19 Kislev 5532 until a year from today 19 Kislev 5533 there will be no deaths, neither young or old, Jew or Gentile, no miscarriages no one will die in the town of Anapoli."

Rav Zilberstein investigated the cemetery and so it is not one had the date between 19 Kislev. How great are Tzadikim, may their Zechusim stand for us.

Living Jewish

וְלֹא־זָכַר שַׂר־הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ The chief butler did not remember Joseph and forgot him (Gen. 40:23)

While "not remembering" Joseph indicates a passive, unintentional action, "forgetting" refers to the chief butler's deliberate attempt to dismiss him from his mind. His failure to remember Joseph was purposeful. (Ohr HaTorah, Tzemach Tzedek)

בַּחֲלוֹמִי וְהִנֵּה־גֶפֶן לְפָנָי In my dream, behold, a vine was before me (Gen. 40:9)

Why did Joseph interpret the chief butler's dream optimistically, whereas the chief baker's dream received a negative interpretation?

The chief butler had dreamt about the fruits of the Land of Israel, which are the handiworks of G-d rather than of man. The chief baker, by contrast, dreamt about baked goods, which are made by man and symbolize an arrogant attitude of "my strength and the strength of my hands." Such a dream, Joseph figured, could not bode well for the future. (Nahar Shalom)

If you can trust a puzzle company to make sure every piece is in the box to complete the puzzle, then why can't you trust Hashem that every piece of your life is there for a reason!

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

If You Find A Fly In The Wine, Don't Do This!



Rabbi Shaya Greenberg moved into a small town in Ontario, Canada to take the position of rabbi of the Orthodox shul. He realized immediately the need to build a new, beautiful shul to encourage new members to join. To accomplish that, Rabbi Greenberg needed a bank loan. He set up a meeting with the local banker, Mr. Jack O'Brian. Mr. O'Brian listened to the rabbi's presentation and then asked a strange question. "Rabbi Greenberg, what denomination of Jews is your place of worship affiliated with?" Rabbi Greenberg was taken aback at this seemingly irrelevant question. He replied, "Orthodox." Mr. O'Brian responded that he was approving the loan for as much money as was needed.

Rabbi Greenberg was stunned at how easy the meeting had gone. When all the paperwork was signed and the loan was approved, Rabbi Greenberg asked Mr. O'Brian why he was willing to grant such a large loan without even knowing him.

Mr. O'Brian said that as a child, he was a young orphan. His mother worked hard to pay the monthly expenses, but she did not always succeed. Some days, the only food they had to eat was stale bread, cereal, and noodles. One day, the local grocer, an Orthodox Jew, told Mrs. O'Brian to take whatever food that she needed and whenever she needed. He trusted her to pay him back, whenever she could, without a time limit. Mr. O'Brian continued, "It was that wonderful and sincere offer of assistance that showed me what kind of people you Orthodox Jews are. Knowing that someone cared enough to

offer help, pulled us through." (One Small deed Can Change the World by Nachman Seltzer)

Two of Pharoah's personal servants were thrown in jail for crimes against the king. The Chief Baker gave the king a loaf of bread that had a pebble inside. The Wine Steward gave the king a cup of wine that had a fly in it. Yosef, who himself was imprisoned, was appointed in charge.

One morning, Yosef noticed that they looked agitated and sad. Yosef asked them why they looked so sad. They said that they had troubling dreams. Yosef offered to interpret the dreams for them. Yosef interpreted the Wine Steward's dream in a very positive light. The Ramban (Bereishis 40:15) says that this positive interpretation gave happiness to the Chief Baker, who then told Yosef his dream. If the Chief Baker felt joy, imagine how happy the Wine Steward must have felt.

Yosef's interpretation gave him a new lease on life. His sadness was turned to joy when he heard that Pharaoh would reinstate him to his former position. Yosef asked the Wine Steward for a small favour, to tell Pharoah that Yosef was unjustly imprisoned.

We would think that the Wine Steward would be happy to return this favour for Yosef. Yet, that was not the case. The Torah tells us (Bereishis 40: 22-23) that the Wine Steward "did not remember Yosef's kindness."

The Ohr HaChaim says even more so, that the Wine Steward removed all thoughts of Yosef from his heart and his mind, totally forgetting about him. Rashi and the Matnos Kehuna on the Midrash (Bereishis 88:7) say that the Wine Steward looked for things to busy himself with, to distract his mind to actively "forget" Yosef's kindness.

HaRav Alter Henach Leibowitz zt"l questions why it was necessary for the Wine Steward to busy himself with different actions in

order to forget Yosef's favor to him. Wouldn't it have been enough just to remain silent and not help Yosef by not speaking to Pharoah on his behalf? Why was it necessary to do actions to help him actively forget Yosef's kindness?

HaRav Alter Henach Leibowitz zt"l explains that the Wine Steward wanted to forget Yosef's kindness. He did not want to mention Yosef to Pharoah, either because it would not benefit him or because he was a rasha, an evil person. However, he understood that he was obligated to help Yosef. He felt a natural hakaras hatov, an appreciation for Yosef's having interpreted his dream and having put his mind at ease. These were conflicting emotions within him that were causing him pain. The understanding of his obligation to show appreciation conflicted with his desire not to help. To resolve this conflict, he actively removed Yosef from his mind.

We have an inborn, natural emotion to feel appreciation for a kindness that one does for us. If we suppress that emotion, we feel internal turmoil. Instead, we should appreciate everything that is done for us and look for opportunities to show our appreciation.



Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

ולא זכר שר המשקים את יוסף וישכחהו (40:23)

Rashi writes that Yosef sinned by asking the cupbearer to intercede with Pharaoh and secure his release from prison instead of placing his trust in Hashem, and he was punished for doing so with an additional two years of jail time. Numerous commentators struggle to understand

what Yosef did wrong. Presumably, a person who is in a perilous situation, and especially one who has already been there for many years, should be allowed, even required, to make whatever reasonable efforts present themselves to secure his release. If so, what was Yosef's error?

A novel explanation is given by **Rav Berel Povarsky**, who points out that Yosef himself interpreted the cup-bearer's dream as indicating that he wouldn't be released from prison for another three days. If so, during the span of those three days, there was no obligation for Yosef to make any efforts, and there was no purpose in asking the cup-bearer to remember him. During those three days, Yosef should have focused on trusting that Hashem could bring his salvation even sooner than could the cup-bearer. Only if he still found himself in jail at the end of three days would it be proper to make his request of the cup-bearer immediately before his release. The fact that Yosef made his request at this point revealed a lack of trust on his part in Hashem's ability to save him immediately, and for that he was punished with an additional two years in prison.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld- *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*



This week's sedra is full of how interactions between Yoseph and his brothers and how they reacted to each other. We all know the famous story of how the brothers threw Yoseph into the pit, and immediately regretted it and decided to make some money and sell him instead. They pulled him out and decided to sell him to the local Arabs that were going down to Egypt.

Did they stop for one moment to think, OMG our brother has just been in a deep pit with dangerous creatures, and he comes out totally safe and unharmed? No, they just continued on as normal. This is an unbelievable thing.

It could be that the Torah gives us the description of what transpired in such an amazing way, to teach us a lesson. The brothers did something and then saw something that was so obviously a miracle that occurred right in front of their very eyes – and they didn't even notice it, it meant nothing to them.

The Gemara tells us in Sanhedrin that when Rav Tanchum was in discussion with the emperor, he asked the emperor a question that he couldn't answer. The emperor was so embarrassed and upset to the degree that he threw Rav Tanchum into the lion's den so that he would get devoured. However, nothing happened! Rav Tanchum was unscathed. One of the people in the crowd said that it was because the royal lions have been fed on steaks three times a day and are therefore not hungry.

The Gemara says, hang on a moment, a miracle just happened in front of your very eyes and you didn't realise or internalise it?!

We do the same thing here in our lives as well. For example, on the third day of creation, Hashem commanded that the earth bring forth produce.

There are times when we find a crack in the pavement or street, with blades of grass sprouting out from there. Our planet is full of forests. In Russia there are forests 130,000 Km2. The Amazon comprises an incredible 5,500,000 Km2. Just to produce Sunday newspapers we have to cut down approximately 500,000 trees! Even small items are made from wood. In order to produce the billions of chopsticks used worldwide by the Asian communities, we need to cut down 25 million trees a year. When we walk past a tree, we don't even realise what it does for us. We don't realise how much we use things produced from trees.

Take hearing for example. A person can hear sounds ranging from 20 Hertz to about 20,000 Hertz. Why weren't we given the ability to hear sounds beyond this range? An animal can hear sounds from

miles away! For example, a tortoise has a range of 75- 150,000 Hertz!

The answer is simple. If we had the ability to hear that well, we would be bombarded by the sounds of our heart pumping, our intestines digesting food, our bones creaking, our muscles stretching -we would go insane.

So Hashem created our range of hearing sufficient for us to be

able to hear what we need to function correctly.

We go through the day and there are miracles happening constantly, but we don't realise it or internalise it.

The message of this week's parsha, is that the brothers saw a blatant miracle happening right before them, and yet, they did not recognise it as such. We have to go around life looking at all the miracles that Hashem does for us constantly and recognising them for what they really are- miracles! - ***Have a wonderful שבת!***



Yeshivas Beis Dovid Newsletter - *R Yoely Rottenstien*

פרק מ פסוק יג רבי עקיבא איגר

וְנָתַתָּ כוֹס פַּרְעֹה בְּיָדוֹ כַּמִּשְׁפָּט הָרִאשׁוֹן

"…You will place Pharaoh's cup into his hand, as your previous practice."

When Yosef interpreted the dream of the Sar Hamashkim, he explained to him that Pharaoh was going to give back his job as the wine steward, and then he added the words, ***"You will place Pharaoh's cup into his hand, as your previous practice."***

What is the need for the repetition that the cup will be in his hands like before? If he gets his job back, of course he'll have the cup in his hand like before?

Yosef was teaching the Sar Hamashkim a life lesson. He said to him, "You might be thinking you're in jail now because of the fly that was found in the king's cup. If so, when you go back to your job, you're probably going to rinse and check the cup dozens of times each time that you serve him. I'm telling you now, that would be a mistake. You could go back to holding the cup exactly the way you used to do it, כַּמִּשְׁפָּט הָרִאשׁוֹן because the fly was not the cause of you being in jail, but rather כִּי אִם זְכַרְתַּנִי אִתְּךָ it's because you had to be here to be the one to tell Pharaoh about me. The fly was just one of the ways that Hashem used to bring you here."

The more we understand how involved Hashem is in our lives, the more we'll attribute every last detail to His doing. What appears to be immediate causes of events are nothing more than the hand of Hashem being camouflaged.

If we would internalize this properly, our view of the world would change for the better. We'll become calmer and have more peace of mind. We'll know Hashem is always in control.

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk

When Yosef told Yaakov Avinu of the things that the brothers did wrong, in every case, he was mistaken. He had misjudged the situation and come to the wrong conclusion.

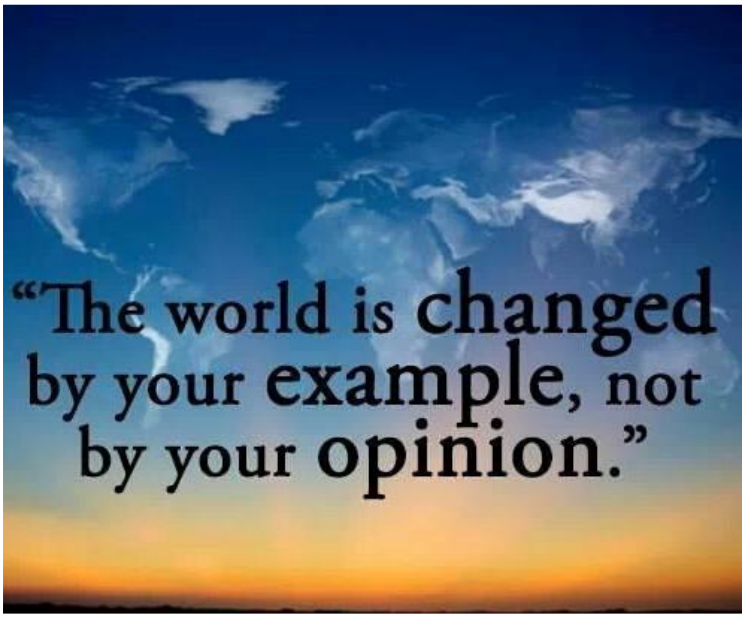
For example, he saw them cut the tail off of a sheep, and assumed they planned to eat it, thus violating the prohibition of *aiver min hachai*, taking a limb from a live animal. He didn't realize that it was a healing technique used by Arab shepherds.

Rashi says that in each case, he suffered for his false accusations. When the brothers dipped the coat in blood, they properly slaughtered the goat. This went against Yosef's assumption that they would eat from a live animal and was used todisguise what really happened to him.

On Chanuka, one would rightly have assumed that the Maccabees would be unsuccessful, or that the oil would run out after one day. Yet, these things did not occur - because Hashem had a different thought on the matter.

We should always remain open to the possibility that there is an alternative we haven't considered and, in that way, we will avoid suffering the consequences of our narrowed minds and fields of view. Better to light a candle and let the darkness be expelled from every corner, than shut the shades and think we see the light. HAPPY CHANUKA!

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk



The Torah tells us that Yosef brought back evil reports about his brothers to their father, and the very next posuk tells us that Yaakov loved Yosef more than all his brothers because he was a 'ben zekunim,' and he made him a special garment.

This seems strange. How is it that instead of rebuking Yosef for speaking negatively about his brothers, Yaakov rewarded him by treating him better than the rest?

This is one of those cases where the plain layman's reading of the verses may fall short, and we need explanation. For starters, it doesn't say Yosef brought reports to ***his*** father, but to ***their*** father. Though to an outsider it might seem that Yosef was basking in their disgrace, one who understands the selflessness a person can achieve can view his actions in an entirely different light. He wasn't telling

his father bad things, trying to look better as compared to his brothers.

Rather, he was telling *their* father, the one who might help them to fix ***their*** shortcomings and become even greater people. Yosef was concerned with helping his brothers and in order to do so, he enlisted the help of Yaakov Avinu who might properly guide them.

For this, Yaakov loved Yosef, as he was a 'ben zekunim,' a youth wiser and mature beyond his years, who sought to help his brothers. Yaakov didn't love him MORE than all his brothers, but he loved him more BECAUSE of all his brothers. When he was able to help each son improve, Yaakov found one more reason to love and appreciate Yosef, who was concerned with each of his brothers excelling.

The special garment showed that Yosef was adorned not just by his own actions, but by the ones of others that he had a hand in facilitating.

This is a new take on the story and should make us consider its ramifications in our own lives. And what a lesson for each of us! Our Father wants all His children to do well. Certainly, any of us who try to help others succeed and make Him proud, will feel the tremendous warmth and love of our Father in Heaven.

The Siddur Speaks

When **Rav Elya Lopian, zt"l**, was a young Bachur learning in Yeshivas Kelm, he joined a select group of promising Torah scholars.

Once, the group decided to hold a nightly meeting, where each member would reveal any thoughts he might have had during the day, that he felt could use improvement. This exercise, they hoped, would motivate them to make a greater effort to perfect themselves.

At the first meeting, **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Broide, zt"l**, was the first one to begin to say what he had thought. Facing the group, he tried

to talk, but he couldn't get any words out, and his face blushed bright red.

He cleared his throat and tried again, but he just couldn't speak. Finally, he mumbled quietly to his friends that he simply couldn't bring himself to tell them about his lowly thoughts.

Later, Rav Elya took Rav Tzvi Hirsch aside and privately asked him to reveal what it was that he had found too humiliating to share with the whole group.

Rav Tzvi Hirsch was mortified, and after hesitating a little, he said, "Just before Davening, I thought to myself that I'd be eating potatoes for supper tonight. Can you imagine? How could I possibly have thought of potatoes at a time when I should have been preparing to stand before Hashem?!"

A Shabbos Vort- Rabbi Yisrael Bronstein

וְלֹא־זָכַר שַׂר־הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ "Yet the chief wine butler did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him" (40:23)

This verse seems redundant, noted the **Maharam of Amshinov**. Why must it state that "he forgot him," once it already informed us that "the chief wine butler did not remember Yosef?

The Rebbe answered: As soon as Yosef uttered his request to the chief wine butler, he realized that he had sinned, as he had trusted in a human being instead of Hashem. He therefore prayed to Hashem that the butler would forget his request entirely! And, indeed, "he forgot him."

If one would only delve into the words of the Torah, he will discover how sweet they are. (Eiruvin 54b)

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיְהִי ה׳ אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרִי 39:2



The great miracle of Chanukah revolves around one tiny flask of oil, the only one tiny flask that was found in the Bais HaMikdash with the special seal of the Kohen Gadol. This was such a tremendous celebration that we continue to rejoice every single year at this time.

What was a single flask of shemen zayis during regular times, when the Mikdash stood in all it's glory and pure olive oil was made in abundance? No one thought twice of such a tiny flask. It was taken for granted because we had plenty of it. Only when the Greeks defiled our Mikdash, and there was no pure oil to be found except this one tiny flask, do we make a holiday out of it. It is the same holy oil whether there is a little or a lot, but when there is a lot, it is under appreciated.

R' Avraham Pam zt"l says that when Yosef interpreted Pharaoh's dreams of a tremendous abundance of food for seven years, followed by a famine for another seven years, he could not remain silent. Although it is not so appropriate to give the King advice, after all, he was only asked to interpret the dreams, he still felt that it was worth the risk to tell the King what to do.

Had Yosef remained silent, all the food during the seven years of plenty would have been squandered. Therefore, he gave his brilliant advice to appreciate the great abundance and put away some of the plenty for when it would be needed.

The tiny flask of oil that was so appreciated because of the tremendous lack of any oil at all teaches us a great lesson about

appreciation. Chanukah is a time to thank Hashem and to praise Him as well. L'Hodos - to thank Hashem is a great level which often comes when we realize that we just received a gift.

L'Hallel means to constantly sing our Creator's praises. If we could only heighten our recognition of al the shefa bracha that we experience in our lives daily, and if we would put away some of those feelings for when we are going through a more difficult period in our lives, we could internalize the lesson of Chanukah and spend our entire lives thanking and praising Hashem, and truly appreciating everything He gives us.



Chazu Bonai Emunoh In The Parsha

ויקנאו בו אחיו ואביו שמר את הדבר בראשית לז:יא

"The brothers became jealous of him (יוסף), and his father guarded the matter". The implication here is that **יעקב** started to look forward to the outcome of **יוסף** 's dreams only after the brothers began to envy him. The question is why?

The **אמרי נועם זי"ע** presents a very important and fundamental idea. Often, when going through a difficult time, a person with **אמונה** might tell himself "This is hard but I'm sure with Hashem's help, I'll get through it. The **נסיון** will pass."

This is indeed a high **מדרגה** and the correct attitude to have. However, there is a level to reach for above this.

When later in the story, **יוסף** is attacked by his brothers and eventually sold into slavery, things looked terribly bleak. Can a person ever sink to a lower level than having their very life threatened by his own siblings and then being treated in such a degrading fashion? Yet, as things pan out, it becomes clear that all this was just in preparation for **יוסף** 's phenomenal future. In the end, **יוסף** becomes not just the viceroy of Egypt but the choicest of all the **שבטים**.

And so it turns out that the difficulties at the beginning were actually sowing the seeds for his eventual success. His namesake **יוסף מוקיר שבת** in the famous story involving the diamond in the fish, went through a similar experience. Everything his enemy did to try and undermine him eventually proved to be the source of his triumph. This is the higher level. Not just to think that difficulties will pass but to understand that those difficulties are the actual breeding ground for future growth and happiness.

Up until the brothers expressed their jealousy towards **יוסף**, Yaakov couldn't be sure where **יוסף** 's success was going to come from, because he knew this rule: only from true adversity can real success be found. But once **ויקנאו בו אחיו,** adversity, then **ואביו שמר את הדבר** great things could start to be expected…

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport

לְכֻ֣ו וְנִמְכְּרֶ֞נּוּ לַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִ֗ים וְיָדֵ֙נוּ֙ אַל־תְּהִי־בֹ֔ו כִּי־אָחִ֥ינוּ בְשָׂרֵ֖נוּ הֽוּא וַיִּשְׁמְעֻ֖ו אֶחָֽיו (37:21)



While the rest of the brothers were plotting to actually kill Yosef, the Torah records that Reuven saved him by suggesting that they instead throw him into a pit. As Rashi writes (37:24) that the pit was full of poisonous snakes and scorpions, in what way was this considered "saving" Yosef and not merely substituting one type of death for another?

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that while humans have free will and the ability to do to somebody even something which wasn't decreed in Heaven, animals have no such free choice and are limited to whatever was decided by G-d. Reuven knew that Yosef wasn't the wicked pursuer that the other brothers thought he was and was confident that a death sentence hadn't been decreed upon him. Nevertheless, Reuven feared that his brothers, with their free will, would succeed in their plans to kill Yosef, so he "saved" him by having him thrown into a pit where he knew that the snakes and scorpions would have no permission to harm him.

Alternatively, the **Panim Yafos** answers that being killed by snakes and scorpions is considered death at the hands of Heaven. However, Rashi writes (Gen. 23:1) that the Heavenly Tribunal doesn't punish a person until the age of 20. Since Yosef at this time was only 17, Reuven knew that even if he was guilty, throwing him to the poisonous animals would still be a salvation.

The Panim Yafos adds that Reuven was relying on this principle to escape punishment for moving his father's bed after the death of Rachel (Rashi Gen. 35:22), as at that time he was also under the age of 20. When he returned to the pit and found Yosef missing, Reuven presumed that he had been devoured by the poisonous animals inside. This shattered his planned defence and caused him to exclaim in agony: "The boy (Yosef) is missing, and where will I go" (Gen. 37:30) - upon which the Midrash comments, "Where will I go with my actions in moving my father's bed from Bilhah's tent?"

Finally, the **Tosefos Rid** suggests that Reuven intended for his brothers to throw Yosef into a different pit, which was empty, but they didn't listen and instead threw him into a pit full of serpents.

"Women are more compassionate than men." ~~ Rashi

Rabbi Yoel Gold - The Giant Gentleman



On December 11th, 1995, at 8 p.m., a boiler exploded in the largest textile factory in America at the time, the Malden Mills. It burned the entire factory to the ground. The fire was so big that it could be seen from miles away and it took an entire week to put out the fire completely. At the time, Mr. Aaron Feuerstein, the CEO of the company, was celebrating his 70th birthday.



In the middle of the party, one of the executives ran over to him and said, "Mr. Feuerstein, there's a fire at the mill." By the time he got there, the factory that had been built by his grandfather in the early 1900s was mostly gone, which meant that overnight, three thousand employees who worked at Malden Mills lost their job. As far as Mr. Feuerstein was concerned, he was about to collect close to half a billion dollars from the insurance company. But now, he was faced with the following decision.

Either close the company and pocket the money, or he can rebuild the company down south and hire cheaper labor there and still make

a lot of money. Either choice would have been common practice among CEOs at the time. Everybody expected Mr. Feuerstein to do the same.

The next morning, Mr. Feuerstein called a press conference. Thousands of people were crammed and jammed into this huge auditorium. Senators and politicians were there and in front of everyone, Mr. Feuerstein gets up and makes a stunning announcement. He pledged to rebuild the factory right in Massachusetts bigger and better than ever before. And not only that, he continued, but every single one of his employees would continue to receive their monthly paychecks until it was rebuilt.



The entire place erupted. There was so much emotion. It was charged because people were so anxious and nervous up to that point, thinking they lost their livelihood. And all of a sudden, the saint of a man gets up and pledges and promises that they have nothing to worry about. News media outlets showed the footage of him making the announcement, and they also showed people waiting in line afterwards to pick up their paychecks. It made national and international headlines. He was interviewed by dozens of news media outlets, and they asked them, "Why would you even do that?"

"My father," he said, "who was a very observant Jew, taught me and I still remember, 'In place where there is no man, strive to be a man. In those circumstances where there is a moral vacuum. do everything within your power to be a man.' That's what he instructed his children to do. And that's what I'm trying to do."

In 1996, the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, invited him to the State of the Union and sat him next to the First Lady, honoring him. From thereon in, he'd call Mr. Feuerstein periodically to ask for business advice, recognizing that here was a man who didn't see money as the end of it all, as the bottom line.

Some might have said that the proper business decision for a seventy-year-old man was to take all $300 million in insurance and retire. "And what would I do with it?" answered Aaron Feuerstein. "Eat more? Buy another suit? Retire and die? No, that did not go into my mind. That was not an option. Not for a second."



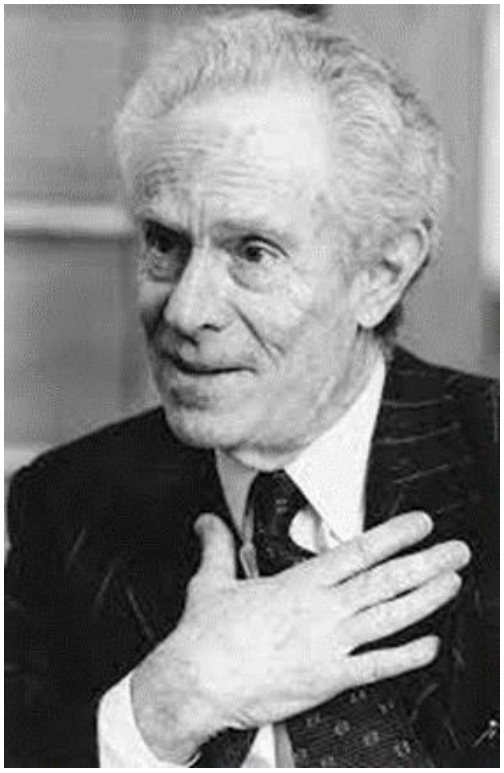
I was only 14 years old when this happened, but recently, when I heard about it again, I wondered if Mr. Feuerstein was still alive. Can I interview and can I meet him? And maybe even can I get a blessing from a great man like this?

I made some calls and found that he lives in Brookline, Massachusetts. He's alive and well. But he hasn't given an interview in 25 years.

He said yes to me.

I took along my twelve-year-old son, Shalom. We traveled to Boston and came to the house of his granddaughter, Marika Feuerstein. He lives with his granddaughter at ninety-five. Not a young man anymore, but completely healthy and completely with it. As I walked into his home and shook his hand, I could see in his eyes the wisdom, the life experience. The first question I asked him was, "Mr.

Feuerstein, what gave you the courage, the strength, to walk away from hundreds of millions of dollars and do what's right and treat the workers properly like human beings, taking care of them."



"First of all, the Torah. As a young man, when I read and studied the Torah, it showed me the way of life. That was very, very important. Not to oppress the worker. We considered him a human being, not a pair of hands. And there's a difference."

Mr. Feuerstein's father was a great example and he also taught him to be a mensch.

"My father was a tzaddik and had great influence over me. Today, we see Orthodoxy prospering. But when my father was a young man, Orthodoxy was dying, and my father was the one who kept Orthodoxy alive in Boston. The business was started by his father, Henry Feuerstein. He came to this country in his teens, and he read in the Forward's Yiddish newspaper that there was a factory for sale in Malden. He went to see the factory, knowing nothing about knitting machinery and nothing about sweaters. Nothing about anything. But, he said, there's a place where I can go to shul and be my own boss, so he bought it, and the business prospered. By the time I got to the business, the Malden Mills was ranked Triple-A for credit, and they were worth millions."

I asked him about the employees who returned to work at Malden Mills after it was rebuilt. They increased productivity by 40% without a wage increase, just as an expression of gratitude to Mr. Feuerstein for what he had done.

"We had good employees. Many of them couldn't even speak English. But when treated like human beings, they were just terrific. They

wanted me to succeed and they increased employment without a wage increase."

Then I asked Mr. Feuerstein a very difficult question. I said, "Mr. Feuerstein, I know that eventually your company went bankrupt. Do you ever feel that had you not done that good deed and spent the tens of millions of dollars on the employees, paying them while the company was being rebuilt, that you would have had the money to continue going?"

"No. You have no right to defame G-d's name with your business or with your family, whatever your enterprise is. 'You shall sanctify G-d's name in the midst of the Jewish people,' the Torah says. I always kept in my mind that I should sanctify G-d's name and not desecrate it. Business wise, I was too enthusiastic, and I should have gone slow. I wanted to go rapidly. And so I paid for it."

Something else he was proud of was the building of the Young Israel synagogue in Brookline, Massachusetts. He kept telling me, "Make sure you go see the shul." I did. A beautiful piece of architecture.

"I remember, as a young man, that it was a fight to get a minyan in the shul, and I wanted to have a shul that was not in a basement. I thought that wasn't respectful for G-d. If you want Him to dwell in your house, you have to make a nice house. So I put together the money and we built an Orthodox shul and it's something G-d could walk into. I feel like some of the Jews who went to the Beis Hamikdash years ago. I'm in the presence of G-d."

I couldn't help but feel that the entire conversation with Mr. Feuerstein was just an incredible experience. I was sitting in front of a giant. He didn't try to sound good or look good, but just wanted to impart the wisdom that he had gained over the years and that he had lived by it. And finally, I asked him, "Mr. Feuerstein, bless me, bless my son. I'm in awe of what you have done, what you have accomplished, the decisions you have made.

"May G-d bless you and make you secure; May G-d see you through security; and most importantly, may He give you in all that you do the divine objective to spread Torah."

My son and I will never forget that interview, that experience. I said my goodbyes, we wrapped it up, and went back to Los Angeles. Shortly after we came back to Los Angeles, we got a call from the family.

Mr. Feuerstein had passed away.

I thought to myself, if he hadn't given an interview in twenty-five years, why did he agree to do it now? I couldn't help but feel that Hashem sent me to Boston to share a story before he passed on so the world could know.

And something tells me I'm right.

DIVREI TORAH ON THE PARSHA BY BORUCH KAHAN

Daled Koisois



The Gemoro tells us in the last Perek of Pesochim that we have a Mitzva of Daled Koisois on Seder Night and one of the reasons is that it corresponds to the 4 terms of Geulah found in Voeiroh.

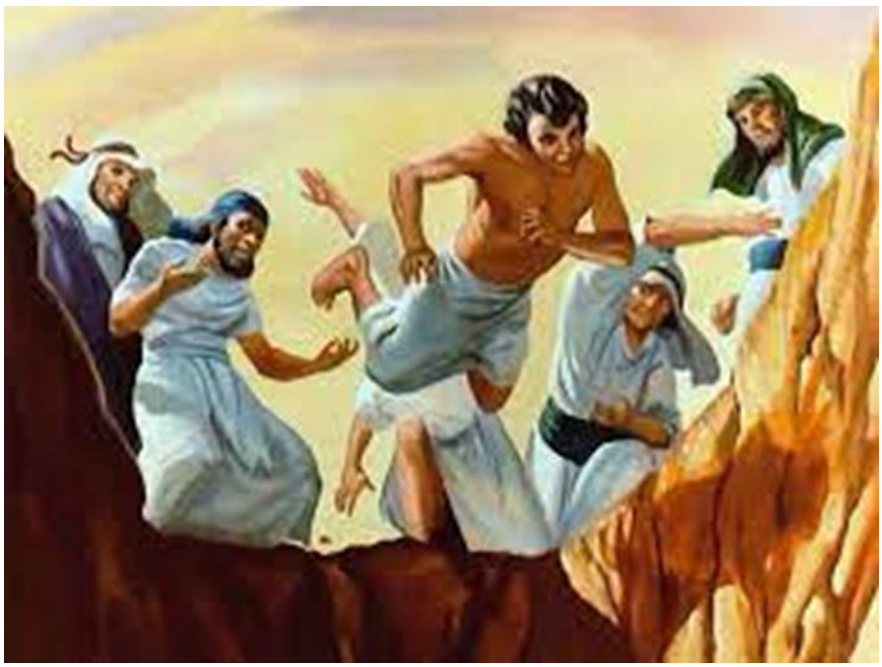
One interesting opinion is that it can also correspond to the 4 times the word Kois occurs in our Parsha. The difficulty is that if you look in the last Perek which is the story of the Sar HaMashkim and Sar HaOfim where this comes from the word Kois comes 5 times! It is very worthwhile to look at the Pirush **Kli Yokor** on this who explains this whole Inyan in a most beautiful way.

It is possible to say that even though we technically and physically have 4 Koisois but from a practical point of view we actually have 5 because at the end of the Seder we have the Kois Shel Eliyohu even though we don't drink it and this is set aside for Eliyohu HaNovi who we welcome to our houses in which a Seder is taking place and informing us the Geula is finally here. So, perhaps the 5th Kois in the story represents this future Kois of Eliyohu that Moshiach will be coming soon.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series [לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה]

'And Yehudah said to his brothers, "What is the gain if we slay our brother and cover up his blood?' 37:26 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל־אֶחָיו מַה־בֶּצַע כִּי נַהֲרֹג אֶת־אָחִינוּ וְכִסִּינוּ אֶת־דָּמוֹ

Rashi asks: **מה ממון** 'What monetary gain will we have by getting killing Yosef? Let's sell him and make some money?



The Orach Chaim says that they threw him into a pit where there were **נחשים ועקרבים** - snakes and scorpions. **The Ramban** says that they definitely did not know this fact as had they known, and they saw that ultimately he survived them, they would have realised that Yosef is the chosen one of Hashem.

The Chidah says that Yehuda said to his brothers. "We are going to try to eliminate Yosef from our lives. Regardless of whether he is **חייב מיתה** or not. If we kill him or not, we are going to face a problem.

If we don't kill him, when we return home without him, our father Yaakov will be extremely distressed, and he will lose his Ruach Hakodesh because **אֵין שְׁכִינָה שׁוֹרָה אֶלָּא מִתּוֹךְ שִׂמְחָה**. However, he will realise that after a year his Ruach hakodesh has still not returned, therefore he will realise that foul play happened to Yosef.

And if we kill Yosef, there is a **הבטחה** – a guarantee that **מת שישתכח מן הלב** - after a year 'the heart forgets'- it will allow the simcha to return. Then his Ruach Hakodesh will return, and he will find out that we killed Yosef.

Therefore Yehudah says, "**מַה־בֶּצַע כִּי נַהֲרֹג אֶת־אָחִינוּ וְכִסִּינוּ אֶת־דָּמוֹ** What is the gain if we slay our brother and cover up his blood? Do you think that we will be able to hide from Yaakov where Yosef is?" Yaakov will find out in due course.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

וַיְהִי ה׳ אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרִי Hashem was with Yoseph, and he was a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master (Potiphar). ***39:2.*** The next Pasuk says, ***וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה ה׳ מַצְלִיחַ בְּיָדוֹ and whatever he (Joseph) did Hashem made prosper <u>in his hand</u>.*** Potiphar saw that hashem was with him.



The Zohar Hakadosh says Yosef was an Ish Matzliach. He had a difficult life, but everything that he put **his hands** to was blessed. All of his endeavours were successful.

Even something that was in his hand, but his master requested something else, it

miraculously transformed into that item that his master requested of Yosef! The menu on the platter in Yosef's hands changed to whatever Potiphar requested!

The Ben Ish Chai says that this was an incredible miracle, but why didn't Hashem simplify it by making Potiphar change **his** mind, and request whatever it was on the menu that day?

The Ben Ish Chai answers, that when Hashem does a miracle for someone, but it is not in the zchus of that person, but rather in zechus avos or someone else, then that person is not zoche to visualise and see the miracle occurring themselves.

(E.g. Lot was saved from Sodom, but was not permitted to see the destruction himself, as he was not saved in his own zechus, but in the zechus of Avraham Avinu.)

However over here, The Ribono Shel Olam wanted to show Yosef that these miracles were happening to him in his own zecus, and not in the zechus of his avos. Therefore, Hashem made the miracle that it changed form **בְּיָדוֹ** – in his hand. He could see it happening himself, right before his eyes.

Furthermore, the Pasuk says **וַיַּרְא אֲדֹנָיו כִּי ה' אִתּוֹ** - ***And his master saw that Hashem was with him.***



The Medrash says that Yosef was saying Tefillos to Hashem the whole time that he was preparing food and serving Potiphar – 'B'Ezras Hashem everything should be good.' Potiphar noticed this and realised that Hashem was with him.

The Sh'lah Hakadosh says that a person must always say the words: **בְּעֶזְרַת הַשֵּׁם** or **אִם יִרְצֶה הַשֵּׁם**

before they do anything. The Pasuk in Mishlei (19:21) says **רַבּוֹת מַחֲשָׁבוֹת בְּלֶב־אִישׁ וַעֲצַת ה' הִיא תָקוּם** – ***'There are many thoughts in a man's heart, but Hashem's plan-that shall stand.'*** **הִיא** is roshei teivos of **אִם יִרְצֶה הַשֵּׁם** !

There is the famous story of the **Chofetz Chaim**, who desired to go to Eretz Yisrael. He announced to the people of Radin that he was leaving in a few days. However shortly after, his wife took ill, and they never managed to emigrate.

He said afterwards that the reason why it never came to fruition, and they never made it, was because he had failed to say **בְּעֶזְרַת הַשֵּׁם**!

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם – ***'But Reuben heard, and he saved him from their hands.' 37:21***

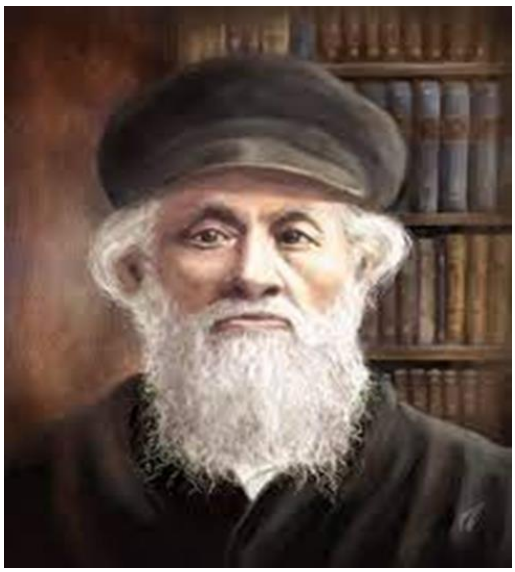
The Medrash says: The Pasuk is coming to teach us that if a person does a mitzvah, he should do it whole heartedly. If Reuven would have only known that Hakadosh Baruch Hu would write in the Torah about him that not only did he save him, but He would have carried him on his shoulders and taken him back home!

If people would realise the amazing accolade that would come from their actions, they would do that much more. This has got nothing to do with Kavod.

What does it mean that they would have done more? If they could have, they would have?!

Some meforshim say that *takke*, they didn't have the extra strength. But had they realized the extent of the reward for the great action that they did, they would have persevered and attempted to do more. People have got more strength then they realise.

Had Reuven realized the repercussions of his actions, he would have done much more.

Rav Shloime Zalman Aurbach Zt'l heard this story from **Reb Arieh Levine Zt'l**: When **The Leshem (Shlomo Elyashiv 1841 [12 Tevet 5602] - 1926 [27 Adar, 5676]**) wrote his sefer, Sha'arei Leshem Shevo V'Achlama, somehow, a copy made its way to Baghdad, and into the hands of **The Ben Ish Chai,** who learnt through it, and sent a letter back to the great men of Eretz Yisrael. "Get dressed in your Shabbos clothes and go to the Leshem to thank him on behalf of myself and Klal Yisrael for the sefer that he has written for us."

When they arrived, the Leshem looked up and asked them, "Why are you here?" They answered, " We have come as emissaries of the Ben Ish Chai, to thank you for the sefer that you have written." The Leshem burst out crying! He said, "Had I known just how much everyone appreciated my sefer, I would have written a second chelek!"

Rav Shloime Zalman said afterwards, that the Leshem was a 'Malach Elokim', but you can see that even to him, the appreciation of what he had accomplished would have spurred him on to write more sefarim!

No one needs kavod – but we all need appreciation. We must appreciate everybody around us, but more important - is to appreciate ourselves!

Jealousy by Rabbi Sender Haber



Reuvein was the least likely candidate to save Yosef. Reuvein was the rightful heir to the throne. He was the oldest and he had championed the cause of Leah too often to stand idly by while one of Rachel's children took the reins in the next generation.

Of all of the brothers, why did Reuvein choose to save Yosef's life?

Rav Aharon Kotler explains by quoting a Medrash that is astonishing in its simplicity. Reuvein, the Medrash says, knew that he had sinned in moving his father's bed. Later Yaacov would tell him that he had acted rashly. Knowing that historically not everyone had made it into the forefather club, Reuvein feared that he had lost his edge. He feared that he would go the way of Yishmael, Eisav and the Bnei Keturah. He spent his days repenting.

Reuvein's glimmer of sunshine came when Yosef had his first dream. Yosef saw eleven stars bowing down to him. Everyone else was upset about the elevation of Yosef, but Reuvein was busy counting stars. He was still in!

Reb Aharon Kotler explains that this attitude saved Reuvein from becoming jealous of Yosef. He was too happy to be jealous. He didn't take his own position for granted and he certainly had no aspirations for Yosef's position.

This was Reuvein's secret and it needs to be our approach as well. If we don't have shoes we need to be happy that we have feet.

The Shtefenishte Rebbe used to say that if we had a chance to walk into a room and choose a burden in life we would all choose our own.

We should spend time being grateful for the life we have, rather than being jealous of the life the other person is leading.



Good Intentions by Rabbi Sender Haber

It is interesting to note that Reuvein is given credit by the Torah for saving Yosef. He really didn't do much. He got Yosef thrown into a pit so that he could come back and save him but when he came back to save him Yosef, Yosef had been sold. According to the Gemara that the pit had snakes and scorpions Reuvein's heroics are even less understandable.

I think the significance of Reuvein's role may lie in a comment that Yosef made to his brothers. After Yaacov died, they were petrified that he would take revenge, but Yosef pointed out that everything had actually worked out pretty well for him.

"You thought to do something bad to me but Hashem was thinking good".

The entire sin of the brothers was in thought. G-d's plan is G-d's plan and in the end, everything worked out well, but the thoughts of hatred that the brothers felt whenever they saw him were inexcusable. Only Reuvein rose above those thoughts of hatred and tried to save Yosef.

This is such an important lesson for us. We all try to do things. Some work and some don't. That's forgivable. It is unforgivable to think bad thoughts. We need to be the Reuvein who's first thought is "How can I help this person? How can I rescue this person? How can I make this situation better?"

So much is out of our hands but there is no excuse for hateful thoughts.

I was once at the deathbed of a very elderly person. As is the case in many families, this person did not get along with one of his

brothers. That brother called while I was in the room and asked to talk to the dying individual. I was on the edge of my seat. What was there to say to a person who you had fought for decades? I watched with awe as the dying man took the phone and said passionately and simply: "Yankel, I wish only the best for you and you and your family". And it was true.

We fight, we bicker, we don't talk. Sometimes we don't even stay in touch, but deep down where it counts we need to wish only the best for one another. The greatest complaint that Yosef had against the brothers was that in their thoughts they intended to harm him. Reuvein thoughts were about saving Yosef and he gets all the credit.

As we enter the book of Shemos we move from the story of a family to the story a nation. In order to survive as a nation we need to be thinking about others. Moshe went out to see the welfare of his brothers. The midwives risked their lives to save the babies. And G-d said "I also heard the cries of the Jewish people". When we listened to the cries of our brothers and sisters G-d began to listen to them as well.

We become a nation by thinking only the best about one another. (Sources: Kaliver Rebbe Shlit"a of Jerusalem and Chasam Sofer. Some details in story have been altered)

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

Even a dog that runs ahead of his master is doing so out of arrogance – believing that he's guiding his owner's direction… Rabbi Moshe Mordechai of Pilov

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt- Daily Direction





To accomplish in life, one must have an objective that he is aiming for. The saying goes, "***If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time***." **The Kotzker Rebbe** once commented, "***People don't get what they want because they don't know what they want***."

The fable is told of a person named Naftali that asked his friend, Levi, which direction he should go in. Levi responded it depends where you would like to get to. Naftali said, "It doesn't matter. I don't have a preference." Levi's response: "Then it doesn't matter which way you go."

Yosef was asked **מה תבקש**, what are you looking for. We need to ask ourselves the same thing. As someone once put it, "Are you a wandering generality or a meaningful specific?" What do we want to take out from today, from this shiur, from this moment, from our life? Do we seek the transitory material pleasures or eternal spiritual gains? Once one has the answer to these questions, he is on his way just as Yosef was!

We must constantly ask ourselves what we want out of life. That is, in every decision we make and in every action we do. If one takes his hands off the steering wheel of life, he may end up in a ditch.

Goals direct us. One can have the best material but if the architect is bad, the building can collapse. Likewise, we can have the best material within ourselves (being brilliant, organized and so on) but if we are not good architects (in life) then it can cause failure.

With direction, one can get very far in life. A sailor that doesn't have a compass must stay close to shore. With a compass, however, he can travel far. When we have direction, we can go far in life.

Peninim on the Torah – פנינים על התורה

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם – *Reuven heard and he rescued him from their hand.* *(37:21)*



Reuven suggested the brothers throw Yosef into a pit, rather than personally execute corporeal punishment against him. [The *Shevatim*, tribes/brothers, convened a *bais din*, judicial court, to determine if Yosef was, in fact, guilty of rendering false testimony against them, or a *rodef*, pursuer, who wanted to do them harm. In any event, they did not make their decision lightly.]

It is difficult to understand how Reuven's suggestion that the brothers instead fling Yosef into a pit swarming with dangerous creatures was an act of saving Yosef. Was he not selecting one form of death over another?

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* explains that Reuven's intention to have Yosef placed in a pit with deadly creatures was to save him – if he was worthy. A man has free will, thus enabling him to take someone's life even if the victim had not been Heavenly sentenced to death. Wild animals are Heavenly-controlled. In this regard, they will not harm a human being unless Hashem has sentenced him to death.

Thus, *va'yatzileihu mi'yadam*; "He rescued him from their hands," meaning: he saved him from the hand of a human being, who possesses free choice.

Ohr HaChaim's position vis-à-vis human free will – and its impact on another human being – is novel. Other commentators appear to disagree, maintaining that no human can harm another unless Heaven has specifically decreed it.

Veritably, our core beliefs are founded upon the principle of Divine Providence, which teaches that Hashem guides everything in this world. As such, no one can harm his fellow unless Hashem is in agreement.

Horav Chaim Kanievsky, zl, sheds light on the *Ohr HaChaim's* statement. Hashem created the world for the purpose of giving man free-will to choose between good and evil. Thus, when one chooses evil by intending to harm his fellow, to countermand his intention by miraculously saving the victim means going against a principle of Creation. The victim certainly wants to live; the murderer wants to change his status. Who wins out, without negating the assailant's free-will?

Such a miracle requires that the intended victim possess enormous merit, such that it will supersede the aggressor's free-will. When we have the merit of the victim up against the free-will of the murderer, the victim requires a greater accumulation of merit than he would if he were facing off with deadly creatures, who have no free-will.

Reuven conjectured that Yosef was sufficiently righteous to merit being saved from the creatures – but not so when he must contend with the brothers. He was certain that, unless Heaven issued a decree that Yosef should die, he would survive the pit. He was not prepared to assert that Yosef's merits could save him from human hands who possess free-will. Therefore, their decision to kill Yosef was inequitable.

The *Ohr HaChaim's* position that an animal cannot harm a human unless Heaven has so decreed, came into play in his own life. ***Horav Chaim Ibn Attar, zl, the Ohr HaChaim***, made Torah study his primary vocation. He spent day and night poring over the tomes of *Talmud* and *Shulchan Aruch*. Refusing to be supported by the community, he opted to open a small silver shop and use his extraordinary craftsmanship to fashion beautiful pieces of jewellery and trinkets.

His fame spread throughout Morocco. He had one stipulation. He worked until he had sufficient funds with which to support his family. He then shuttered his shop and returned to his Torah study. When the funds ran out, he returned to the shop.

One day, two emissaries from the king of Morocco presented themselves at his shop with a message from the king. He had gold which he wanted him to fashion into a beautiful jewellery piece in honour of his daughter's upcoming wedding.

Rav Chaim apologised that he could be of no assistance. His shop was closed. He had earned enough money to retire to his beloved Torah study.

They looked at him incredulously. How dare he say "no" to the king? He replied that he had priorities, and Torah had supremacy over everything.

The two men returned to the king in a state of shock. This had never happened before. No one had ever manifest such audacity. The king was angry to hear of the *Ohr HaChaim's* refusal, but decided to forgo his feelings this one time and give the Jewish silversmith another chance.

To his chagrin, the negative response had not changed. "No" remained "no." To defy the king twice was high treason, which warranted the death penalty. Since the silversmith had made a fool of the king, the execution would be especially painful and gruesome.

He would be thrown into a cage with three hungry lions. In short time, he would satisfy their hunger.

Rav Chaim took the decree with total equanimity, and even refused to share it with his family. He bid them goodbye and said he would return later. He made one request of the soldiers: He would like to take his *Tallis, Tefillin* and *Sefer Tehillim* along with him. They scoffed at him, but agreed, knowing that within minutes he would be devoured.



Bedecked in *Tallis* and *tefillin* and reciting *Tehillim* in a loud voice, *Rav* Chaim was led into the cage. A short time passed, and, when the guards heard no screams, they went to see what was occurring. How shocked they were to discover the *Ohr HaChaim* sitting in middle of the cage reciting *Tehillim*. The three lions sat at his feet entranced, listening to his prayers.

When the king was informed of the developments, he raged in disbelief. He was going to the lion's den to see with his own two eyes the spectacle that was taking place.

At first, he blamed the lion keeper for having fed the lions a large meal. Thus, they were not hungry for human flesh. The lion keeper denied any wrongdoing. To prove his innocence, he hung a piece of meat from a pole which he passed through the bars of the cage. The lions proceeded to devour it fiercely. Clearly, something was special about the holy rabbi.

Seeing this entire scene, the king declared, "***Now I know that there is a G-d of Yisrael***!" - He had *Rav* Chaim removed from the cage

and asked for his forgiveness. As penance, the king showered him with gifts and great honour.

When he returned home and his wife asked him about his day, he replied, "*Baruch Hashem*. But I see now that the time has come for us to move to *Eretz Yisrael*. Conditions here do not provide the proper climate for Torah study."

While variations to this story exist, the message remains: Animals have no power over a human being unless Hashem wills it to be so.





Becoming Stronger from Your Struggles

The holy **Chasam Sofer** says an incredible vort. - The Pasuk says: **וַיּוֹסִפוּ עוֹד שְׂנֹא אֹתוֹ עַל־חֲלֹמֹתָיו וְעַל־דְּבָרָיו** -***And they continued further to hate him on account of his dreams and on account of his words.***37:8

Before that, the Pasuk says **וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־דִּבָּתָם רָעָה אֶל־אֲבִיהֶם** - ***and Joseph brought evil tales about them to their father***. 37:2

And then the brothers tell Yosef - **הֲמָלֹךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ אִם־מָשׁוֹל תִּמְשֹׁל בָּנוּ** - "***Will you reign over us, or will you govern us?***" 37:8

What exactly took place here?

The Chasam Sofer says that Yaakov Avinu had sent Yosef Hatzaddik to pasture his flock together with the sons of Leah. Leah's sons however, sent him away to join the sons of the maids.

Those were the 'evil tales' which Yosef brought to Yaakov. Yosef protested to his father that his brothers were shaming him by relegating him to the sons of the maids.

The Chasam Sofer says that we find that later when Yosef related to them what he'd dreamt- how they were all bowing down to him- his brother's replied, "You believe you will rule over us? Forget about it; You'll never become king!"

How come they were so sure?

The Chasam Sofer answers: Because they knew the traditional rule, that only after being incarcerated in jail, one can go on to become a king! Only after hitting 'rock bottom', can one achieve greatness! It is from the lowest of places that royalty comes forth! First one needs to be at an extreme low, and only then can he become great!

If Yosef protested to his father about being sent to join the sons of the maids, this implied that he was unable to handle the humiliation – so they believed that he would never be able to become king!

This is what the brothers were indicating to Yosef. "Your dreams and your words contradict each other." The Pasuk says: **וַיּוֹסִפוּ עוֹד שְׂנֹא אֹתוֹ עַל־חֲלֹמֹתָיו וְעַל־דְּבָרָיו -*And they continued further to hate him on account of his dreams and on account of his words.***

"You cry to father about being humiliated, but at the same time you dream about becoming a king? The two don't go together, because as a proven rule, one must go through difficulties to achieve success!"

It is precisely the struggles and hardships that enable a person to succeed and become great!



Happy with Hashem's Will

It states (39:20), **וַיִּקַּח֣ אֲדֹנֵ֧י יוֹסֵ֛ף אֹת֖וֹ וַיִּתְּנֵ֑הוּ אֶל־בֵּ֣ית הַסֹּהַ֗ר מְקוֹם֙ אֲשֶׁר־אֲסִירֵ֣י הַמֶּ֔לֶךְ אֲסוּרִ֖ים**, "*Yosef's master took Yosef and put him into prison where the king's prisoners are detained.* **וַיְהִי־שָׁ֖ם בְּבֵ֥ית הַסֹּהַֽר** *"and he was there, in prison."*



These final words seem superfluous; it is obvious that if Yosef was in jail, he was "there, in prison." Where else would he be?

The answer is that Yosef was "there, in prison," willingly, with all his heart and soul, because he believed this was Hashem's will. If Hashem wanted him to be in prison, he would fulfil Hashem's will with joy.

The Sfas Emes writes, "Yosef was extremely wise. He was also wealthy (because Potiphar gave him everything he owned [see 39:8]). If Yosef wanted, he could have found a way to get out of prison. But he believed that his imprisonment was Hashem's will, so he remained there and didn't try to leave."

Similarly, the **Kedushas Levi** writes, "Yosef could have tried to free himself from jail, but he didn't because he trusted in Hashem that everything is for the good."

The Midrash says, "Eliezer served Avraham loyally, and in this merit, instead of being cursed, he was blessed."

Another Midrash (*Shir HaShirim* 1:1) states "Yosef served Potiphar loyally, and in that merit, he was freed from jail."

The Sifsei Tzaddik asked his brother-in-law, the Sfas Emes, "We understand that Eliezer was blessed because of his loyal service because it is a great mitzvah to serve Avraham Avinu. But why would Yosef be freed from prison because he served Potiphar loyally? What was special about serving Potiphar?"

The Sfas Emes answered the Sifsei Tzaddik that when the Midrash writes **באמונה**, it doesn't mean loyally. Instead, we should translate it like the standard translation of emunah, which is belief in Hashem.

Yosef had emunah. He believed that it was Hashem's will that he be a slave to Potiphar. In the merit of his emunah, he was freed from jail.

Yosef was a slave, far from his family, distant from his father Yaakov Avinu, with whom he would study each day. He was living among idol worshipers, nevertheless, Yosef didn't allow himself to lose hope or despair. It states (39:2) **ויהי ה' את יוסף** - "Hashem was with Yosef," and Chazal (*Shabbos* 30) say, "The *Shechinah* rests with someone who is happy." If the *Shechinah* was with Yosef, he must have been happy.

Also, it states (39:2) **ויהי איש מצליח**, "He was a successful man," and the Midrash translates **איש מצליח** as **גבר קפוז** "a dancing person."[**מצליח**means success, and it also means jumping/dancing. This tells us that simchah is mesugal for parnassah.] Yosef was always dancing and filled with joy.

But how was he so happy under these trying circumstances?

The answer lies in Yosef's *emunah*. He believed that this was Hashem's will, Hashem wanted him to be a slave in Mitzrayim, and he believed that everything is for the good, so he was happy.

We must know that all the moments that seem negative to us are all for our good. - **The Or HaChaim** (Bereishis 45:4) writes that Yosef told his brothers, "Even when you sold me, my feelings of brotherhood toward you never ceased."

How did Yosef reach that level? How did he love his brothers even as they sold him?

It is because he believed it was from Hashem. He told his brothers (Bereishis 45:8) **ועתה לא אתם שלחתם אתי הנה כי האלקים**, "And now, it wasn't you who sent me here, rather it was Hashem."

The Sfas Emes concludes, "We must learn from these *parshiyos* to accept Hashem's decrees with love and joy because everything is in His hands."

A Vort from R'Yoel R - רבי ירוחם ליבוביץ

וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מְגוּרֵי אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן "***And Yaakov settled in the land of his father's residence, in the land of Cana'an***"



The medrash says that Yaakov was seeking to live in tranquillity when the troubles of Yosef were thrust upon him.

Question: Why couldn't Hashem give Yaakov some peace and quiet? What would have been so terrible had he enjoyed tranquillity?

Answer: The purpose of life is to grow from every situation, not to relax. For a person to reach his personal sheleimus , he must pass the tests that Hashem sends him. If he fails these tests, Hashem will send him the same tests in different ways, so avoiding the issue will not accomplish anything.

Rather than looking for tranquillity in his life, Yaakov should have asked Hashem, as did Dovid Hamelech, to give him the strength and wisdom to overcome the difficult nisyonos that would surely arise, so that he could serve Hashem properly.

Our job is not to focus on how we feel about a situation, but rather, to view every issue in life as a tool for growth. This way we can actualize our potential and accomplish our goals.

The Great Test



This week's parashah tells us about the great test Yosef faced with *eishes* Potiphar.

The Gemara (*Yoma* 35:) says, "Every day *eishes* Potiphar spoke to Yosef and tried to convince him to sin. Yosef always kept his eyes down, so she forced him to wear an iron blade under his neck to try to get him to gaze at her. Still, Yosef didn't look at her.

The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 87; *Tanchuma*) states that *eishes*

Potiphar said, "I will give you less *parnassah* [if you refuse to sin]." Yosef replied, 'Hashem feeds the hungry.'

She threatened to imprison him, to blind him, to send him to a distant land, but Yosef wouldn't bend. And perhaps the hardest part of the test was that *eishes* Potiphar kept telling Yosef that to sin with her was a mitzvah, and she really believed that!

(She saw in the stars that she will bear children with Yosef, only she didn't know whether it would be with her or with her daughter.) Nevertheless, (39:8) **וימאן** –Yosef refused to sin.

The Divrei Shmuel *zt'l* writes that Yosef also saw in the stars that he would have a child with *eishes* Potiphar. Yosef thought that this

meant he would eventually sin with *eishes* Potiphar. (He didn't know that it meant he would marry *eishes Potiphar's* daughter.)

But then Yosef told himself, "Although I see in the stars that I will have a child with *eishes* Potiphar, right now, I can fight and overcome the *yetzer hara*. What will be in the future will be, but now I will pass the test." This attitude saved Yosef from the aveirah, and he ended up marrying Osnas bas Potiphar and bore children in a permitted way.

It also says **וימאן** by the mitzvah of yibum (Devarim 25:7). The Midrash (87:5) says that Yosef told eishes Potiphar, "If a person can refuse to do yibum, certainly one can refrain from an aveirah!"

The Sfas Emes explains that Yosef was telling her, "Even if you are correct that it is a mitzvah, I may refrain, just as one is permitted to refrain from the mitzvah of yibum. When one refuses to do yibum, another path opens – the path of chalitzah.

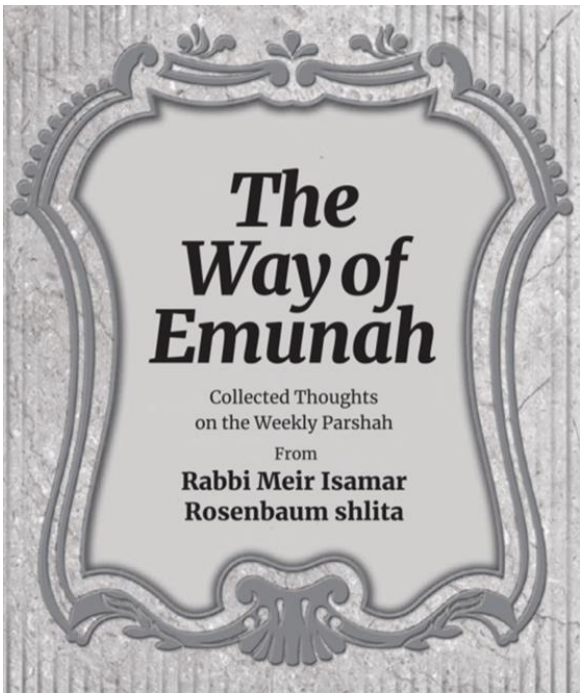
Yosef told her that even if it were a mitzvah, Hashem would arrange another way if he turned it down. (And indeed, Yosef married *eishes* Potiphar's daughter, who bore Efraim and Menasheh.)

Despite his challenges, Yosef passed this difficult test. His example strengthens everyone to pass the tests that come their way.

One Who Davens for His Friend Receives What He Needs As Well

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen quotes the **Saba Kadisha of Lechovitch** as using this idea to explain the pasuk (40:14) where Yosef tells the minister of drink: **כִּי אִם־זְכַרְתַּנִי** - "***If you remember me***."

We learn from this that if one remembers his friend and davens for him, he will be remembered in Shomayim as well and he will be provided with his needs.



How to Be "Like a Mute"

וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְּמִים אֲלֻמִּים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלֻמָּתִי וְגַם־נִצָּבָה וְהִנֵּה תְסֻבֶּינָה אֲלֻמֹּתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ לַאֲלֻמָּתִי

Behold, we were binding sheaves…my sheaf arose and also stood upright, and behold, your sheaves encircled it and bowed to my sheaf." (37:7)

Sefer **Imrei Pinchos** explains that the word "alumim", sheafs, can also mean a mute person ("ileim"). The Gemara (Chulin 89A) states: "What should a person do in this world? He should act like a mute."



Thus, the pasuk can be understood to be saying that the Shevatim acted like mutes. They did not speak about any mundane matters.

Even regarding this lofty concept, however, there are various levels. Yosef reached an even more exalted level than his brothers. Therefore, he dreamt that his muteness was superior to theirs.

Ask and Ask Again

וַיִּמְצָאֵהוּ אִישׁ וְהִנֵּה תֹעֶה בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּשְׁאָלֵהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ

And he found a man. And, behold, he was lost in the field. And he asked the man…(37:15)

The Chidushei Harim zy"a says in the name of the **Kotzker Rebbe zy"a** that when the malach asked Yosef what he was seeking, it was

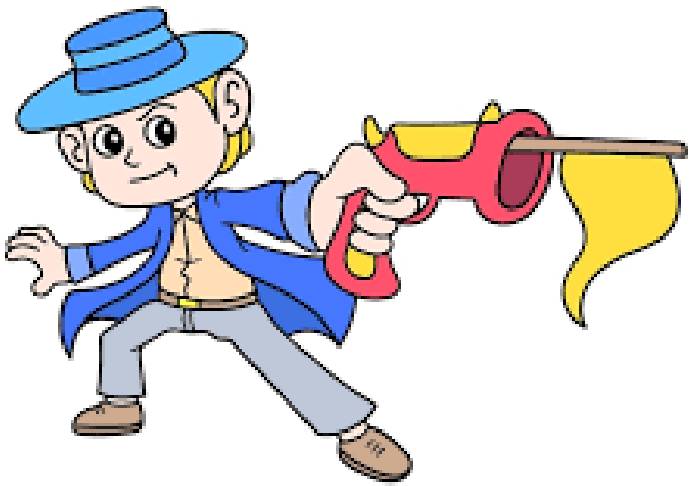
intending to teach him that one should always seek his goal and continue to seek again and again.

The Chidushei Harim adds: It was certainly not an easy thing to leave the bais medrash of Yaakov Avinu and to go down to Mitzrayim, a land drenched in immorality. Therefore, the malach told him to always remember what he was really seeking in life and daven to Hashem over and over to be able to attain it. And, in fact, through doing this Yosef was able to retain his lofty level.



QUESTION: When a person works in a dangerous neighborhood, is it advisable to apply for a license for a gun?

ANSWER: Now that's a question that's not so easy to answer because many times you can get by with a substitute for a gun. Like what you say in *Elokai Netzor* every day:- '*And my soul should be like dust to everybody.*'



If somebody, a goy, is fresh and insults you, become an *anav*. It pays to be an *anav* - you'll live longer if you're humble and keep your mouth closed. But when you have a gun in your pocket, you might forget yourself and answer back something rash. And then, it's not so certain that he doesn't have a gun. And he might know how to use it better than you.

I was once walking in the street and I visited a friend of mine and he saw that I carried a stick, a heavy stick, on me. It was many years ago, about thirty years ago and it was a dangerous neighbourhood so I was holding a stick. And this friend told me, "Don't do that! It's dangerous to carry a stick."

It's dangerous to carry a stick, because first of all they could take the stick away and hit you with it. That's number one. Secondly, with a stick, you become reckless. Without a stick, you'll stay home. You're safer off. And it's better always to avoid trouble.

I told you this many times. The Chinese say, "Who is a hero? The one who knows how to run away." That's a hero – if you know how to run away you're the hero. So therefore, it's always better to avoid any possibility of danger, but carrying a gun sometimes makes you reckless and you go into places where ordinarily you wouldn't go.

The Chasam Sofer (ד״ה והיה) writes:



"A person doesn't know the value of his deeds, just how precious they are."

The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 141) says, *"If Reuven knew that Hashem would write in the Torah that he saved Yosef, he would have done far more than save him - He would have carried Yosef on his shoulders to bring him to his father."*

Beneath the Surface By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(מ:כג) ולא זכר שר המשקים את יוסף וישכחהו ***Yet the officer of the cupbearers did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him.***



Rebbe Yehuda Aryeh of Modina wrote that our custom is to read Parashas Zachor on the Shabbos before Purim and not on the day of Purim itself since the Halachah is that a person is supposed to drink wine on Purim "**עד דלא ידע**" (Megillah 7b).

This then becomes inappropriate for Parashas Zachor because on a day that there is drinking there is no remembering, and this is alluded to in our Posuk, 'yet the officer of the cupbearers did not remember'. (Divrei Megidos as brought in Nimletzu Lechki)

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

וַיֵּלְכוּ אֶחָיו לִרְעוֹת אֶת־צֹאן ***Yosef's brothers went to shepherd the sheep*** (37:12).



In the Torah the word 'Es' has dots over it to emphasize that they did not actually go to watch the sheep, they went to focus exclusively on themselves (Bereishis Rabbah 84:13).

Although we cannot relate to the true level of these great people, we can work with what our Rabbis have taught us.

Rav Aryeh Finkel (Yavo Shilo p.409) explains that a shepherd focusses on the needs of others. As soon as the brothers were only focusing on themselves, that lack of caring for others, was the entrance to their being able to sell their brother.

We must take the approach of true shepherds and try to help others and be there for them!



Ish Matzliach - Written by Benjamin A Rose

Yosef is in Mitzraim and is in charge of the household of Potifar. The Torah testifies: וַיְהִי ה' אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ "***And Hashem was with Yosef and he was a prosperous man.*" *39:2***

The Chafetz Chaim makes a very interesting observation. When we say the prayer for the new month, we repeat one particular phrase. Twice we ask for Yiras shamoyim, fear of Heaven. No other request is repeated.

His explanation for this is that in between these two times we have a request for Osher v'Kovod, wealth and honour.

He makes the observation that it is often the nature of people who attain the position such as Yosef's of wealth or honour to draw away from his closeness to Hashem. We, therefore, ask again for Yiras Shamoyim implying that even if our prayer for wealth and honour be granted, we still want Hashem to help us maintain our close contact with Him.

This is what the Torah testifies about Yosef. Even though he was Prosperous, Hashem was still with him. He never lost his Yiras Shamoyim!



Analysis of the Haftorah – R' Tzvi Hirsch Hoffman

עַל־מִכְרָם בַּכֶּסֶף צַדִּיק וְאֶבְיוֹן בַּעֲבוּר נַעֲלָיִם (Amos 2:6)



Amos HaNavi reminds Klal Yisroel of the infamous sale of Yosef HaTzadik and how even the greatest of men - the shevatim, erred and sold "an innocent man for money."

Interestingly, Chazal note that despite Yosef being a good looking, strapping young lad, he was still sold for the paltry sum of twenty silver coins. Did the brothers truly have such little respect for Yosef that they wouldn't even try to get a more substantial sum based on his worth and true value?

R' Mordechai HaKohen zt"l of Tzefas (Sifsei Kohen) quotes the Medrash Tanchuma that when Yosef was thrown into the pit with the snakes and scorpions, his face contorted into a horrific shape and lost all colour from the sheer terror and fright of the ordeal. His beautiful countenance, which resembled his father, was lost and with it, his market value dropped as well. The brothers were forced to accept a smaller amount than they knew Yosef to be truly worth.

However, all this seems hard to believe. Is it true that just because his appearance changed, his value dropped so drastically?

The truth, says the Sifsei Kohen, is that when Chazal said that the brothers received twenty coins for Yosef - the amount of money needed to buy shoes, in reality, each brother received twenty coins of their own bringing the total to two hundred coins, a princely sum.

This is alluded to from the description of the sale - **עַל־מִכְרָם בַּכֶּסֶף... בַּעֲבוּר נַעֲלָיִם** - the word **נַעֲלָיִם** - 'shoes' has the numerical value of two hundred, the total amount of money received for the sale!

Maaseh Avos Siman L'Bonim

וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־סְרִיסֵי פַרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בְּמִשְׁמַר בֵּית אֲדֹנָיו לֵאמֹר מַדּוּעַ פְּנֵיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוֹם - *And he asked Pharaoh's chamberlains who were with him in the prison of his master's house, saying, "Why are your faces sad today?* (40:7)



The home of **R' Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l** in Monsey, NY, was situated across the street from a convent. One day, Mother Superior of the convent stopped a Jewish passer-by. "Why is it," she asked, "that all of our Jewish neighbours cross the street or avert their eyes when we pass by? It makes us feel uncomfortable. All, except for one old rabbi - he always has a greeting and a warm smile." That rabbi was the great Rosh Yeshivah, R' Yaakov Kamenetsky.

Making another human being feel comfortable is part of being human. The wisdom of R' Yaakov was not just in his mind - but it was clearly manifested in his actions, as well. - How far can a friendly, greeting travel?

A renowned builder in Monsey, Reb Mechel Tauber, relates how he discovered the power of a good morning, many years ago. The story began when his cell phone rang one day. "Mechel? This is Rabbi Oppenheim from Yeshiva Ohr Yechezkel. We need your help."

Mechel was a sought-after developer in Monsey. He was a busy man, but if someone needed his help, Mechel would find the time.

"What can I do for you?" he offered.

"Well, we're building a new building, but the township inspectors are giving us a hard time with the plans. We heard that you are friends with Mr. O'Reilly. Do you think you can speak to him for us?"

Mechel sighed. Phil O'Reilly was a chairperson on the Ramapo planning board. Mechel often had business dealings with him when he worked on a project in Ramapo, a neighbourhood next to Monsey.

"I would really like to help you, but that's a tall order. I do speak to Phil often, and we get along - on a personal level. But Phil is an Irish Catholic, and he is not fond of the Jewish population around here. Your yeshivah is not the only one that has had a hard time with him."

"Can you at least try?" Rabbi Oppenheim pleaded.

"I'll do my best," Mechel promised.

That day, Mechel Tauber called Phil's office, and made an appointment to see him.

"So, Mr. Tauber," Phil O'Reilly greeted him jovially the next morning, "what are you building today?"

"Well actually. I am not coming for myself today. I wanted to speak to you on behalf of a Yeshivah. They are busting out and need to build a building, so they asked me ...."

"A Yeshivah? Sure! What do you need?"

Mechel was shocked by Phil's obliging response. He was not so easy-going usually and certainly not this eager to help a yeshivah.

"I ... I appreciate your readiness to help, but ... Phil, what has gotten into you?"

Phil smiled at Mechel's confusion. "Let me tell you what happened. My mother lives in a convalescent home for the elderly on a convent campus in the centre of Monsey, not far from here. Usually when I go and visit her, she's in a very foul mood. She never smiles; she's always depressed and angry. I learned to live with it.

"Not too long ago, it was on the weekend - I get there, and she's all smiles. My mom was laughing and happy! I asked her, 'Hey Ma, what happened today that you are in such a good mood?'

"My mom's face lit up even more. 'The Rabbi wished me a good morning!' she tells me. 'I go out now every morning at the same time so I can see him. He makes my day!'"

Phil O'Reilly was practically laughing into the phone. "Tauber, I am telling you - this Rabbi changed my mother's life! She is a different person now. So when you say 'Yeshiva' I am with you. What can I do for you?"

From that day forward, Phil O'Reilly was ready to assist the Jewish schools and organizations whenever there was an issue. And for his part, Mechel found out that the friendly Rabbi was none other than the great tzaddik, R' Yaakov Kamenetsky, who knew the power of a warm smile and a good morning to every person - and how far the ramifications can go!

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע"ה בן ברוך הלוי נ"י וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ֮ לֶךְ־נָ֣א רְאֵה֒ אֶת־שְׁלֹ֣ום אַחֶ֗יךָ וְאֶת־שְׁלֹ֣ום הַצֹּ֔אן וַהֲשִׁבֵ֖נִי דָּבָ֑ר וַיִּשְׁלָחֵ֙הוּ֙ מֵעֵ֣מֶק חֶבְרֹ֔ון וַיָּבֹ֖א שְׁכֶֽמָה 37:14 '***So he sent him (Yosef) from the depth (valley) of Hebron, and he came to Shechem***.'

From the depth (valley) of Hebron? Hebron was on top of a mountain!



Rashi explains that the Pasuk is hinting to us that Yaakov sent Yosef based on the 'deep advice of the Tzadik buried in Hebron…' As Avraham Avinu learned by the **ברית בין הבתרים** that Yaakov and his whole family would end up in Mitzrayim , and remain there, enslaved for hundreds of years. This would begin with Yosef being sold to Mitzrayim.

Says the **Megaleh Amukos**: The Torah tells us (Shemos 12:40) that the Yidden were supposed to be enslaved in Mitzryim for 430 years. In the end, this was shortened to 210 years.

According to the Zohar, the 10 Shevatim were responsible for removing 10 years of enslavement from us, meaning the original number was 420 and not 430.

So, in whose merit did these 210 years disappear?

The answer is, that it was due to the suffering of Yosef being sold by his brothers at the young age of 17, that the 210 years were subtracted from our slavery in Mitzrayim.

What is the connection between 17 and 210?...

In 17 years there are 204 months. There are 354 days in a year. Each month alternates between 29 and 30 days. However, in a leap year, there is an extra month.

In 17 years there are 6 leap years. This means, that we add one extra monrth 6 times in a 17 year period.

So, in 17 years, there are 204 + 6 months = 210 months.

In Yosef's 17 years – which equates to 210 months, he was able to remove 210 years of our slavery with his suffering at that age!!

This was the עֲמֻק חָבְרוֹן – ***'deep advice'*** as Rashi explains. Yosef was 17 years old – 210 months! He was therefore able to cancel out 210 years of Galus!

And amazingly... עֲמֻק is gematria of 210!

The world wants to see your accomplishments – Hashem wants to see how hard you tried.



וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְּמִים אֲלֻמִּים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלֻמָּתִי וְגַם־נִצָּבָה וְהִנֵּה תְסֻבֶּינָה אֲלֻמֹּתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ לַאֲלֻמָּתִי

'There we were binding sheaves in the field when suddenly my sheaf stood up and remained upright; then your sheaves gathered around and bowed to my sheaf.' (37:7)





The Ohr HaChaim notes that the word וְהִנֵּה "and behold" appears in the posuk three times. The reason is that we are discussing dreams. Most of the time dreams are nothing other than subconscious thoughts percolating in our mind when we sleep. They have no meaning or significance. Yosef wished to make it very clear to his brothers that his dreams were real. Yosef employed the term "and behold" to impart that the dreams were real and clear. They were vivid and larger than life and therefore must be taken seriously.

"The husband is master of the home. . . if the wife is out-of-doors. " ~~ Traditional Proverb

וַיְהִי־שָׁם בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר '***And he was there in the prison***' (39:20)



The phrase "and he was" is used to indicate something that is consistent and without change. Yoseph was the same righteous person in Potiphar's home as he was in prison, for "the righteous person is the foundation of the world" regardless of circumstance. (Sefas Emes)

אור החיים הקדוש

וַיָּקֻמוּ כָל־בָּנָיו וְכָל־בְּנֹתָיו לְנַחֲמוֹ וַיְמָאֵן לְהִתְנַחֵם וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־אֵרֵד אֶל־בְּנִי אָבֵל שְׁאֹלָה וַיִּבְךְּ אֹתוֹ אָבִיו '***And all his sons and daughters sought to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, saying, "No, I will go down to the grave in a state of mourning for my son." And his father bewailed him***.' (37:35)

Why was it necessary for the posuk to emphasize that "all" of his sons and daughters came to give him comfort?

The Ohr HaChaim answers that when a person has only one child or even a few children, the ability to find comfort for a loss is so much more difficult. The child's absence is constantly noticeable. If one is blessed with many children, there is more of a possibility to find comfort by dwelling on the other children. One can attempt to be distracted by the abundance of blessings that Hashem has provided.

Yosef's brothers thought they could get away with eliminating Yosef by comforting Yaakov with his numerous sons, daughters, in-law children, and grandchildren. This is why it says that all his sons and daughters came forward.

However, they were severely mistaken. The love Yaakov had for every child and specifically for Yosef could never be dulled despite the abundance of love he had for all the members of his family.

אור החיים הקדוש

וְלֹא־זָכַר שַׂר־הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ *'Yet the chief butler did not think of Yosef and he forgot him.'* (40:23)



Why does the posuk say that the chief butler "did not remember" and also that "he forgot." Aren't they the same? What is the difference between not remembering and forgetting?

The Ohr HaChaim answers that not remembering is a deliberate act of choosing to ignore the facts even when they are staring at you front and centre. The chief butler as he was speaking to Pharaoh remembered exactly what Yosef told him to do. However, when the time came, he deliberately chose not to mention Yosef.

The other term forgetting means that he deliberately erased the memory of the event from his subconscious to such a degree that if he were ever in conversation with another person the memory would never surface.

This double dosage of the chief butler's evil attempt not to recall Yosef only makes the miracle of being remembered two years later all the greater.

אור החיים הקדוש



כִּי אִם־זְכַרְתַּנִי אִתְּךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר יִיטַב לָךְ וְעָשִׂיתָ־נָּא עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד וְהִזְכַּרְתַּנִי אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְהוֹצֵאתַנִי מִן־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה 'But ***remember me when all is well with you. And please do me the kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh, to free me from this place. (40:14)***.' (37:35)

Why did Yosef take a liking to the chief butler? What did Yosef see in his dream that triggered the need to provide a positive interpretation and ask that he be remembered? Why the chief butler and not the chief baker?

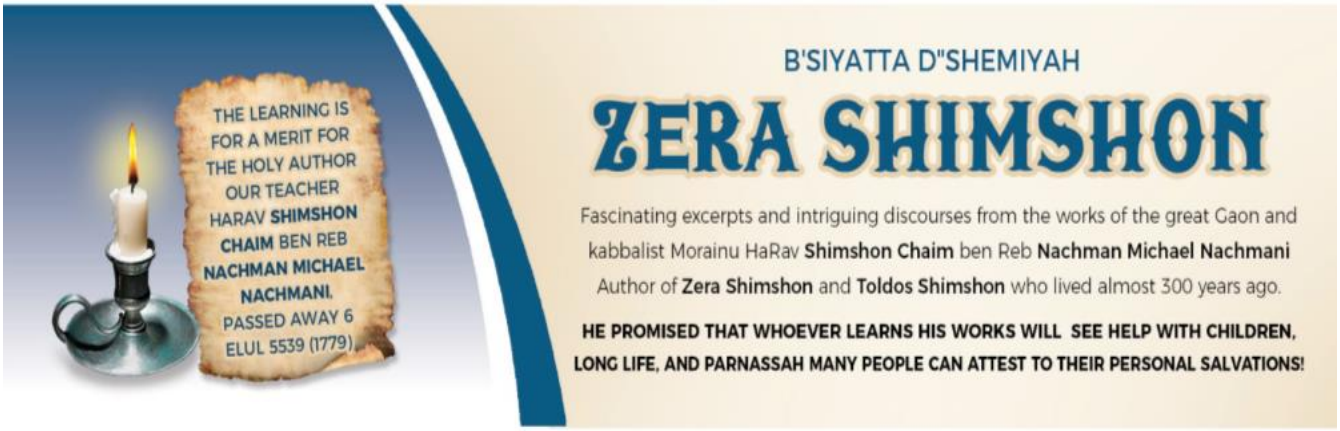
The Ohr HaChaim answers that it was because the chief butler mentioned that he saw in his dream a vine. From the perspective of the chief butler, this detail was irrelevant. It would have been sufficient to see himself pouring and presenting the wine to Pharaoh.

Yosef realized that this detail of the dream was relevant for the Jewish People. It is they who are compared to a vine. Yosef capitalized on this information by doing all he can to help bring this dream to fruition and bring salvation to his people.

Parsha Thoughts By Mordechai Sapoznick

The שַׂר הַמַּשְׁקִים, Pharoah's chief butler and the שַׂר הָאוֹפִים Pharoah's chief baker, had a dream. The פָּסוּק says, "Both of them had a dream…the wine butler and the baker of the king of Mitzrayim who were in prison." Why doesn't the פָּסוּק refer to them as the chief butler and the chief baker as the previous פְּסוּקִים referred to them?

The Sforno answers that being in prison broke their spirits. They did not feel like a chief but rather like helpless servants!



וַיִּקָּחֻהוּ וַיַּשְׁלִכוּ אֹתוֹ הַבֹּרָה וְהַבּוֹר רֵק אֵין בּוֹ מָיִם ...***and the pit was empty, there was no water in it***. (37:24)

The Gemara (Shabbos 22a) says that the pit that Yosef was thrown into was void of water however it contained snakes. This Gemara is brought down in middle of the where the Gemara discusses the halachos of Chanuka. It is preceded by the halacha that says that if one lights a Menora higher than twenty amos, he did not fulfil his obligation.

The well-known question is - what is the fact that the pit that the Shevatim threw Yosef into contained snakes, doing right in middle of the halachos of Chanuka, specifically the halacha requiring the Menora to be lit under twenty amos?

The Zera Shimshon explains the connection as follows: The reason why a Menora cannot be lit above twenty amos is because above twenty amos the Menora cannot be seen and there is no Pirumay Nisa - public recognition of the miracle. The question is - why do we only publically commemorate the miracle of the oil when there was another miracle - the war that the Makkabim won against the Greeks?

The Zera Shimshon offers a tremendous chiddush that in fact the reason why we light the Menora is to commemorate the victory on the battlefield. The Greeks wanted to destroy us spiritually and in order not to follow their decrees, the Jews rose up in battle to overthrow them. Being that the Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 2:4)

refers to the exile of the Greeks as 'darkness', to commemorate our victory over them we light oil candles!

However, the question arises as to why we must publicize this miracle, after all Hashem had no choice but to save us? He placed in an exile that wanted to snuff out our souls and He must therefore save us?



The Zera Shimshon explains that the answer to this question is dependent on the argument between R' Yehuda and the Chachamim (Sanhedrin 76b). R' Yehuda holds that if someone makes a snake bite a person, since the poison of the snake is between its teeth, he is liable for the person's death. The Chachamim hold that the snake has control to spit out its poison if it wishes and therefore, even by placing a snake's teeth on someone else, one cannot be entirely blamed for his death.

The enemies of the Jewish people are compared to snakes (Yirmia 8:17, Tehillim 58:5). According to the Chachamim this would mean that placing the Jews in exile doesn't by design spell their death sentence, since like the snake, the poison is expelled by will - not automatically.

Therefore, when there is a decree against the Jewish people (it is because of their actions, not an intrinsic reaction of the nations that they find themselves amongst), and Hashem saves us we must publicize the miracle. This however, is only if we follow the opinion of the Chachamim.

Perhaps though, the halacha is like R' Yehuda which would mean that the second we find ourselves in galus we are in mortal danger and

Hashem has no other choice but to save us? Thus, freeing us of our obligation to commemorate the miracle in a public way?

The Gemara, immediately after it says that one must light under twenty amos which is to publicize the miracle, it brings the fact that the pit Yosef was thrown into was full of snakes. This is because the passuk (37:21) praises Reuven for saving Yosef by throwing him into the pit. However, if the pit was full of snakes, why does the passuk say that Reuven saved Yosef? He had him thrown to his death?

It must be that the halacha is like the Chachamim - that a snake will not automatically kill and therefore by throwing Yosef there he was saving him from being killed outright by the Shevatim. This proves that a Menora must be placed under twenty amos to publicize the miracle since the halacha is like the Chachamim.

"Nefesh Shimshon" – Yosef 's Dreams

וְהִנֵּה תְסֻבֶּינָה אַלְמֹתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ לַאֲלֻמָּתִי '***Your sheaves surrounded and bowed down to my sheaf. (37:7)***.'



Yosef 's first dream was all about sheaves of grain. His brother's sheaves bowed down to his sheave. But in his second dream he saw the moon and the stars bowing to Yosef himself.

Why, in the first dream, did they bow to Yosef 's sheaf and not to Yosef himself?

These two dreams were about two different events. The first dream was about the first time Yosef 's brothers came down to Egypt and met him there. The second dream was about their last trip to Egypt, when they came together with Yaakov their father.

When Yosef 's brothers came initially, without Yaakov, they did not know who Yosef was. They did not recognize him. So this meeting was symbolized in the dream by bowing down to his sheaf. But when they came the final time, with Yaakov, they already knew who he was, so in the second dream, they bowed to Yosef himself.

That is one possible answer. Another is that they came the first time with the purpose of buying food. They did not need Yosef as himself; they just needed him as a means to obtain grain, so Yosef was represented in the dream as a sheaf of grain. But when they came the final time, they showed honour to Yosef as himself. So in the second dream they bowed to Yosef himself.

Another difference between the two dreams is that in the first one, it says תְּסֻבֶּינָה אֲלֻמֹּתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ לַאֲלֻמָּתִי – "***Your sheaves surrounded and bowed down to my sheaf***." They all bowed down together. In the second dream it says only that they bowed down.

This is because the first dream was about Yosef 's brothers bowing to him when they came to buy food. They all came with that common purpose in mind, so they all bowed down together. But when they came down the last time, with Yaakov, each one bowed down alone, on his own, because they did not have a shared reason to prostrate themselves to Yosef at that point.

Yosef Hatzaddik is the only person in Tanach who is called איש מצליח. He is called that way because he always felt that he was successful. He never thought his life or Avodas Hashem was a failure or a waste. His Avodas Hashem in Mitzrayim wasn't the same as it was when he lived in Eretz Yisrael together with the shevatim and his father, but he was successful because he carried out the mission that Hashem had planned for him ~ R' Elimelech Biderman.

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

כִּי אִם־זְכַרְתַּנִי אִתְּךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר יִיטַב לָךְ וְעָשִׂיתָ־נָּא עִמָּדִי חָסֶד וְהִזְכַּרְתַּנִי אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְהוֹצֵאתַנִי מִן־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה

While in jail, Pharaoh's cupbearer had a dream in which he pressed grapes into Pharaoh's cup. After listening to the dream, Yosef told him that his dream meant that he would be returned to his original position of serving Pharaoh in three days, which indeed came to pass.

After Yosef finished interpreting the dream, he additionally requested that the cupbearer, upon being released from prison, remember his kindness and intercede with Pharaoh to help secure his release. If the cupbearer only asked Yosef to interpret his perplexing dream, why did Yosef add on a personal request that ostensibly had nothing do with the actual meaning of the dream?



Rav Chaim Soloveitchik answered based on a fascinating historical incident. After one of Napoleon's hard-fought military victories, he decided to make a lavish celebration. Numerous orators came to speak in praise of his greatness, but he found none of their speeches satisfactory and requested that a Rabbi be brought to address the gathering.

Napoleon's royal coach was sent to a small neighbouring village in search of the closest Rabbi. The Rav of the community was delivered to the grand celebration, where he was requested to deliver an appropriate speech in honour of the special occasion. After providing the necessary background information so that those present could understand, the Rav continued by asking the aforementioned question: Why did Yosef

insert his personal needs into his interpretation of the cupbearer's dream?

The Rav explained that in the normal affairs of a country, a private citizen may be arrested and brought to trial for even a relatively small offense. Even if he is convicted, he will hold out hope for a successful appeal. On the other hand, a minister to the king will be able to get away with minor offenses since the courts will turn a blind eye to an esteemed officer of the king. If they elect to prosecute him, the charges against him must be grave. If he is convicted, his odds for appealing and being released are slim to none. Even in the rare case that he obtains his freedom, he will certainly never entertain any hope of being returned to his lofty position.

Knowing all of this, the cupbearer was surely floored to hear Yosef's prognosis that he would be freed in only three days' time without even filing an appeal. Not only would he be released, but Yosef claimed that he would be returned to his position as Pharaoh's royal cupbearer. He could hardly believe his ears and was surely so happy to hear of his imminent freedom that he would have happily relinquished the position that originally brought about his imprisonment.

Rav Akiva Eiger explains that Yosef assured the cupbearer that although the entire episode made no logical sense, it was all part of a larger Divine plan for the Jewish people, a nation that defies the laws of nature. Thus, an integral component of Yosef's apparently counterintuitive interpretation of the dream was to inform the cupbearer precisely why this bizarre turn of events was occurring: **כִּי אִם־זְכַרְתַּנִי אִתְּךָ** – this incident was merely one small part of Hashem's master plan to bring about his release from prison.

The Rabbi concluded by noting that Napoleon had enjoyed miraculous military and political success in his rise to power. Even the fact that he already ruled over wealthy and advanced Western Europe and nevertheless showed interest in poverty-stricken, antiquated

Eastern Europe defies logic. The Rav suggested that this unnatural turn of events could only be explained by realizing that Napoleon was good to Jews wherever he went, granting them religious freedom and equal rights. As a result, Hashem extended Napoleon's conquests so that he would see the plight of the Jews in Eastern Europe and work to improve their conditions, a conclusion that made perfect sense to Napoleon and found favour in his eyes.

Good Guys and Bad Guys - Rav Yissochor Frand



The Yeshiva in Volozhin was known as the "mother of all Lithuanian Yeshivas." There was a period in time when there was a question regarding who should head the yeshiva. The two candidates for the position were **Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (the Netzi"v) and Rabbi Yosef Dov haLevi Soloveitchik (the Bais HaLevi)**.

This was such a world class issue, that it was taken before a Beis Din of three distinguished Rabbanim. One of the members of the panel, after hearing both sides of the argument, noted: "It is Parshas Vayeshev this week." The other members of the panel looked at him incredulously, because in fact it was not Parshas Vayeshev that week! He explained himself: Throughout the first eight parshios of Bereishis, whenever I speak about the parsha, I am able to speak about the hero and the villain of the parsha. In Bereishis, it is Adam against the Snake, in Noach, it is Noach against the Generation of the Flood, in Lech Lecha, it is Avraham against Lot. In Vayera, it is

Yitzchak against Yishmael. In Chayei Sara, it is Avraham against Ephron. In Toldos, it is Yitzchak against Avimelech. In Vayeitzei, it is Yaakov against Lavan. Finally, in Vayishlach, it is Yaakov against Eisav.

In each parsha, we have a hero and a villain, a good person and a bad person. However, in Parshas Vayeshev — it is Yosef against the brothers. This is not a question of a good person versus a bad person. They are all Tzadikim here. Therefore, I have nothing to say.

The question of who should be the Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin, between the Netziv and the Bais HaLevi, is like the dispute between Yosef and his brothers. They are both qualified. They are both perfectly righteous. This is like the story of Parshas Vayeshev.



Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk

When Yaakov saw that his son Yosef was special and unique, he gave him a special garment. This fuelled the flames of jealousy among the brothers and led to them selling Yosef into slavery.

What did Yaakov think the special garment would achieve? Did he not consider that it would cause envy?

Perhaps the reason to give Yosef a special garment was because he was destined to be a leader, and Yaakov wanted him to have a uniform. Uniforms remind people of their responsibilities, like that of a policeman or firefighter. The idea is to recognize your obligation to protect others.

This was the message he tried to convey, and it is for this reason he didn't imagine it would be a source of jealousy. Since the main point

of the garment was to remind Yosef of who he had to be, and it was to show that he should be of service to others instead of the other way around, Yaakov assumed the other sons would recognize that Yosef was getting mussar and they would not care.

As Jews, we are given a uniform of sorts. We are commanded how to dress (modestly) and given a code of conduct (the Torah.) These should remind us of our obligations to Man and G-d, and not be used to make us feel superior.

A Message From The Kalever Rebbe - Smiling To Children

וַיְהִי כְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיָּבֹא הַבַּיְתָה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלַאכְתּוֹ "***And it came about on a certain day, that he came to the house to do his work***" (39:11)



A Smile: The Greatest Gift

The greatest gift you can give someone is to greet them with panim yafos, a friendly and welcoming disposition.

Chazal taught (Kesuvos 111b) that showing your teeth, smiling, is "sweeter than milk." Meaning, greeting someone with a pleasant, happy and warm smile is a greater kindness than providing them with warm milk. The milk will invigorate their body, but the smile revives their soul, which drives the successes of everyone.

Raising Children

This is critical when it comes to raising and educating children.

Even a baby can discern and react to facial expressions. When you smile at a baby, the baby will laugh and smile back. But, if you look

angry or unhappy, you can even make a baby cry. Parents need to be extremely careful to always greet their children with a warm and loving temperament ensuring that their children will grow up happy and healthy, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Chazal warns us (Gittin 7a) that on Erev Shabbos, as it gets darker outside and Shabbos gets closer, the Yetzer Harah tries to tempt us with anger; in the hectic rush to prepare for Shabbos the Yetzer Harah wants you to lose your temper with your family. Therefore, a person must be even more careful to speak gently, patiently and lovingly with his family on Erev Shabbos, as it says (Koheles 9:17), The words of the wise are heard [when spoken] softly.

In Agra D'Kalah (Parshas Vayeishev), R' Tzvi Elimelech from Dinov, zt"l, quotes R' Mendel from Rimnov, zt"l, who taught that a person who returns to their home, should not do so while they are famished, because it will cause them to be short and angry with their family.

Acceptance of All

And, even when a child starts to drift from the just path of Torah and mitzvos, they need to be welcomed and treated with the utmost love and acceptance, a true panim yafos.

The Seforim HaKedoshim explain that this is the meaning of the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (1:15), And receive every man with a pleasant countenance. You must treat everyone with loving acceptance, even when someone's behavior contradicts Torah values. If you accept them and they feel welcomed despite how they behave, they will be willing to listen to what you have to say, and you will have an opportunity to offer advice and guidance.

They might even return them to a life of Torah. As Chazal relates (Bava Metzia 85a) that after R' Eliezer ben R' Shimon passed away, his son abandoned Torah and mitzvos. When Rebbe heard about this, he invited him over and showed him a tremendous amount of respect. He gave him a coat tailored from gold and he called him "Rebbe". The

son swore that he would no longer return to his previous deeds, repented and became a tremendous Torah scholar.

Even if you cannot guide a son back to Torah and mitzvos, that love at the very least, can protect him from making the gravest mistakes. They will want to avoid the embarrassment of facing their loving parents and supportive parents. As it says (Avos D'Rebbe Nossan 12:3): Aharon HaKohein greeted everyone with a warm and loving temperament. In doing so, he prevented them from committing the gravest sins. For, if they were to sin, they knew that they had to face Aharon and they would think to themselves, "Woe to me! After such a heinous sin, how can I face Aharon who also treated me with such caring acceptance!?"

The Torah teaches us (Breishis 25:28), "And Yitzchak loved Eisav because [his] game was in his mouth"... Yitzchak wanted to spare his son from committing the worst sins. So, he showed him acceptance and love. He didn't speak with him harshly. He knew that love and acceptance were the keys to trying to save Eisav spiritually.

This is especially critical when a child faces tremendous challenges. R' Aharon of Zitmar, zt"l, wrote in Toldos Aharon (Parshas Toldos) that his Rebbe R' Levi Yitzcak of Berditchev, zt"l, showed greater love to Jews who were unobservant than his own students. R' Ahraon, therefore, explained that Yitzchak showed greater love for Eisav because he knew that Eisav needed that support more than Yaakov.

The protection of love

The Seforim explain that this is why Yaakov favored Yoseif. He provided him with a special coat that he did not give his other children. Yaakov saw, with ruach hakodesh, that Yoseif would face tremendous spiritual challenges in his life. And,what could he do to empower and protect his son, to give him the skills and tools to overcome those challenges? Show him love. That love would infuse the strength that Yoseif would need.

Indeed, this love and acceptance saved Yoseif from the most daunting challenges as his life took him to Egypt. At the time he was sold, Yoseif was 17 years old, a teenager, a time in one's life when their passions are flowing through their veins. He faced the temptations of Potiphar's wife, who dressed pleasantly and begged him to commit a horrific sin. A sin which was common in Egyptian culture. However, the love that Yaakov showed him, the acceptance, protected Yoseif, enabled him to overcome the temptation to sin and, in fact, to flee from it with all his might.

This is perhaps the deeper meaning of the words of Chazal that taught that when he was tempted to sin with Potiphar's wife, he saw an image of his father. He remembered his father's smiling face, loving countenance, and his warm support. He didn't want to disappoint his father and stray away from the path of Torah and mitzvos. That loving environment that he grew up in gave him the strength to overcome the greatest temptation in the darkest times.

Jealousy by Rabbi Sender Haber



There is an old tradition amongst the Chasidim of Bobov, Shinove, and others to enact a yearly Yosef Shpiel. Despite opposition, the show continues to this day because it gives us an adult perspective on the story. The brothers were not a group of kids arguing in a sandbox, they were a group of holy, mature, men engaged in painful philosophical decision-making. The brothers were wrong – they admitted it themselves – but they were in no way childish or lacking intelligence in their actions.

Our descent to Egypt began when the brothers plotted to rid themselves of Yosef and dipped his coat into blood. We stayed in Egypt for 210 years, eventually becoming slaves and suffering greatly. The story of Yosef and his brothers plays a central role in the story of our slavery and redemption.

When Yosef was reunited with his brothers he gave each of them a suit. He singled out his brother Binyamin by giving him five suits. The Talmud wonders how Yosef could put Binyamin into the same favoured position that caused him such trouble.

Rabbi Binyamin Bar Yefes explains that the single suit received by each of the brothers was actually equal in value to the total value of Binyamin's five suits. Binyamin received a different gift, but not a better one. Yosef alluded with his gift to Mordechai, a grandson of Binyamin, who would wear five royal robes as he walked through Shushan as second in command to King Achashveirosh. (Megila 16b, Maharsha)

Mordechai suffered as a result of his extra suits. Some of Mordechai's colleagues in the Sanhedrin felt that he was too involved in royal affairs and could not remain the holy scholar and leader that he had been in the past. Other members of Sanhedrin continued to support Mordechai. Assuming that the latter were correct, it would seem that Mordechai did himself a disservice by leaving the palace wearing all five suits. He may not have had a choice, but by showing all of his glory at once he gave the wrong message to those around him.

Yosef taught Binyamin a similar lesson: If you have something special – don't wear it on your sleeve. Don't wear a suit of many colours. Don't try to intimidate people by showing all of your merits at once. By exhibiting each of his traits on a 'need to know' basis, Binyamin would be able to accomplish far more for the Jewish people. The humility of Shaul of the tribe of Binyamin helped him become the first king

of Israel; Ester, his grand-daughter, saved the Jewish people because she refused to disclose her royal lineage.

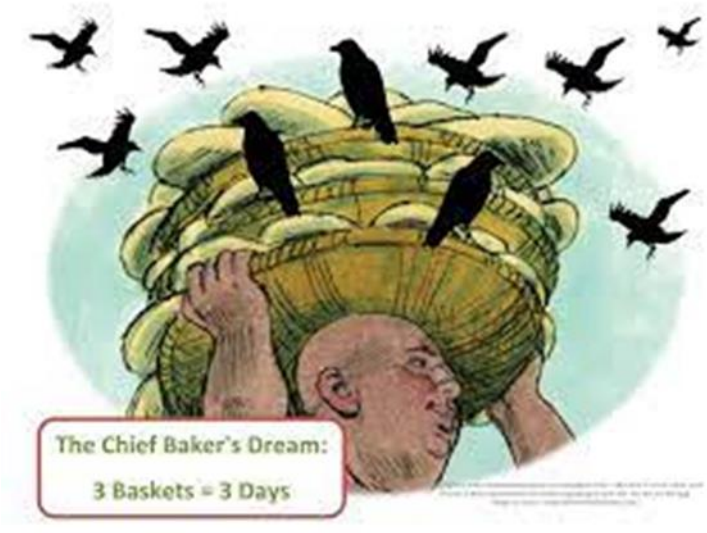
Our descent to Egypt began when the brothers dipped Yosef's coat into blood. We left Egypt only after dipping our hyssop into the blood of the Paschal lamb (and painting the doorposts).

Two immersions in blood: One got us into Egypt; the other got us out. The Jews came to Egypt as a result of the Sale of Yosef and they couldn't leave until it was addressed.

On the night of the Seder we dip twice. We dip our Karpas into salt water to remember the bitterness caused by the Ksones PASim that was dipped in blood. We take the edge off of our bitterness by dipping Maror into Charoses and recalling the immersion that took place just before we were freed.

Double-dip at the Seder and make a difference. We must remember the story of Yosef and remove jealousy from our lives.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series



Reb Elchonon Wasserman and Rabbi Meir Shapiro asked, how Did Yosef know that the Sar Hamaskim would live, and the Sar Haofim would die?

Yosef heard from the Sar Hamashkim the following: 'I saw a barren vine. Grapes grew on the vine. I took the grapes, I sqeezed them into a goblet, and I brought it to Pharoah.'

He was actively involved in the dream. There was movement by him. Therefore Yosef realized that there was life there, and the Sar Hamaskim would live.

However, the Sar Haofim dreamed: 'On my head were three baskets. There were baked delicacies for Pharoah. Than birds came…..

Everything was happening around him; he was completely passive in his dream. Yosef took this as a sign of death.

The Sefas Emess says, the reason why we take a dreidel (on which it says נס גדול היה שם) on Chanukah and spin it, is to publicize the miracle. So asks, "Why don't we take a big banner with these words, and hang it outside our houses? This would be a much bigger display? Everyone would see it.

He answers because a flag or banner is static- it's not moving. It is dead. However, the dreidel may be very small, but it is moving – it is alive! - The Chashmanayim could have acted passively, and said, "Ok, so we won't do the avodah or light the Menorah anymore."

But they decided that sitting doing nothing is not going to help. So they decided to do something and act proactively. 'We have to move and try something.'

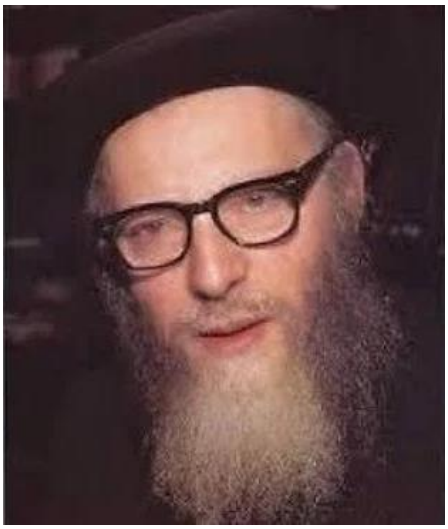
This is one of the messages of Chanukah – There must be life and movement in our avodas Hashem. We can't stay passive!

The Empty Envelope

A wealthy supporter once mailed **R' Shach** an envelope with a generous donation for Ponovezh Yeshiva. A few days later, the man received a phone call from R' Shach himself. "Thank you for your letter," R' Shach said warmly, "but it seems you forgot to include the check." The donor was mortified. He apologized profusely and said he would send another immediately.

R' Shach reassured him, "Please, there's no need to be embarrassed. *I only called because I feared you might think I received it and hadn't acknowledged it — and that could cause you distress*!"

The Origin of the Name 'Shneur'

Shneur is a very common personal name, popular among both chasidic and non-chasidic Jews.

The name Shneur (שניאור) has Ashkenazi Jewish origins and derives from a combination of two Hebrew words: 'shnei' (שְׁנֵי) meaning 'two' and 'or' (אוֹר) meaning 'light'. This distinctive name literally translates to 'two lights' in Hebrew symbolizing spiritual balance, knowledge, or the duality of Torah study. The name first gained prominence in medieval European Jewish communities, particularly among Ashkenazi Jews in Central and Eastern Europe.

It is common, for instance, in Chabad where boys are often named after the founder of the movement, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, and also in the Lithuanian "yeshiva world" where boys are often named after Rabbi Shneur Kotler, the dean of Lakewood yeshiva.

Shneur became more widely recognized after the birth of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), the founding rebbe of Chabad Hasidism, also known as Lubavitch Hasidism. As a prominent spiritual leader and founder of the Chabad movement, Rabbi Shneur Zalman's influence led to increased adoption of the name within Jewish communities that followed Hasidic traditions. The name's symbolic meaning of 'two lights' has been interpreted by scholars as representing the harmonious balance between intellect and emotion, or between the written Torah and oral tradition—concepts central to Chabad philosophy.

Where does this unusual name come from? Unlike most Jewish male personal names, Shneur is neither biblical nor of Yiddish origin. Its

etymology is somewhat controversial with anthroponomasticists disagreeing as to its exact origin.

Shneur = Two Lights?

"Rabbi Shmuel Vidaslow in his book Beth Shmuel on the Even Haezer section of the Shulchan Aruch explains the name's etymology: 'When both the paternal and maternal grandparents of the child is named Meir, he shall be called Shnei-or.'

The Maharashal in his commentary Yam Shel Shlomo on Tractate Gittin, Chapter 3, article 26 relates an incident that occurred in his family. 'A son was born to his grandfather who wanted to name the child Meir after his own father; however, the mother wanted to name the child after her father, whose name was Yair, so they compromised by naming the child 'Shnei or.'

However, the name Shneur predates all of this, and its origins are much older.

Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai in his Shem Hagedolim likewise relates the aforementioned story of the Maharshal but adds:

"It seems that the name Shneur is much older because Rabbi Yonah already quotes from his teacher Rabbi Samuel b. Shneur. Likewise, other rabbis were named Shneur and therefore they named the aforementioned child Shneur because this name already existed in the world and it (also) alluded to the 'two great lights' Meir and Uri."

I would also add an additional grammatical reason as to why Shneur probably has nothing to do with "two lights." In Hebrew, two lights would be "shnei orot" ("ohr" being the singular noun and "orot" being plural).

Silence is the most beautiful of all sounds. - Kotzker Rebbe

The Weekly Vort

■ ויקנאו בו אחיו ואביו שמר את הדבר – ***His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind*** (37:11).

The Sforno explains that after Yosef relayed his dreams, the brothers were jealous of him whereas Yakov, his father, was not because Chazal teach us that a person is jealous of others, except one's son and one's student.

■ ויכירה ויאמר כתנת בני חיה רעה אכלתהו – ***[Yakov immediately] recognized it. He said, 'It is my son's coat! A wild beast ate him!'*** (37:33)

Why did Yakov immediately assume that Yosef was eaten by a wild beast rather than slain by bandits?

Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that had bandits attacked Yosef, they surely would have taken his expensive colorful coat that Yakov made for him. Therefore, when Yakov saw the coat, he concluded that a wild beast must have devoured Yosef. (A Gut Vort)

Chizuk - Inspiration

One early morning in Jerusalem, **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ZT"L** left his home in Shaarei Chessed and boarded an Egged bus, likely the number 9 or 15 line, on his way to the Yeshiva in Rechavia. The driver, distracted by something going on outside, waved him onto the bus absentmindedly and did not notice that Rav Shlomo Zalman had not paid his bus fare yet. Rav Shlomo Zalman tried to hand him the fare, but the driver motioned for him to just walk on and sit down.

Rav Shlomo Zalman refused to sit down. Instead, he stood by the driver for the entire ride, repeatedly trying to hand the driver the money. However, the driver insisted that it was not necessary.

When the bus reached Rav Shlomo Zalman's stop in Rechavia, instead of getting off, he told the driver, "I insist on paying the bus fare. This fare belongs to the Egged bus company, not to you. You do not have the authority to waive it." The driver shrugged and still waved him off.

Undeterred, Rav Shlomo Zalman rode the bus all the way to the old Central Bus Station on Jaffa Road in the city center, walked into the Egged office and stood in line to pay the single fare that he owed.

From the Central Bus Station, it was nearly a mile back to his Yeshiva in Rechavia, a journey he now had to make on foot or by taking another bus. For Rav Shlomo Zalman, the additional time and effort were insignificant when compared to the reassurance he felt from meeting his responsibility to pay the bus fare that he owed.

"Torah of Truth"



Early in life, **Rav Shimon Schwab's** father taught him the importance of not only speaking the truth but of living the truth. The Rav told the following story from his childhood: "

As a young boy around the age of *Bar Mitzvah*, I decided to stand for the entire *tefillos* on the night and day of *Yom Kippur*, a custom cited in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 619). My father, who was not one to ignore such things, made no comment.

On *Motzei Yom Kippur*, one of my younger brothers did something that was not to my liking, and I let him have it physically. My father slapped my face. 'I thought that you had perhaps attained the

madreiga of observing even a custom brought as *yesh omdim* (some stand) in the *Shulchan Aruch*,' he said. 'But your behavior immediately following *Yom Kippur* indicates that you reached no such level at all and were just showing off. For that, you got the *potsch*.'"

Bearing the Burden of the Soldiers

November 27, 2025

Rav Chaim Yehoshua Hoberman (Rosh Yeshiva of Long Beach) shared an extraordinary story at last week's Torah Umesorah convention.

During the panel of roshei yeshiva, a question was asked:

What is our approach toward IDF soldiers? Are we supposed to feel their pain and appreciate their tremendous sacrifices, even though there is tension and disagreement regarding the army and its ideology?

All of the roshei yeshiva on the panel answered unequivocally: Of course! What is the question? Being nosei ba'ol and showing hakaras hatov are fundamental middos of being a Jew, and differences in ideology should make no difference. There is no question!

Rav Dovid Goldberg cited sources demonstrating that even toward a non-Jew, one should feel compassion and be nosei ba'ol for their pain.

Rabbi Hoberman then added the following story:

His father-in-law, Rav Yitzchok Feigelstock, was very close to **Rav Aharon Kotler** when he was a young bachur. In 1954, they traveled together to Philadelphia for a meeting about opening a yeshiva.

On the way back, Rav Aharon was exhausted and stretched out in the back while a driver handled the trip, and Rav Yitzchok sat in the front. As they crossed a bridge back into New Jersey, they noticed two non-Jewish boys, about twelve years old, hitchhiking late at night.

Rav Aharon asked the driver, "Aren't you going to pick them up?" The driver replied, "I don't pick up hitchhikers—it's not safe." Rav Aharon insisted, "They're children. Their mothers are worried. It's late at night."

The driver continued driving, but Rav Aharon pressed again. Finally, after they were already six miles past, the driver asked, "Should I go back?"

Rav Aharon responded, "Do you have another suggestion? Yes—go back."

The driver turned around, picked up the boys, and seated them in the front, while Rav Yitzchok and Rav Aharon remained in the back. They safely dropped the boys off at their homes.

While safety considerations today might be different, and the context of non-Jewish twelve-year-olds may have changed, our middos and reflections of Hashem must remain steadfast and unchanging.

Have a wonderful Shabbos, Rabbi Shraga Freedman.

Believe in Yourself



The strongest foundation for success is unshakable belief in yourself - everything begins there. The moment you understand your inherent worth is the moment your life begins to rise. When you know how precious and how capable you are, when you see your value and your ability, your choices become clearer, your path brighter, and your heart lighter. Your best life grows from the belief that you deserve the best in life.

You are stronger and more capable than you can imagine, and what you can accomplish is nothing short of greatness. Hashem is King, and that makes you royalty – know your value, know your worth, know your strength.

Sometimes the most difficult part of healing or moving forward is believing you're worthy of it – worthy of kindness, worthy of understanding, worthy of joy. It's important to know that your voice matters, your struggles matter, your happiness matters – everything about you matters.

There is nothing ordinary about you; you are quite literally one of a kind. There never has been, and there never will be, someone just like you – you are a one-time creation, and that alone makes you priceless. Hashem doesn't make any extras – your existence is proof that the world needed something no one else could offer. You are irreplaceable – there is no backup version of you. The world needs you, and everything that makes you, you.

You are stronger than your doubts, braver than your fears, and more loved than you will ever know. Self-worth is the key that unlocks every version of your greatness – when you value yourself, your life becomes a reflection of that value. The best life isn't found – it's built from the inside out, starting with self-respect. Your best self emerges when you stop chasing perfection and start embracing authenticity. When you honor your own value, when you rise above your doubts, your entire world begins to rise with you.

Inspired by the teachings of Rabbeinu Yonah (1180-1263)

Small Steps, Great Growth

Torah study requires consistency. Even a small amount, learned with regularity, builds a person. ~ R' Tzvi Pesach Frank zt'l

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

The Smile That Changed The World

Rav Benzion Sneh, Shlita, one of the most beloved maggidim in Eretz Yisroel, has always been known for his profound wisdom, powerful stories, and ability to touch hearts with his words. But a while ago, his life took a dramatic turn. A serious car accident left him gravely injured, his body crushed, his future uncertain. His physical injuries were severe: broken bones, an inability to walk, and pain that seemed endless. Rav Benzion and his wife flew to America, seeking a medical solution that would put an end to his suffering.

He had lost all the hearing in one ear. And that deaf ear was the source of his most excruciating agony. The nerves in that ear, although no longer able to transmit sound, were still very much alive. And it was those nerves that tormented him day and night, causing infections, unbearable discomfort, and an unrelenting reminder that something was wrong.

While in America, he met with a renowned ear specialist who examined him carefully. After a thorough evaluation, the doctor delivered his recommendation. "The nerves in your ear are still active, and that's why you're in so much pain," he began. "The only way to stop the infections and discomfort is to deaden the nerves completely. Once that's done, you'll never hear with that ear again, but at least the pain and infections will cease."

It was a substantial blow. The thought of losing all hope of regaining hearing in that ear was difficult to accept, but the idea of continuing to live with constant pain seemed even worse. The surgery was scheduled, and Rav Benzion prepared himself for the finality of it all.

As the days led up to the surgery, Rav Benzion did what he's always done in times of difficulty – he turned to Tehillim. The words of Dovid Hamelech have always been a source of comfort and strength



for him, and now, more than ever, he needed those ancient words to carry him through. One day, as he was reciting Tehillim, he came across a familiar posuk (81:11): *"Harchev picha va'amal'eihu* – open wide your mouth, and I will fill it."

Rav Benzion has said these words countless times before, but for some reason, on this particular day, they struck him with a force he had never felt before. He stopped, letting the words wash over him. Why, he wondered, does it say *harchev,* open wide? Why not simply *p'sach*, open? After all, if the posuk is referring to prayer, wouldn't it make more sense to say "Open your mouth, and I will fill it?"

The more he thought about it, the clearer the message became. The posuk isn't referring to tefillah in the conventional sense. It isn't about the words we say when we are in need. It is about something much more infinite. *Harchev,* open wide. Dovid Hamelech is teaching us that in times of trouble, it not enough to simply open our mouths in prayer. We have to widen our mouths in joy and gratitude, even when it seems impossible. When we smile, when we choose to focus on the blessings we still have, even in the midst of suffering, we are widening our mouths in the truest sense.

It was a revelation. Despite all of the physical challenges and frustrations he was facing, Rav Benzion knew he still had so much to be grateful for. He had a wonderful wife, beautiful children, and a satisfying life filled with Torah. Yes, he was in pain, but that didn't mean he couldn't smile. He shared his newfound understanding with his devoted wife, and together, they made a decision. Every day, no matter how difficult, they would focus on their blessings. They would reiterate their feelings of gratitude, over and over, smiling and widening their mouths with joy, even when it felt unnatural.

The day of the surgery finally arrived. Rav Benzion went to the hospital, prepared for the operation that would take away his hearing in one ear permanently. As part of the routine pre-op exam, the doctors conducted one final test of his ear. They were not expecting anything unusual. But what they found left them dumbfounded. The nerves in Rav Benzion's ear had somehow begun to heal. Though, for some reason, he had not noticed the change just yet, the nerves that had been causing him so much pain were now beginning to heal and were beginning to function again.

The surgery was called off. Rav Benzion walked out of the hospital with tears of gratitude coursing down his face. It was a miracle, no doubt about it. He had smiled and said thank you through the pain, he had widened his mouth with joy and Hashem had filled it with a miracle.

As a maggid, Rav Benzion had always shared stories of others' faith and the miracles that often followed. But now, he had his own story to tell. Everywhere he went, he shares the lesson of "*harchev picha*", the power of widening our mouths of joy, even during times of hardship. And the ripple effect of that message has been extraordinary.

One day, he received a letter from a man blessed with many children, BYH, each of whom had found their soulmate shortly after beginning to date; that is, except for his youngest two. His two youngest children struggled for years to find their bashert, and it pressed on their father's heart. After hearing Rav Benzion's lesson on "*harchev picha*", he decided to try a new approach.

Instead of focusing on his worries and frustrations, he began to thank Hashem for all the blessings he already had. He thanked Him for his children, for their health, for the wonderful families they had all created, and for the homes filled with Torah and the love they all shared. He committed to "*harchev picha*"; he widened his

mouth in gratitude, and two months later, both of his youngest children became engaged.

But the story doesn't end there. Rav Benzion's message continued to spread, by other speakers, as well, and it wasn't long before another story reached him. This time, it was from a father of 14 children. The seven older ones had embraced a life of Torah, and the youngest six were following closely in their footsteps. But his eighth child, his 'sandwich' child, had begun to slip away from Torah. First, he cut off his peyos. Then, he stopped wearing tefillin. And next, he abandoned Shabbos, and so it was continuing.

The parents were heartbroken. They had so much nachas from their other children, but this one child caused them immense pain. Despite all the blessings in their life, this one aberration cast a shadow over everything. But after hearing Rav Benzion's story of "*harchev picha*", they decided to try something different.

Before Pesach, they made a conscious decision to fill their Seder night with joy and thankfulness. Instead of focusing on the child who had strayed, the parents spoke about all the blessings in their lives. They expressed their nachas from their children, and they talked about the joy that Torah and mitzvos brought into their homes. They embraced "*harchev picha*", widened their mouths in joy, and even though it felt like a stretch, they kept smiling.

That Shavuos, their 'sandwich' son asked his father if could learn with him through the night. It was a small step, but it was the first step back. Slowly but surely, the boy returned to his roots, and eventually, he fully embraced the life of Torah he had once left behind.

The parents were elated, but they were curious. "What brought you back?" they wanted to know.

The son's answer was simple. "I never saw the joy in your life, until now," he said. "You were always running from one gemach to the

next, trying to make ends meet. I knew you loved Torah, but I didn't see the happiness it brought you. But that night at the Seder I saw it. You spoke about the joy of a Torah life and for the first time, realised that I had such a wonderful life and I owed so much to Hashem. How could I go against Him after all He had done for me?"

Good Shabbos

Aaron Leitner



אַחֲרֵי

If you want to learn how to do something, watch an expert. And if that something is *chesed*, then one expert you'll surely want to learn from is **Rav Avrohom Genechovsky, *zt"l***. Rav Avrohom was so great that **Rav Chaim Kanievsky** would stand up for him when he came to visit. Rav Avrohom was famous not only for his brilliance in Torah but for his genius in how to treat other people.



Once, a man came to him along with a few *bachurim* and asked a *shailah*. Rav Avrohom quickly gave an answer and the source for it. When the group left, someone told him that the man was the *maggid shiur* at a local yeshivah.

"Oh, no!" Rav Avrohom thought. "I might have made him look bad in front of his *talmidim*. I gave him such a quick, simple answer that the *bachurim* might think he can't come up with a simple answer himself."

Rav Avrohom was willing to do whatever was needed to undo the damage. He went to the *maggid shiur's beis medrash*. The students gathered around him. "I came with some questions I need to ask your *maggid shiur*," Rav Avrohom told them. He asked the questions in front of the *talmidim* and praised the *maggid shiur's* crystal-clear answers.

With that, Rav Avrohom undid whatever damage he might have done earlier. But what did this repair involve? He acted immediately and went to the *beis medrash* right away. He made sure to honor the *maggid shiur* before the very same people in whose presence he

feared he might have embarrassed him. And he lowered himself by acting as if he needed the *maggid shiur's* advice.

He did the whole repair job, beginning to end, just so this *maggid shiur's* students would think, "Wow! Rav Avrohom comes to our *rebbi* with his *shailahs*!"

Short Story Of The Week By Yoni Schwartz

In 1939, the Tisser family was living in an area of Poland that had recently been conquered by the Soviet Union. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact - a pact of non-aggression between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union - was still in effect. Being in a region where no war was expected to reach them, the family felt safe. However, since the area was now under Russian control, they soon found the government knocking at their door. They were told that they must register to become Russian citizens.

Unsure of what to do, they consulted with their Rebbe, **the Bokovsker Rebbe, Rav Alter Reuven Shapiro, ZT"L**, asking if they should register. The Bokovsker Rebbe replied, "Absolutely not. Under no circumstances should you register for citizenship."

They followed his advice. A few days later, however, there was an angry bang on their door. It was the police. "You had the chance to become citizens and refused?! That is an inexcusable insult to Mother Russia!" they shouted. The family was ripped from their home and taken to Siberia.

Now in Siberia - freezing, starving, and suffering - they felt furious at themselves. "How could we have listened to the Rebbe? Look where that got us!" To add insult to injury, Soviet propaganda, Pravda, was spreading like wildfire. They were told that the Soviet Union was thriving, that they were winning the war, and that the country was stronger than ever.

Five years later, when they were finally released, they discovered that all the information fed to them had been a lie. The Nazis broke the pact, had demolished that region of the Soviet Union, and had sent every person who was registered as a Russian citizen straight to the death camps. - They realized that the Rebbe had saved their lives.

A Yid Must Never Lose Hope



Jerusalem's Abu Tor neighborhood is usually a quiet place, perched on the hills with winding streets and a view of the Old City. But one morning, the peace was shattered. A Jewish jewelry store owner arrived to open his shop, only to find the door forced open, the showcases smashed, and every last piece of gold and jewelry gone.

The burglars had worked with precision, leaving behind nothing but broken glass and despair. The police came quickly, surveyed the scene, and gave their grim assessment. "It's gone," they told the distraught owner. "The goods have already been moved. Most likely they were used to finance other crimes. By now, they've changed hands several times. There's no chance of recovery."

For the store owner, this was more than a financial disaster. His livelihood, his pride, his years of hard work had all vanished overnight in one fell swoop. He sat in his shop, shoulders slumped, staring at the empty cases. How could he face his family? How could he rebuild?

Word of his plight spread, and **R' Moshe Aharon Braverman *zt"l***, *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Yeshivas Meah Shearim*, heard about it. He knew

the man needed more than police reports; he needed spiritual energy.

That day he came to the dazed man and offered to bring him to *Bnei Brak*, to seek encouragement and blessing from the **Ponovezh Rosh Yeshivah, R' Elazar Menachem Mann Shach *zt"l***. The man did not object and allowed himself to be driven from Jerusalem to *Bnei Brak*, to the home of Rav Shach, the great Sage, to hear words of encouragement.

The store owner poured out his heart. "*Rebbi*, they say it's all gone. The police told me the jewels are already out of reach. There's no hope of ever getting them back." He burst into tears, his shoulders heaving uncontrollably.

Rav Shach listened quietly, allowing the man to vent, his eyes steady, his presence calm. Then he uttered one sentence: "*Reb Yid*, you must not lose hope. It happens that thieves quarrel, and one informs on the other."

The words hung in the air. To the store owner, they sounded almost beyond belief. The police had been clear: the goods were gone, unrecoverable. He tried to explain. "But *Rebbi*, they said it's already left their possession. It's impossible."

Rav Shach did not argue with the man. He simply fell silent. His message had already been given. Nothing in this world is impossible. *A Yid* must never lose hope.

Days passed. The store owner tried to move on, though the weight of his loss pressed heavily upon him. Then, unexpectedly, his phone rang. It was police headquarters. "Come immediately," they told him. Of course, he rushed over, not knowing what to expect.

When he arrived, he was led into a room and there, laid out before him, was every piece of his stolen property. Gold chains, diamond rings, bracelets, watches - all of it. His fortune had been returned.

The investigator explained, "One of the robbers got into a quarrel with the others. In anger, he turned them in. That's how we found everything." The store owner was stunned. Indeed, nothing is impossible. Just as Rav Shach had said, thieves had quarreled, and one betrayed the others.

The next day, a notice appeared in a local Jewish newspaper. It was short, heartfelt, and powerful: "I want to offer my greatest thanks to the Creator of the World." Signed simply: *Baal Hachanut* - The store owner.



"Your Job Is To Learn, Not Wash Dishes" - Rav Shach's Unforgettable Response"

There was a woman who worked as a cook in a yeshiva. Sadly, she had been an agunah for many years, with no realistic chance of receiving a get. She would prepare supper in the yeshiva and then stay late into the night to clean the entire kitchen. That was her parnassah.

It took hours, and she had no one to watch her children, so she brought them along. It was an extremely difficult situation. By the end of the day, her children were exhausted, crying, and begging to go home.

A group of bachurim noticed her struggle and felt terrible for her. They came up with an idea. "You go home and take care of your children," they told her. "Come in, cook the supper, and then leave. We'll take care of all the serving and all the cleaning."

And so, these bachurim quietly began doing this every day. They were careful to do it during their own free time, never missing time from their learning seder.

Eventually the mashgiach found out and objected. "Absolutely not," he said. "Bachurim are here to learn, not to clean kitchens."

But the bachurim respectfully explained that they were always back before seder began. The mashgiach remained unconvinced and brought the matter to Rav Shach, fully expecting that the Rosh Yeshiva would support his position.

After hearing the story, Maran Rav Shach suddenly rose from his chair and exclaimed with great emotion:

"Niflaos! Wonders of wonders! What wonderful bachurim! What thoughtfulness! Where are those bachurim? I want to kiss each and every one of them!"

"Tell them," Rav Shach continued, "that what they are doing is certainly right and proper. They deserve to be praised and encouraged.

Because of the great kindness they show in the yeshiva, they will undoubtedly receive an abundance of siyata diShmaya in their learning. This chesed will not take away from their Torah—it will enhance it!"

(As told by Rabbi Fischel Schachter, based on a Dirshu Hebrew email adapted from Vha'ariv Na.)

From Rav Shach's words we learn a profound truth: kindness and refined midos are the very foundation of greatness in Torah. As the Gemara in Avodah Zarah (17b) says: '*One who engages in Torah only, while neglecting chesed, is like one who has no G-d.*'

The Maharsha explains that this is because chesed lies at the heart of Hashem's midos, and our role is to emulate Him - "**והלכת בדרכיו**."

The way to live with Hashem is by emulating His ways.

Have a wonderful Shabbos, Rabbi Shraga Freedman



Inspired by Time - When Galus Meets Geula – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Rav Pincus would often draw attention to a remarkable phenomenon unfolding in our generation. We are living through a wave of return unlike anything seen in recent history. Across the world, yeshivos and institutions devoted to bringing Yidden back to Torah are opening and expanding at breathtaking pace. Classes, kollelim, outreach centers, chavrusa programs, Shabbos gatherings are springing up everywhere. Entire communities are being built around renewed commitment to Torah and mitzvos.

And the results are staggering. Not tens or dozens, but hundreds — even thousands — of ba'alei teshuva are emerging. People from every background, every place on the spectrum of Jewish life, are finding their way home.

But, Rav Pincus noted, when we turn our eyes back to earlier generations, we encounter a striking contrast. In the era of the Chafetz Chaim, in the days of the **Shpoler Zeide**, and in the centuries before them, bringing even a single Jew back to Torah was considered a monumental accomplishment. The average person could not do it. Even the greatest tzaddikim — masters of Torah, purity, and kedusha — poured enormous effort into reaching just one neshama. - And when they succeeded, it was celebrated with tremendous simcha. One Jew who returned, one life that found its way back to Hashem — this was a victory that resonated for decades. Two or three over the course of an entire lifetime was considered an exceptional achievement. And rightfully so. To inspire a person to remake his life from the inside out — to shift habits, to challenge deeply rooted patterns, to choose a new direction — is among the hardest things a human being can ever do.

So how is it, Rav Pincus asked, that in our generation we witness this on a scale that defies all historical precedent? How is it that the doors of teshuva seem wide open, that hearts soften so quickly, that entire groups of Yidden are returning with such ease and in such astonishing numbers? How can it be that what once demanded unimaginable spiritual strength now occurs in every corner of the world?

He offered an insight of tremendous depth and inspiration — one that casts our entire era in a new light: We are already tasting the light of Yemos haMashiach.

This is not yet the full radiance of geula, but the early glow, the faint illumination before sunrise. It is the beginning of a world where Hashem's presence becomes clearer, where the soul instinctively turns toward Him, where the barriers that once made teshuva so difficult begin to soften. The shifts we see around us — hearts opening, Yidden returning in remarkable numbers — are signs of that new light starting to filter in.

When Mashiach comes, the world will be filled with clarity. The miracles of that era will not be only physical — they will be spiritual at their core. The light of Hashem will be so openly revealed that the natural instinct of every neshama will be to draw close to Him. Teshuva will no longer be a struggle; it will be the most natural movement of the soul.

And Rav Pincus taught that we are already seeing early traces of that light. The remarkable openness of hearts, the ease with which Yidden return, the sheer number of neshamos finding their way back — this itself is one of the miracles of Ikvesa d'Meshicha. It is a faint, early reflection of what the world will look like when the full brilliance of geula finally shines.

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

Finding Hashem In The Daily Headlines - Rav Wolbe on Chumash by Rabbi Yitzchok Caplan

בַּאֲשֶׁר ה' אִתּוֹ- '*For Hashem was with him.*' (Bereishis 39:23).



Toward the end of Parashas Vayeishev the Torah relates how Yosef was falsely accused and consequently thrown into jail. He found favor in the eyes of the jail warden, and he was accorded preferential treatment.

In an exact repetition of what occurred when he was in Potiphar's house, his superior entrusted him with the day-to-day management of the jail, and Yosef took complete charge over his fellow inmates. The passuk tells us, "*The officer of the jail did not supervise anything for Hashem was with him, and whatever he did Hashem granted him success*" (39:23).

We should take note of the simple explanation of this passuk: It is possible for Hashem to live with a person no matter where a person finds himself. Even if he is in a secular or antagonistic environment, he must realize that Hashem is with him. - Yosef was in a forlorn dungeon together with a group of gentiles, in the basest, most immoral land, and nevertheless the Torah tells us clearly that "Hashem was with him."

One cannot blame his environment for causing him to slacken off in his commitment to Torah and mitzvos, because Hashem can be found everywhere.

Rav Wolbe once attended a lecture in Sweden. In the middle of the speech the speaker mentioned R' Shlomo Wolbe that "the very atmosphere of Sweden is treif." Rav Wolbe felt a strong desire to vehemently protest such a statement, since it implied that Hashem is not to be found in Sweden! We know that "His glory fills the entire world" (Yeshayah 6:3) and that He can be found in the most far-flung and desolate places. We simply have to look for Him, but if we make the effort, His presence will be clear beyond a shadow of a doubt.

This can be seen from the subsequent pesukim in the parashah. The Torah relates that shortly after Yosef was thrown into jail, two officers of the king were also imprisoned for their respective offenses. Rashi tells us (40:1) that the accusations leveled at Yosef by Potiphar's wife generated much negative talk about Yosef. Hashem therefore brought about the indictment of the king's officers so that attention should be shifted away from him.

Rav Yerucham Levovitz once said that if we would have the "eyes of the Torah," we would be able to see Hashgachah evident even in the newspapers. To this day, Hashem continues to act in the same manner. When the media starts attacking religious Jews, Hashem reveals some scandal and the spotlight is shifted away from the Jews.

Our surroundings do not always support our avodas Hashem, but we can choose whether or not to live with Hashem. He can be found in the dungeons of Egypt, in the subways of Manhattan, and even in the North Pole. We simply have to look for Him, and if we do, we will find Him everywhere — even in the daily headlines!

The Anonymous Donation

This coming week will mark 70 years since our family arrived here, in Manchester. Our parents, **זיכרונם ליברכה**, embarked on the long journey from Chile, for the sole purpose of providing a yiddishe education for the Leitner brothers. They not only sacrificed their livelihood and travelled half the way round the world by ship; and had to leave behind our elderly grandmother, whom our mother, o"h, never got to see again. She, together with a daughter, are buried in the Beis Hachaim, in Santiago, Chile.



My parents often dreamt about having them reburied in Eretz Yisroel and made serious enquiries as to how to bring this to fruition. The reason was of course that the family could visit their graves frequently, apart from the spiritual aspect of being buried in **ארץ הקדשה**. They knew that it wasn't a simple matter, very costly, too, and they would also have to find a reliable person to undertake to oversee the job properly. Despite that, our father went several times to discuss this possibility with **Dayan Yitzchok Weiss** (Minchas Yitzchok) who, after giving the matter some serious thought, advised them not to proceed.

About twenty years ago, Micha, as the oldest grandchild, felt that he should perhaps pay a visit, despite the distance and expense involved, but was advised not to go. But Micha didn't want to leave it at that and wanted to find out the state of the matzevois. He, therefore, called Rabbi Yitzchok Shaked, the Rov of the Orthodox

community in Santiago, and requested of him to arrange for someone to go to the kevorim of our grandmother and aunt, and daven there on our behalf, and to take some pictures of the gravestones.

Sometime later two photos arrived via email, confirming that the gravestones and inscriptions, as well as the cemetery in general, were well maintained. Micha telephoned the Rov in Santiago to thank him for his services, and asked about the 'Jewish Chile' where he was born, what progress had been made, how the Kehillah was faring, and if there was anything that he might want from him. One favour deserves a reciprocal action.

Rabbi Shaked was quick to respond. "Yes, we need money, and plenty of it, too, to build a new Santiago Mikvah!" The Rov explained that the Orthodox population had now moved to a different area, and the area where the old Mikvah stood was a rather run-down and unsavoury part of town. They needed to build a new one nearer to where the Yidden lived, and he, therefore, had begun a campaign to build a new, modern Mikvah. He was still short of $120,000 to complete the project.

So, Micha undertook to help in whatever way he could. Micha already supports four other tzedokas by sending out bi-annually 7000 appeal letters, for each tzedokah, to Yidden in London, Manchester and Gateshead, requesting donations. Now, he added a 5th appeal – 'The Santiago Mikvah Appeal.' The responses were generous and plentiful, with these campaigns and subsequent replies continuing for three or four years. All the funds that came in for the Mikvah appeal was promptly wired to Rabbi Shaked in Chile.

One evening Micha received a phone call from a friend, who first inquired about the authenticity of this building appeal – which seemed to continue bi-annually, and who, then, informed Micha that a wealthy acquaintance of his was seriously interested in helping to complete the Santiago Mikvah project. He wanted to know all the details, where they were holding at present, and how long it would

take to complete the project. He also asked to see photos of the work in progress, as well as the plans and specifications. This would all be presented to the 'baal haboss friend'.



Micha called his contact in Chile and was told that only the previous night the community executive had held a meeting regarding the Mikvah and had decided, due to lack of funds, to postpone the entire project for six months and put everything on hold. The contractor could then go and do another project and return later to complete the Mikvah. The shell of the building had already been built but a further £45,000 was required to complete the interior and fittings. It was estimated that 3-4 weeks were still required to complete the full schedule of work.

Micha immediately contacted the Mikvah project manager in Santiago, Mr Ady Magendzo. He requested all the relevant information and stressed that it was needed urgently! This all took place on a Monday. By the next day, all the requested information arrived by email. Micha's friend was contacted who then forwarded the details to his 'baal haboss friend'. Micha's friend came back to report that his 'baal haboss friend' had agreed to forward the total amount still outstanding to complete the project, but with one condition: that the work must be completed as quickly as possible,

because 'every day counts'. The money was wired to Chile before Shabbos.

On Shabbos morning Rabbi Shaked made a public announcement in Shul. Only last Sunday evening the executive had decided, due to a lack of funds, to postpone the Mikvah project for 6 months, and they had informed the contractor accordingly. But the following morning they had received a phone call from the other side of the globe requesting full details of the Mikvah project, with a view to offer financial support to the project.

By Shabbos, the entire sum outstanding had been received, which would now allow the Mikvah to be completed as scheduled. The announcement and clear Hashgocho Protis was met with great excitement and brought many of the mispallelim to tears. The Rov then made a special Misheberach for their British Friends that had stepped in to enable the project to reach completion so speedily.

Three weeks later, the community in Santiago, Chile, had a state-of-the-art Mikvah and celebrated this with a commemorative dinner to mark this special event. Amongst the many guests they also welcomed the Israeli Ambassador to Chile and a Jewish Minister of the Chilean Government, who graced the event with their presence, as the new Santiago Mikvah became a reality. The committee also wanted Micha to fly over for this dinner, but instead he wrote them a speech which was read out, relating this wonderful story of Hashgocho Protis.

His speech concluded with a powerful message: "All the thousands of kilometres of land and sea that separate us physically cannot diminish the bond of friendship that exists between Yidden."

The 'baal haboss friend' was also invited to the inauguration dinner in Santiago, which he declined. He wanted his 'contribution' to remain anonymous. In the end he agreed to the wording of a plaque that adorns the entrance to the building, saying "This Mikvah was built with the assistance of our friends in England – from

Manchester, London and Gateshead. May the Zechus of the use of this Mikvah bring spiritual and material blessing to all those who supported this project. Nissan 5767."

The Yidden in the UK who donated (small and big) in support of the building of the new Mikvah in Chile are approx. 7300 miles away.

Our parents' dream of reburying their close relatives in Eretz Yisroel, was never fulfilled, but it is in their merit that Santiago got a new Mikvah instead.

Good Shabbos

Aaron Leitner

Parshah Pearls – (Adapted from the P'ninei Torah)

● **Cross-Purposes**

וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים - *"And he made him a fine woolen tunic*" (37:3).

The Gemara in Shabbos (145) teaches us that the Talmidei-Chachamim in Bavel dressed elegantly because compared to those of Eretz Yisrael (who dressed much more simply), they were not B'nei-Torah.

In the same way, the **Chasam Sofer** explains, Ya'akov Avinu, in an attempt to hide his great love for Yosef (over and above his brothers), made him a special tunic, in the hope that the brothers would take this as a sign that their father did not consider Yosef a ben-Torah.

Unfortunately, however, the brothers saw through Ya'akov's efforts to hide his real motive, with the devastating results that the Torah goes on to record.

● In Case they Die

וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַּבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֹם- *"And they hated him, so they were unable to speak with him 'peace'* (37:4).

In reality, say Chazal, it ought to be forbidden to use the conventional greeting 'Sholom aleichem', due to the off-chance that, after have pronounced the word 'Sholom', one has a stroke, in which case, one will have pronounced it in vain - and 'Sholom' remember, is one of G-d's Names.

Yet they did not forbid it because of the principle that anyone who 'gives Sholom' to his friend, will have his days and his years lengthened. Consequently, someone who says the word 'Sholom', and intends to add 'Aleichem' can rest assured that his life will not be curtailed before he has managed to conclude the greeting.

But this only applies in a case where one's greeting is genuine. Yosef's brothers, however, would have greeted Yosef with their mouths, but not with their hearts (as Rashi explained in Pasuk 4). In such a case, says the P'ninei Torah, it is safe to assume that the above assurance does not apply. Consequently, the brothers were unable to greet Yosef with the word 'Sholom'.

● A Triple Errand

רְאֵה אֶת־שְׁלֹום אַחֶיךָ וְאֶת־שְׁלֹום הַצֹּאן וַהֲשִׁבֵנִי דָּבָר - *"Go and see how your brothers and the sheep are getting on, and let me know"* (37:14).

Yosef said three derogatory things about his brothers: 1. that they were treating the sons of the maidservants with contempt; 2. that they ate Eiver min ha'chai (meat taken from an animal whilst it was still alive) and 3. that they were immoral.

R. Ya'akov Gezuntheit points out that these three things conformed with the three instructions that Ya'akov issued to to Yosef: 1. ***'Go and see how your brothers are getting on*** (whether

they are living together harmoniously)'; 2. ***'How the sheep are*** (that the brothers are not eating from them before they have been Shechted)'; 3. ***'Return me word*** (that they are not behaving immorally [indeed, the Torah uses the word ***'Davar***' in connection with immoral behaviour - see Ki-Seitzei 23:15])'.

נִיצוֹצֵי שִׂמְחָה
Sparks of Simcha

There is a perplexing statement made in the middle of this week's Haftorah הַשֹּׁאֲפִים עַל־עֲפַר־אֶרֶץ בְּרֹאשׁ דַּלִּים וְדֶרֶךְ עֲנָוִים יַטּוּ – *'They aspire [as they walk on] the dust of the earth for the head of the poor and they twist the judgment of the humble…'* (Amos 2:7)

Rav Yonason Eibschitz quotes the sages who explain the oppression of the poor refers to not giving enough charity to support the downtrodden: **אַל תַּסֵּג גְּבוּל עוֹלִים** – do not move the property lines of **those who rise**." Why do the sages refer to the poor as "those who rise" (Peah 7:3)?

Rav Yonason Eibschitz (Ahavas Yonason Vayeishev) beautifully explains that the sages refer to the downtrodden as **עוֹלִים** – those who rise because the challenges they face help elevate and refine their character to unbelievable heights. Although it may be difficult, we cannot underestimate the profound power of transcending our painful circumstances to grow into bigger, inspirational individuals.

"The greatest obstacle to success is not failure, but giving up. Perseverance is the key to overcoming any challenge." – Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler.

RABBI SHIMSHON PINCUS ON THE PARASHA

Do It Happily



וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּצִּלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם - *'Reuven heard and rescued him from their hands.'* (37:21)

When a person does a mitzvah, he should do it with a happy heart. - If Reuven had known that Hakadosh Baruch Hu would write about him, "Reuven heard, and rescued him from their hands," he would have put Yosef on his shoulders and carried him to his father. - If Boaz had known that Hakadosh Baruch Hu would write about him that "he handed Ruth roasted grain," he would have fed her fattened calves. (Vayikra Rabbah 34:8)

We all do mitzvos. Who writes them down? - R. Kohen, and R. Yehoshua son of R. Simon in the name of R. Levi, said: In the past, a person would do a mitzvah and the Navi would write it down. - Now, when a person does a mitzvah, Eliyahu Hanavi and Melech Hamashiach write it, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu signs on it.

It wasn't just then. Also today, the mitzvos we do are remembered and recorded. - Reuven and Boaz didn't realize the full greatness and importance of their deeds. It seemed to Reuven like he was just helping his brother Yosef and getting him out of a tough spot. But in truth, if Yosef had been killed, this would have cancelled the whole future Jewish people, and the purpose for which the world was created would have come to naught. - *Chazal* say that the Jewish people can be built only from all the twelve Tribes together, none can be missing. And besides that, if not for Yosef, the human race would have perished during the seven years of famine that were destined to come.

On the other hand, if Reuven had put himself out more for the *mitzvah* of rescuing Yosef, if he would have carried Yosef on his

shoulders back to his father, he would have thereby saved the Jewish people from the whole exile in Egypt.

As for Boaz and Rus, it was all about the future birth of *David Hamelech* and *Mashiach,* who were destined to descend from Rus. However, Boaz and Rus did not give the matter enough importance at the time. They did not know that their actions would become part of the Torah and determine the future of the Jewish people for ever and ever. – In their minds, they were just acting as individuals, and didn't think it had significance beyond that.

But the deeds of Reuven and of Boaz had supreme significance, far beyond what they thought at the time. And according to the above-quoted *Midrash,* the same is true of us. The *Chumash* is already a closed book. And no matter what we accomplish, it will not be added to the *Tanach,* either. But this shouldn't make us think our *mitzvos* have no special significance, that they lack profound effect on the Jewish people and the future.

Every good deed of every Jew goes into building the future of the Jewish people. It is so significant that *Eliyahu Hanavi* and the *Mashiach* write it down themselves in a special book, because their mission depends on this *mitzvah.* And *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* comes and signs on it. - That's how important is every *mitzvah* we do.

Thus *Chazal* said: Be as careful about a light *mitzvah* as about a severe *mitzvah,* because you don't know what reward the *mitzvos* bear. Even if the *mitzvah* in front of us doesn't look very special to us, it looks like just another ordinary *mitzvah,* we should know that *Eliyahu Hanavi* and *Mashiach* are aware of its immense worth and value. They are just waiting and longing for this *mitzvah* to be done properly and fully in a spirit of joy – and *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will sign on it, to build the future of the Jewish people and bring the *Geulah Sheleimah* very soon.

Short And Sweet Story By Yoni Schwartz

Rabbi Yisroel Brog once shared an interesting story about his grandfather, **Rav Avigdor Miller, ZT"L**. He once visited his grandfather's shul in Flatbush on a Friday afternoon and saw a curious sight: all the windows and doors were wide open - something that never happened.

He walked inside and saw a woman sitting alone in the women's section. He approached her and asked, "Can I help you?" She responded, "Shh. I'm talking to the Rabbi."

Since the Rav lived upstairs and would not normally be in the Shul at this time, he thought she must have been mistaken or confused. He said, "I'm the Rabbi's grandson. If you need something, maybe I can help you."

Suddenly, he heard his grandfather call out, "Who's there?"

He walked around to the women's section and found the Rav sitting behind the mechitzah with a Mesilas Yesharim - opened to the first chapter - on his lap.

Puzzled, he asked his grandfather, "Are you learning Mesilas Yesharim with her?"

The Rav replied, "Ah, Mesilas Yesharim - that's for shemirah (protection)." Protection from the Yeitzer Hara.

The Rav was in his high eighties, sitting behind a mechitzah and unable to see the woman, yet he understood how strong the pull of the Yeitzer Hara can be and took every measure to guard himself from even the slightest possibility of improper influence.

Comment: In this week's parsha, Vayeishev, we learn about the stories of Er and Onen, Yehudah and Tamar, and Yosef and Potifar's wife. These stories, each about the negative consequences of boundaries being crossed, appear right before the Jewish people descend to Egypt.

Perhaps the Torah is teaching us that the first step to remaining free and building a healthy society is honoring the boundaries between men and women. By doing that we protect not only ourselves, but the dignity and holiness of everyone around us.



Regarding the time that **יוסף** was in prison, the **תורה** states (Bereishis 39:22) **וַיִּתֵּן שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר בְּיַד־יוֹסֵף אֵת כָּל־הָאֲסִירִם אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עֹשִׂים שָׁם הוּא הָיָה עֹשֶׂה** - "*The chief jailer put all the prisoners in Yosef's charge and and he was the one to carry out everything that was done there.*" (or, per Onkelos, "by his word" everything was done).

There are many explanations of this. **רש"י** elucidates that this is to be understood like the **תרגום**, that everything that was done there was based on **יוסף** 's instructions.

The **אור החיים הקדוש** notes that the Torah could have simply said Yosef gave orders (like "by his word they acted") if that was the full point. The Ohr HaChaim explains that the **תורה** is informing us that although **יוסף** was the leader, he did not act with dominance and withhold himself from doing the activities which the other prisoners did there, rather his hand was equal to theirs.

Perhaps the Torah wanted to hint that despite his authority, Yosef did not use his power to become arrogant or to shirk work. He continues that this shows **יוסף** 's nature, he was a good person and found favour in the eyes of both people and Hashem.

בס"ד

למודי משה

Focusing on Positivity

וְהַבּוֹר רֵק אֵין בּוֹ מָיִם -"*The pit was empty, it contained no water*" 37:24

When Reuven heard his brothers planning to murder Yosef and throw his body into a pit, he opposed the plan. He argued that they should not shed his blood directly, but should instead throw him alive into a pit.

The brothers accepted Reuven's suggestion, and when Yosef approached them, they stripped him of his special tunic and threw him into a pit.

Curiously, the Torah records that they threw him into a pit that was empty and contained no water. This is difficult to understand. If the pit was empty, isn't it obvious that it had no water?

Rashi explains that the apparent redundancy implies that although there was no water in the pit, there were poisonous serpents and scorpions inside.

The Oznayim L'Torah points out that the pit had a positive quality and a negative one. Its good point was that it was not full of water, which could cause Yosef to drown. On the other hand, it contained poisonous animals that could bite and kill him.

In describing the pit, the Torah explicitly mentions the positive feature while leaving it to us to infer the negative. If this is the case for inanimate objects, how much more so must we be careful when speaking about living people to emphasize only their praises.

"The greatest gift you could give someone is your time."



Burst of inspiration – Rabbi Jeremy Golker

The pasuk says **וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זְקֻנִים הוּא לוֹ** – *'And Yaakov loved Yoseph more than all his sons, because he was a son of his old age.'* (37:3)

What exactly does that mean? First of all, Binyamin was born after Yosef, so, surely he should be the child of Yaakov's old age? – In what respect was Yosef classified as the **בֶּן־זְקֻנִים** of Yaakov Avinu?

All the meforshim grapple with this question and give different answers.

The Baal Haturim says that it's referring to the Torah knowledge that Yaakov transmitted to Yosef with the word **זְקֻנִים** being used here as an acronym for the body of Torah that he taught him.

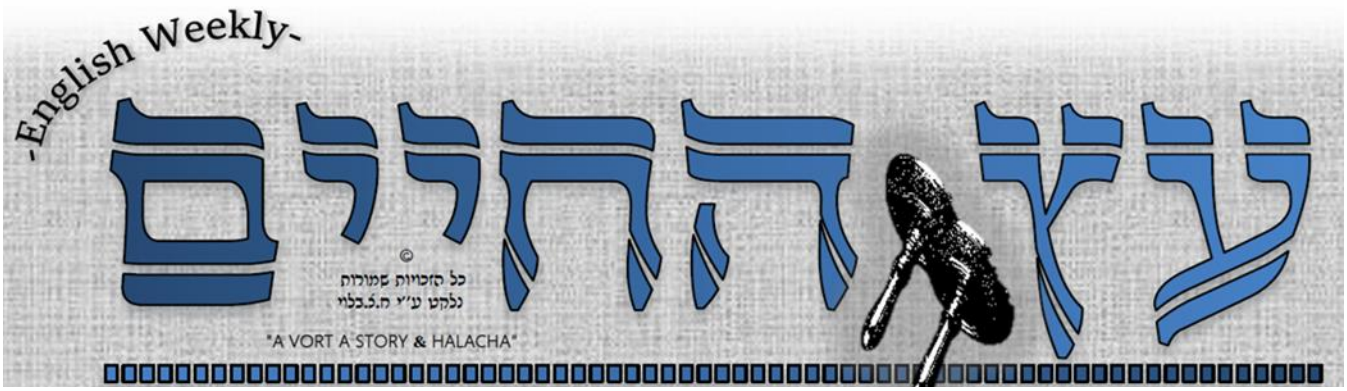
זקנים נוטריקון זרעים קדשים נשים ישועות* מועד – [*The gemarah in Shabbos 31a says **יְשׁוּעוֹת — זֶה סֵדֶר נְזִיקִין**, that **ישועות** is a reference to Nezikin.]

There is a concept called **זְמַ"ן נָקַ"ט** which is an acronym for **זרעים, מועד, נשים, נזיקין, קדשים, טהרות** which comprise **ששת סדרי המשנה**.

The problem is that the word **זְקֻנִים** only has 5 letters, so how can this word represent ALL the Torah that Yaakov transmitted to Yosef? – **טהרות** is missing!

Says **The Chidushei Harim** an amazing chidush: A father can teach his son the whole Torah, but when it comes to **טהרה** – purity, that has to be self-generated! Purity and Yiras Shamayim must ultimately come from the child's own efforts.

So yes, Yaakov Avinu taught Yosef the whole body of Torah – **זְקֻנִים** – Five of the six **סדרי משנה**, but **טהרות** had to come from Yosef himself! – Which clearly it did!



If Reuven would have known what the Torah would write about him that he saved Yosef, Chazal say that he would have brought Yosef on his shoulders back to his father.

The big question is, how would Reuven have had the power to do this against the consent of all his brothers?

The answer that I saw from **Rav Shraga Grossbard זצוק״ל**, is a big yesod. If Reuven would have been certain at the time that he was being the savior, as the Torah is testifying, Reuven would have had the power of adrenalin in every which way to fight against all his brothers physically and intellectually and he would have prevailed! This the power of *ratzon* and *hakara berurua* of what the emes is.

I was mekabel from my rabbbeim the same yesod when it comes to kiruv, kiruv could be very dangerous! If a person wants to go into *kiruv rechokim,* he himself must be rooted and anchored without any sfeikos in Yiddishkeit. He must be living with a *hakara berura* himself to be convincing to others about Yiddishkeit. If a person has even the smallest sfeikos, chas v'shalom, he can get pulled in the wrong direction Chas Vshalom

There is an expression in english that people say, "If there's a will there's a way", in lashon Hakodesh people say **אין הדבר עומד לפני הרצון**. It's famous that every human being has kochos within them to do acts that are normally beyond their level of strength.

The most common example is the story of the mother who lifted a car that a child was under. There are countless stories where people showed superhuman adrenalin. This concept applies not only to

physical strengths but also to intellectual strength. If one is convinced that they are 1 million percent right, they can intellectually fight against anyone who will argue on them. They receive intellectual adrenalin. But it is only shayach if they have zero sfeikos. - If Reuven would have known, he would have used this koach to bring Yosef back to his father.

Lemaisa, Reuven *did* try to save Yosef. What is the significance that Reuven *would have* carried Yosef to his father on his shoulders?

The lashon of the Medrash is that Reuven did not do the Mitzvah at the time b'lev shaleim. Had Reuven known that he was the savior, he would have done the mitzvah of saving Yosef with a full heart. Carrying Yosef on his shoulders signifies Reuven doing the Mitzvah with a full heart.

Many mitzvos that we do, we get kavod and recognition for them. However, there are other mitzvos that we do, that we get little recognition for. Reb Lamed Shin Mem Shlit"a told me the following incredible story:

There was a sefardi chacham who was niftar recently by the name of **Rav Eliyahu Cohen**. Rav Eliyahu Cohen was nifter at age 91 and served for many years as a Dayan in Bnei Brak. At the age of 70, Rav Eliyahu Cohen had a serious heart procedure and after the surgery, he could not be resuscitated. He was attached to all sorts of machines…. One day, the doctors heard a loud noise, and they found him on the floor still attached to the machines, but amazingly he was awake.

Rav Eliyahu Cohen had a story to tell. Rav Eliyahu had been to the heavenly court, and they told him that his time has come. Rav Eliyahu Cohen begged for more time on this world, claiming that he was deserving because he taught Torah…

They told him in heaven that he got a lot of kavod for it and therefore it wasn't a good enough reason to be granted more life in

the world. Rav Eliyahu Cohen argued that he and another Yid used to go around every week distributing matan b'seser… they said, "No. Your friend knew what you did and you felt chashuv, it is not enough to let you return." Rav Eliyahu Cohen said, "I davened netz for the last 6- years…" "No, it's not enough… It's true that all these Mitzvos and Ma'asim Tovim made a tremendous ra'ash in Shamayim but they will not allow you to go back.

The time was almost done, and Rav Eliyahu Cohen said, "WAIT! I have the zechus because of the following story. Every Friday I would leave home with a full hour to calmly go to shul and do hachanos…

One Friday I was on the way to shul and I passed a home where I heard unusual shouting and yelling and screaming. I stopped in my tracks and made my way up the stairs of the building. I softly knocked on the door and I saw a horror scene. The house was completely on wheels and there were no parents there.

I asked the children, "Is everything okay? It's an hour to Shabbos!" They said that their parents got into an argument and the mother ran out and the father went out after her to try and be mefayes her and they said they would come back but lemaysa the house is chaos.

Rav Eliyahu Cohen said, "I took of my jacket and rolled up my sleeves and began to scrub dishes and clean. When they saw a choshuva looking Yid helping out in the house, so they also got their act together and the house was "magically" getting put back together.

After about 45 minutes I saw the house was under control and headed toward the front door to leave, when there was a knock on the door! I peeked in the peep hole and saw the parents. When they opened the door, they were in shock at the "surprise" that the children did for them, and I hid behind the door. When they came in, they did not see me and as soon as they made a turn into the dining room, I ran out the front door never to be seen again. - This I did belev Shalom and got zero kavod for it.

In shamayim they agreed that for this they will give more time… and that is when I woke up." - Rav Eliyahu Cohen lived for another 21 years after that story!

The limud from the story is that of course, many mitzvos we have no choice but to get recognition and kavod for them. However, there are time that we put in a lot of effort into a certain mitvah and we get no "Thank You's" or kavod. If that happens, hold onto that Mitzvah and cherish it because you never know what mitzvos can do for you one day down the line. If someone does thank you don't say to them, "No! No! please don't thank me you are ruining my mitzvah!" That is not the way to go about it. The point is, however, that when you do have that Mitzvah that you feel that you did so much and got "no recognition, in Shamayim you got big time recognition. "If only Reuven would have known…" - We don't want to kick ourselves and say, "If only we would have known…"

There is a similar story that we have brought in the past with Harav Yechiel Mechel Stern, who has published many useful seforim. I was always so mesmerized how each one of his seforim are so practical and well used in the world.

Rav Yechiel Mechel Stern once got sick with a dangerous illness. One day his wife walked into the hospital and noticed that his face had a different look. Rav Stern told his wife the following, "I had a chaloim, [dream] where I saw a fellow who I used to visit 40 years ago. He came to me and told me that since I did something for him 40 years ago, I would be fully cured from my illness."

What happened? 40 years earlier, Rav Yechiel Mechel visited a helpless man whose family didn't care for him properly. One time, the fellow told Rav Stern that he needed a procedure done, but his family did not want to pay for it. During that time, Rav Yechiel Mechel had just published a sefer. After receiving his paycheck, he immediately went to the hospital and paid for the man's surgery.

A Vort from R' Yoel R.

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לֶךְ־נָא רְאֵה אֶת־שְׁלוֹם אַחֶיךָ וְאֶת־שְׁלוֹם הַצֹּאן - "He [Yisrael] said to him, go please, see after the wellbeing of your brothers and the welfare of the sheep…" 37:14

Why does the Torah use the word shalom for the brothers and repeat the word shalom for the flock? Why didn't the Torah simply say **שלום אחיך והצאן** – the welfare of your brothers and [their] sheep?

Yaakov is teaching us that the matter of shalom regarding sheep is an entirely different one from shalom among brothers. What is the meaning of shalom concerning sheep? - As long as my sheep have food and drink, even though your sheep have nothing at all, I am perfectly content and satisfied.

Yaakov was conveying an eternal message: The concept of shalom concerning sheep is abhorrent and entirely unacceptable when it concerns your brothers, Klal Yisrael. If I and my family have proper provisions, but you, my brother, do not have food and drink, I cannot possibly be at total peace with myself. Only when we are in complete harmony with our brothers and are consumed with their total wellbeing have we achieved the definition on shalom achecha - true peace among Klal Yisrael.

וַיִּמְצָאֵהוּ אִישׁ וְהִנֵּה תֹעֶה בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּשְׁאָלֵהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ - ***"A man found him (Yoseph) wandering in the field. The man asked him: what are you seeking?" (37:15)***

If we are ever wandering in life, bewildered and unsure of our way - we have to clarify our desires and ask: what is it that I am truly seeking?" ~ R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk.

Rabbi Shlomo Farhi - A Hairsbreadth



I want to share with you a *chiddush* that absolutely stunned me. The Pasuk tells us about Yosef: "*Vehu na'ar*—He was a youth." Rashi immediately asks the obvious question: Why is he being called a *na'ar*, an immature lad, if he is already seventeen years old?

Rashi answers: Because Yosef was engaged in "*ma'aseh na'arut*," youthful behavior. What exactly does that mean? Rashi specifies: "*Hayah mesalsel b'sa'aro*—He was curling his hair."

Yosef HaTzaddik, the future viceroy of Egypt, the visionary dreamer, the man destined to sustain the entire world during famine was fidgeting with his hair like a teenager in front of a mirror. He was fixing it, arranging it, playing with the curls. And from the Torah's perspective, this was unbecoming for someone on his spiritual level.

Rashi's explanation always bothered me. The Torah is making a point that Yosef is acting immaturely, but the very next Pasuk tells us Yosef is receiving prophetic dreams. How do these two things coexist? Is Hashem really appearing to someone who's sitting there fussing over his hairstyle? The image is almost comical. How do you go from a hair salon moment to *nevuah*?

This contradiction troubled me for years, until I saw an insight from **Reb Simcha Bunim of Peshischa** that reframed the entire issue.

Reb Simcha Bunim points to the laws of the *Parah Adumah*. The Torah states that the red heifer must be *tamim*—perfect, without blemish. Even the smallest physical defect invalidates it. But

interestingly, hair is treated differently. A single black hair does not invalidate the Parah Adumah. Two black hairs, however, do.

Why this discrepancy?

Reb Simcha Bunim explains. When it comes to ordinary wholeness—completeness for the average person—Hashem does not demand absolute perfection. A person does their best; Hashem calls them righteous.

But regarding *tzaddikim*, Chazal teach: "Hakadosh Baruch Hu is meticulous with tzaddikim *kechut ha'sa'arah*, even to the width of a single hair" (*Yevamos* 121b). For the average Jew, one stray spiritual imperfection is not disqualifying. For a tzaddik striving for absolute purity, even a "hair," the smallest detail, matters.

With this, Reb Simcha Bunim says something beautiful. Yosef was not curling his hair out of vanity. He was examining himself with relentless precision, striving for the level of a tzaddik whose perfection is measured "like a strand of hair."

"*Mesalsel b'sa'aro*" is symbolic. He was scrutinizing the tiny "hairs," the small subtleties of spiritual refinement. Yosef wasn't being childish; he was aiming for the exacting spiritual standard appropriate to his destiny.

If Yosef represents flawless purity, then we understand on a deeper level what it means that he was "*mesalsel b'sa'aro*." Yes, physically he might have ensured not a single hair was out of place; but spiritually, he was striving for the level where even one hair's breadth—*kechut ha'sa'arah*—matters.

But if that is so, the question remains. If Yosef's obsession was not vanity but spiritual aspiration, then why does the Torah call him "*na'ar*," a young, immature boy?

For Yosef, the pursuit of perfection would indeed become his life's mission. But sometimes, the right goal pursued at the wrong moment becomes the wrong goal entirely. Yosef, at seventeen, was still

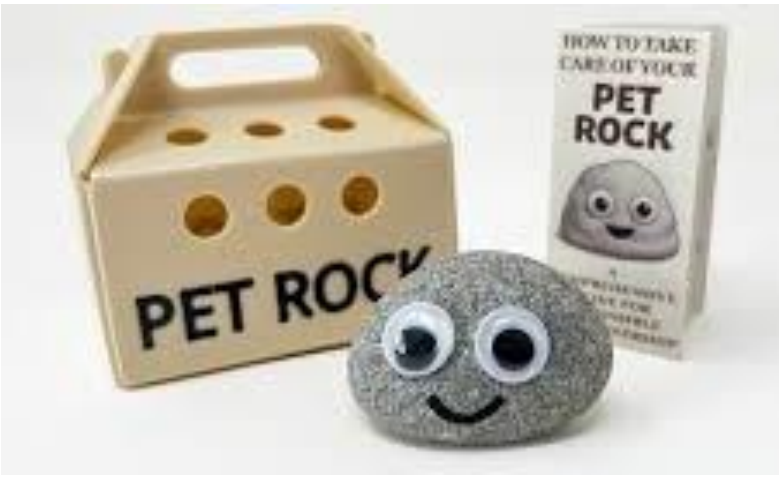
forming his identity. To demand perfection of himself at that age, and more critically, to expect it of others, was the hubris of youth.

Look at how he interacts with his brothers. He shares dreams of dominance which imply, rather straightforwardly, "I will rule over you." And what does he expect? That they respond: "Oh, that's wonderful, Yosef! We're thrilled! Everyone in favor, say aye!"

Did he really imagine they would swallow that? Why not? Because *vehu na'ar*. In his chase for perfection, Yosef was still immature. He did not yet understand that this is not the conversation you have at seventeen. Maybe at seventy. Maybe as an elder, seasoned, respected leader. But not now.

And here lies the great danger of the perfectionist. Be a perfectionist for yourself if you wish, but the moment you demand your perfection from others, you burn everyone around you. The only reason some perfectionists' homes are not military boot camps is because they married someone who brings joy into the home. But they often fail to recognize that gift. Yosef held his brothers to a standard they were not ready for, and that, the Torah tells us, was *ma'aseh na'arut.*

Yosef was trying to chart a path toward perfection for his brothers. That was noble. But expecting them to already be on that path—that was immature.



A parent asks a child, "Why didn't you think this through?" Because he's a child. It says so right in his job description. His job is to drive you crazy. A rebbe demands absolute silence for five hours. That's not *chinuch;* that's a pet rock.

A synagogue wants more people to come. Wonderful! But then they complain the newcomers aren't on the same religious level. Children make noise, someone sits in the wrong seat—and suddenly, the community that prayed for growth resents the very growth it asked for. I often ask people: If your grandfather had been told, "Don't come to shul until you keep Shabbos perfectly," Would you be here today?

So why deny others the journey you yourself were allowed to walk? Chart a path for them? Absolutely. Expect them to already be advanced on that path? That is *ma'aseh na'arut.*

Someone once told me, "Rabbi, but this man is older. He should know better." No. Jewish maturity isn't measured by chronological age. You may be 20, but born into a home steeped in Torah for 50 years. You're not 20; you're spiritually 70. Another person, by contrast, may be 60, but Jewishly, he is one year old. So who is truly the *na'ar*?

May Hashem bless us to chart a path toward spiritual perfection with patience, compassion and realism. And may we encourage others to grow at a pace that is healthy, gentle and respectful.

Rabbi Shlom Hoff Shlita

I'd just like to mention a very important Yesod that we learn from the Rashi at beginning of the parasha. It states, **וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מְגוּרֵי אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן** - Yaakov dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. And the next pasuk says **אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף**

The parasha begins with Yaakov dwelling in the land of Canaan, followed immediately by the introduction of Yosef, Yaakov's son. Rashi questions this juxtaposition, suggesting a deeper meaning: Yaakov desired to live in peace, but the bitter story of Yosef's struggles disrupted this peace.

The tzadikim aspire to live peacefully in this world as well as to attain goodness in the next world. - **צַדִּיקִים מְבַקְּשִׁים לֵישֵׁב בְּשַׁלְוָה, אָמַר**

הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לֹא דַּיָּן לַצַּדִּיקִים מַה שֶּׁמְּתֻקָּן לָהֶם לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, אֶלָּא שֶׁמְּבַקְּשִׁים לֵישֵׁב בְּשַׁלְוָה בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה - *'The righteous seek to dwell in tranquility. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, "What is prepared for the righteous in the world to come is not sufficient for them, but they seek [also] to dwell in tranquility in this world?!"*

The question is why not? Why can't they have everything?



The answer is that we want Tzadikim to have the fullness of Toivah. We want them to have everything. However, they cannot achieve both simultaneously without challenges - without working for it and earning it. This tension emphasizes the spiritual principle that peace and ease are not simply granted but are earned through struggle. - Struggles are not obstacles but platforms for growth, refinement, and eventual elevation.

That's what Rashi is saying. Because we want Olam HaBoh, the Olam HaZeh has to be the place where they earn it. The platform for their greatness is through the struggles of Olam HaZeh. We don't ask for the struggles, we want Rabbono Shel Olam to take them away from us. But when Hashem puts a person in a situation, everybody has their situations. It's the situations for which he is zoche to greatness.

A chavar of mine, a Yedid, went to his and my Rebbe, **Rabbi Osher Arieli** [born 1957 a globally renowned senior lecturer at the **Mir Yeshiva]**. I think it was Sukkos bein hazmanim. He went with one of his children, and he asked Reb Osher for a bracha.

He asked him for a bracha for this child, who has his struggles, has his difficulties, that his learning should go easier for him, to take away any struggles.

Rav Osher smiled and turned around to this child. And he said to him, 'If you have your difficulties, that can only be good. It's for your greatness. Difficulties are a sign of potential greatness.

He suggested that perhaps a grandfather in heaven prayed for the child to face challenges to become truly distinguished, underscoring the idea that challenges are divine opportunities for greatness.

Yosef's imprisonment symbolizes a profound test (nisoyan). He did not despair but accepted his situation as the platform for his eventual greatness. This teaches us that acceptance and connection to one's circumstances can transform hardship into spiritual advancement.

Chanukah is directly connected to us, symbolizing light amid darkness. Darkness cannot be moved or eliminated, unlike physical obstacles. Instead, darkness disappears where there is light.

The key to overcoming darkness is not struggling against it directly but connecting to sources of true spiritual light. This light eradicates darkness by its presence.

Chanukah teaches us to focus on igniting and nurturing light within ourselves and our surroundings. By fostering this light, we find guidance and hope even in difficult times.

The narrative of Yosef in Parasha Vayeshev teaches that struggles are essential for achieving greatness, while Chanukah exemplifies how light—both literal and metaphorical—is the ultimate force against darkness.

The message is clear: embracing challenges and focusing on spiritual illumination leads to profound personal and communal transformation.

UKforTORAH@gmail
Authentic Hashkofa from Gedolei Yisroel

Insights Into The Torah Perspective From Great Personalities Of The Last Generation & Beyond

20 Kislev: Rav Yitzchok Hutner

Rav Yitzchok Hutner, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin and author of *Pachad Yitzchok*, was one of the leading Torah figures in America. In his profound maamarim he revealed deep dimensions of Torah, presenting a distinctive *derech hamachshavah*—a Torah approach to thinking that could illuminate both Torah study and the events of the world.

Although he rarely addressed contemporary issues directly, his teachings provided a framework for understanding them. On several occasions, however, he spoke explicitly on matters of hashkafah.

The Effect of Zionism

Rav Yisroel Elya Weintraub once related that he possessed a rare Kabbalistic manuscript which Rav Hutner eagerly examined. After studying it, Rav Hutner remarked that such a work could only have been written before the first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897. From that point onward, he said, the spiritual impurity of the world increased to the extent that such profound Torah could no longer easily emerge.

The Six-Day War

A letter from Rav Aharon Feldman recounts that Rav Hutner feared the Jewish people might conclude after the success of the Six-Day War that Zionist ideology had been vindicated. Rav Hutner strongly rejected this idea, describing Zionist ideology as fundamentally incompatible with Torah.

Zionism and the Destruction of European Jewry

In a discourse to communal leaders, Rav Hutner warned against historical narratives shaped by political interests. He argued that public discussion often ignored the role Zionist leaders played in intensifying tensions in the Middle East, particularly through the reaction of the Mufti of Jerusalem, whose hostility contributed to encouraging Nazi policies of extermination.

The Golus of the Torah

In a maamar delivered on Chol Hamoed Pesach 5730, Rav Hutner explained the teaching of the Chazon Ish that the modern era represents the final tribulations before Moshiach.

Drawing on the teaching of the Vilna Gaon, he described a "golus within a golus": even while the Jewish people live in exile among the nations, the Torah itself can enter exile when its authority is rejected. When Jewish society replaces the laws of the Torah with an alternative legal system, the Torah's own **משפטים** are placed in exile. Rav Hutner stated that anyone who does not feel the pain of this "golus of the Torah" cannot truly be called a talmid chochom.

Modern Psychology and Bechirah

Rav Hutner also addressed modern psychological theories that attribute human behavior entirely to external influences. Such views, he argued, undermine the Torah concept of *bechirah.*

In *Pachad Yitzchok* he explains that before the Geulah there will be ideological pressures that subtly weaken belief in personal responsibility. By portraying human beings as products of conditioning rather than moral choice, such ideas diminish the dignity and uniqueness of the human being created in the image of Hashem.

These teachings were later cited by Rav Shlomo Wolbe in discussions of contemporary psychology and Torah thought.



We are all familiar with the story in this week's *parsha* of how *Tamar* was sentenced to the death penalty rather than publicly humiliating *Yehuda*. To save her own life, she said, **לאיש אשר אלה לו אנכי הרה**. By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant. She produced the collateral that *Yehuda* gave her and gave him the choice to confess.

Rashi learns from here that it's better for a person to jump into a fiery furnace than publicly humiliate someone else.

The *Sefer Birchas Avraham* writes, based on the **תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל**, that initially, *Tamar* was unable to locate these three articles that she was given as collateral. She then turned her eyes towards heaven and begged *Hashem* for mercy to show her where they were. That is when *Hashem* opened her eyes and enabled her to find the items that eventually saved her life.

But even after that, had *Yehuda* not confessed, *Tamar* was prepared to die. If this is the length a person is supposed to go not to shame someone else, it shows how severe the *Torah* considers causing embarrassment. And so if someone stumbled and humiliated another individual, that person should do everything in his power to obtain forgiveness, even if it means subduing his pride and overlooking what the other person may have done to him.

The story takes place here in Israel with two neighbors, two women that lived on the same floor of an apartment building.

One day, the two women, two neighbors, got into a dispute, and one of them, *Leah*, completely humiliated the other one, *Esther*. *Esther*,

that had been shamed, chose to stay quiet but harbored negative feelings towards *Leah* from that day onwards. For the next twenty years, these neighbors did not speak to each other. They saw each other in the grocery store, in the street, and even in the elevator, but they avoided making eye contact.

In 2001, *Leah* celebrated the engagement of her son. She was full of *hakaras hatov* to *Hashem* and wanted to do something to show the appreciation she had. So she decided to make peace with her neighbor. One evening, *Leah* worked up the courage to knock on *Esther*'s door.

Esther was shocked to open the door and see *Leah* standing there. "How are you?" *Leah* said with a big smile on her face, to which *Esther* replied, *"Baruch Hashem."* Then *Leah* said, "I came to invite you to my son's wedding, which will be taking place *be'ezrat Hashem* in a few months." *Esther* invited *Leah* to come inside and sit down, and they began to talk as if they had never been in any dispute at all. "By the way, what's the exact date of the wedding?" *Esther* asked. "May 24th," *Leah* replied.

"*Oy*, I feel bad," *Esther* said, "but I have a procedure scheduled, and I'll have to be in the hospital that day and the next, so I won't be able to make it. I'm sorry." A few minutes later, the women hugged each other and *Leah* left. That evening, *Leah* asked her son if he would mind changing the date of the wedding, and she explained why making it earlier was not possible and the *chassan* really didn't want to push it off. But after his mother told him what a *zchus* it would be if they changed the date to accommodate that neighbor, he agreed.

He discussed it with his in-laws, and they changed the date to two days later. After everything was finalized, *Leah* went back to *Esther*'s apartment and once again invited her to the wedding on the new date. The neighbor couldn't believe they changed the date of the wedding just for her. Both women were practically in tears.



The long twenty-year dispute was finally over. *Rabbosai*, on the night of May 24th, 2001, a major tragedy took place in the wedding hall in *Talpiot* when a large portion of the floor collapsed, many people falling two stories, resulting in several casualties. That was the hall where the wedding had scheduled to take place on that very night. But because *Leah* was so steadfast in wanting forgiveness for humiliating her neighbor, they were saved from being a part of that tragedy.

People's feelings can be highly sensitive, and we need to do everything in our power to prevent someone from being shamed. If *chas v'shalom* we caused someone embarrassment, we must do all we can to seek their forgiveness, just as *Leah* did even twenty years later, humbling ourselves for the sake of peace. And healing is very precious in *Hashem's* eyes. And when we overcome our inclinations and do the will of *Hashem*, we will surely be rewarded greatly for it.

Wishing you all an amazing *Shabbos*.

"Every descent that Yosef experienced became the beginning of a greater ascent. 'וירד יוסף מצרימה' was not merely a fall—it was the הדרך by which Hashem prepared him to save an entire world. A Jew must know that what appears to be a ירידה is often the beginning of the greatest עליה." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.



יוסף הצדיק, if we trace back how **יוסף** was saved out of the dungeon and the prison that he was there for so many years, it's because of these four words: **מדוע פניכם רעים היום**. Not because **שר המשקים** remembered him, but because he asked them: "Why are you so sad and depressed?" He took the opportunity to ask them.

The power of words that ultimately led to his salvation. He cared enough to ask: "Who are they already?" **שר האופים, שר המשקים**.

Not **חשוב** people. But instead, he took the time and care to actually approach someone. That ultimately was the reason for his **ישועה**. That is the power of speaking.

Sometimes, however, it's the power of not speaking that also could bring a **ישועה**. There were two **משגיחים** on one of their trips to check out a factory. Would always say to the guard: "Good morning" when they came, and "Good evening" and "Good night" when they left. At some point, one of the **רבנים** left and asked the guard: "Did you see my friend? Did he leave already?" And the guard said: "I know for sure he did not leave because both of you say good morning and both of you say good evening, and you're saying it, but your friend is not here.

So he must have not left yet." So where is he? They searched everywhere and they finally found him in the freezer near death. Only because he said good morning in the morning, but something was missing in the afternoon evening. The good evening was missing. The

power of words in the morning and the power of omitting words in the evening actually saved his life.

Most people like speaking. As a matter of fact, most people like hearing themselves speak. But the art of listening or not speaking is something that's usually very seldomly overlooked. Silence is golden.

Golden? Golden. Something which is precious. Something which is precious has to be guarded. Our mouths have two barriers: one is the lips and the second is the teeth.

Like the **פסוק** says: **נצור לשונך מרע**. Guard your tongue from speaking evil. That means it's super precious not to speak unless it's one hundred percent.

A daughter was once holding two apples, one in the right hand, one in the left hand. The mother said: "Can I have an apple, please?" All of a sudden she bent down and she took a bite from each of those two apples.

The mother was absolutely exasperated. "What? I asked you for one and you didn't give me either one."

"Here ma, this one is sweeter."

Can you imagine if the mother impulsively would have heard herself speak and given her daughter that message that she thought was the right one? But instead she kept quiet. And instead of having a negative effect, it was turned into a most cherished event.

The **רמב"ן** in **אגרת הרמב"ן** says: **חשוב הדיבור לפני שתוציאנו מפיך**. Some learn that it means purify your thoughts before you actually speak. That's true. But maybe we have to discipline ourselves that not only should we speak when we have to, but maybe it's better not to speak at all when the moment is needed.

נצור לשונך מרע, because remember, words matter.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

In the year 1798, the Russian government, acting on a malicious and false tip from informants, arrested the great **Ba'al HaTanyah, R' Shneur Zalman of Liadi ZT"L**, founder of Chasidei Chabad, and placed him in a prison cell in the city of St. Petersburg. The story of his miraculous release from harm came about, according to one of the many legends, when the ruler of Russia, Czar Pavel I, felt an urge to meet the great Tzaddik in person and find out what, in truth, was he and his Chassidim all about. The Czar dressed himself in peasant's clothing, so that the Rebbe should not recognize him, and descended into the dungeons of the prison, under the pretense of bringing him his dinner.

As soon as the Czar walked in, the Ba'al HaTanyah stood up and immediately recited the Brachah made when one is in the presence of royalty - **"ברוך שחלק מכבודו לבשר ודם"** - Blessed is he that allots from his honor to flesh and blood. When the Czar was informed as to the meaning of this blessing, he was startled, but then flushed angrily. "From where do you have the audacity to even think that the great and mighty Czar of Russia would ever come to lower himself to visit a Jew in prison? Your words alone are treasonous and deserving of severe punishment"!

"Do not be angry," said the Rebbe in a soothing manner, "For even G-d, the king of all kings, entered a lowly jailhouse when he felt it was absolutely necessary."

The Czar sneered, "What are you talking about? Some more of your Hasidic fables and wive's tales! I've heard all about them." The Czar was obviously influenced by the negative reaction toward Chassidim in general, and the Admor of Chabad, in particular.

"If his majesty will permit me," explained the Rebbe, "The Bible says this very thing explicitly. About Yosef Hatzaddik it is written **"ויתנהו אל בית הסהר מקום אשר אסירי המלך אסורים"** – He was put in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were imprisoned. And

right afterwards it says "**ויהי ה' את יוסף**" – And G-d was with Yosef. Obviously, G-d, the greatest of kings, did not feel it beneath his dignity to visit Yosef in jail."

The Czar was so impressed with this answer that his atitude towards the Rebbe changed, and on **י"ט כסלו**, the Ba'al HaTanyah was released. Till today, Lubavitcher Chassidim celebrate a Yom Tov on this very day.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

In the official town records of the city of Lissa, the following story is recounted. Many years after the **Rov of Lissa, R' Yaakov Loberboim ZT"L**, author of the Nesivos Hamishpat, had passed away, his granddaughter became engaged to a fine young man. The necessary preparations were underway and the bride and her mother, the daughter of the Nesivos, needed to travel to an adjoining city to buy clothing and other items that would be necessary for the wedding.

Taking all the money that they had, the bride's mother arranged for a wagon, driven by a gentile driver, to take them to the nearby city. However, this wagon driver was far from honest. Sensing the vulnerability of his passengers, and after further inquiry he learned that the bride's mother was indeed a widow with no husband to protect her, he drove them off the main road to his own empty home. There he relieved them of all their cash and tied them up in a back room.

In a celebratory mood, he called some of his boorish friends and they drank and ate heartily while the terrified captives prayed, cried and awaited their fate in the next room.

Suddenly, without warning, the door burst open and in stormed a German officer. He screamed and threatened to shoot all the people sitting around the table.

In the midst of the chaos, the wagon driver and his friends managed to run away and the officer, as if knowing exactly where to go, entered the back room. Wordlessly, he freed the captives, gave them back their money, which still sat on the table where the driver had put it, and drove them to a local inn from where they arranged for passage home.

That night, the mother of the bride had a dream in which her father, the Nesivos, came to her. He told her that he was informed in his Heavenly abode, that his daughter and granddaughter were in grave danger. He tried to daven and ask for mercy on their behalf but he was refused on the grounds that they had transgressed on the terrible sin of יחוד - Seclusion, with a man - a non-Jew in this case - and they were to be punished.

R' Yaakov related how he rose even higher through the Heavenly echelons, begging and pleading for mercy on their behalf. "In the merit of my Torah and my sefer Nesivos Hamishpat, which is universally acclaimed and studied," he argued, "Please allow them to live." Thankfully, his prayers were answered in a miraculous way, as a German officer found himself in a rural Polish town, and was able to effect their rescue.

"You have no idea the importance of this mitzvah," R' Yaakov concluded in his daughter's dream. "Always make sure to be careful and stringent when it comes to secluding oneself with another man. It can save your life!"

R' Yisroel Salanter ZT"L would say:

"One who works on behalf of the community must have three qualities: He must not tire. He must not become angry and he must not expect to have the work completed!"