



To: parsha@parsha.net
From: cshulman@gmail.com

BS"D

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYIGASH - 5780

parsha@yahoo.com / www.parsha.net - in our 25th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoo.com. Please also copy me at cshulman@gmail.com. A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net>. It is also fully searchable.

Sponsored in memory of
Chaim Yissachar z"l ben Yechiel Zaydel Dov

Sponsored by
Miryam & Jonathan Fiskus
for a full and speedy recovery for
Simcha Leib ben Tziporah

Dedicated for a refuah shleimah to **Yisrael Yaakov ben Rut**

To sponsor a parsha sheet contact cshulman@parsha.net
(proceeds to tzedaka)

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com
from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com
subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein
Weekly Parsha :: VAYIGASH
Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

The dramatic moment that Joseph has dreamed of for decades has finally arrived. His dreams are to be fulfilled and he has achieved the ultimate triumph over his brothers who doubted him and his integrity. And at that moment, when he is at the zenith of his power, he breaks down and weeps. He is unable to control his emotions and his care for his brothers and his father and for the future generations of the Jewish people overwhelms him. In a flash of reality, he realizes the consequences of his behavior and he pulls back from the abyss that would have destroyed the family of Jacob and prevented the creation of the people of Israel.

The rabbis of the Mishnah long ago told us that wisdom lies with those who can see the consequences of their actions and behavior in advance. Joseph clearly sees that he has pulled the rope as tightly as he is able to, and that any further action on his part would have dire consequences for the very future that he himself envisions.

If there will be a Jewish people and if he reconciles with his brothers, he knows that he will be remembered eternally as the righteous Joseph. If he exacts full revenge, justified as that may be in his mind, he knows that he dooms himself to being, at most, a footnote in the story of human civilization. His behavior towards his brothers, Judah and Benjamin, carries with it not only righteousness and altruism but a certain degree of self-

interest and self-preservation. He realizes that only with greater unity of the tribes of Israel will he be remembered and truly justified.

When Joseph was tempted by the wife of Potiphar, we are told by midrash that he was able to overcome that desire because he realized that by succumbing, he would become an outcast amongst the tribes of Israel. And, he would not be represented on the holy breastplate of the high priest of Israel. The rabbis warn us often that no matter what temptation or justification we may have for wanting to separate ourselves from the other tribes of Israel – many of whom we feel have failings or shortcomings or perhaps have even behaved incorrectly towards us – always brings sadness and personal disaster.

It is very tempting to go it alone and to not be burdened by the weaknesses and foibles of others. After all, we are aware that everyone but us is out of step! Nevertheless, we are constantly warned not to fall into that trap. Joseph realizes that he cannot go it alone despite his temporal power and personal righteousness. And, in the moment of his greatest triumph, he seeks to unite and reconcile and create the necessary vehicle that will make the Jewish people eternal and eventually triumphant morally and physically.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

from: JewishPress.com <JewishExpress@webads.co.il>
date: Dec 27, 2019, 6:26 AM

The Future of the Past (Vayigash 5780)

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Britain's Former Chief Rabbi

In our parsha, Joseph does something unusual. Revealing himself to his brothers, fully aware that they will suffer shock and then guilt as they remember how it is that their brother is in Egypt, he reinterprets the past: "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no ploughing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt." (Gen. 45:4-8)

This is markedly different to the way Joseph described these events when he spoke to the chief butler in prison: "I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon" (Gen. 40:15). Then, it was a story of kidnap and injustice. Now, it has become a story of Divine providence and redemption. It wasn't you, he tells his brothers, it was God. You didn't realise that you were part of a larger plan. And though it began badly, it has ended well. So don't hold yourselves guilty. And do not be afraid of any desire for revenge on my part. There is no such desire. I realise that we were all being directed by a force greater than ourselves, greater than we can fully understand. Joseph does the same in next week's parsha, when the brothers fear that he may take revenge after their father's death: "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. (Gen. 50:19-20)

Joseph is helping his brothers to revise their memory of the past. In doing so, he is challenging one of our most fundamental assumptions about time, namely its asymmetry. We can change the future. We cannot change the past. But is that entirely true? What Joseph is doing for his brothers is what he has clearly done for himself: events have changed his and their understanding of the past.

Which means: we cannot fully understand what is happening to us now until we can look back in retrospect and see how it all turned out. This means that we are not held captive by the past. Things can happen to us, not as

dramatically as to Joseph perhaps, but nonetheless benign, that can completely alter the way we look back and remember. By action in the future, we can redeem the past.

A classic example of this is the late Steve Jobs' 2005 commencement address at Stanford University, that has now been seen by more than 40 million people on YouTube. In it, he described three crushing blows in his life: dropping out of college, being fired by the company he had founded – Apple, and being diagnosed with cancer. Each one, he said, had led to something important and positive.

Dropping out of college, Jobs was able to audit any course he wished. He attended one on calligraphy and this inspired him to build into his first computers a range of proportionally spaced fonts, thus giving computer scripts an elegance that had previously been available only to professional printers. Getting fired from Apple led him to start a new computer company, NeXT, that developed capabilities he would eventually bring back to Apple, as well as acquiring Pixar Animation, the most creative of computer-animated film studios. The diagnosis of cancer led him to a new focus in life. It made him realise: "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."

Jobs' ability to construct these stories – what he called "connecting the dots" – was surely not unrelated to his ability to survive the blows he suffered in life.[1] Few could have recovered from the setback of being dismissed from his own company, and fewer still could have achieved the transformation he did at Apple when he returned, creating the iPod, iPhone and iPad. He did not believe in tragic inevitabilities. Though he would not have put it in these terms, he knew that by action in the future we can redeem the past.

Professor Mordechai Rotenberg of the Hebrew University has argued that this kind of technique, of reinterpreting the past, could be used as a therapeutic technique in rehabilitating patients suffering from a crippling sense of guilt.[2] If we cannot change the past, then it is always there holding us back like a ball and chain around our legs. We cannot change the past, but we can reinterpret it by integrating it into a new and larger narrative. That is what Joseph was doing, and having used this technique to help him survive a personal life of unparalleled ups and downs, he now uses it to help his brothers live without overpowering guilt.

We find this in Judaism throughout its history. The Prophets reinterpreted biblical narrative for their day. Then came Midrash, which reinterpreted it more radically because the situation of Jews had changed more radically. Then came the great biblical commentators and mystics and philosophers. There has hardly been a generation in all of Jewish history when Jews did not reinterpret their texts in the light of the present tense experience. We are the people who tell stories, and then retell them repeatedly, each time with a slightly different emphasis, establishing a connection between then and now, rereading the past in the light of the present as best we can.

It is by telling stories that we make sense of our lives and the life of our people. And it is by allowing the present to reshape our understanding of the past that we redeem history and make it live as a positive force in our lives. I gave one example when I spoke at the Kinus Shluchim of Chabad, the great gathering of some 5000 Chabad emissaries from around the world. I told them of how, in 1978, I visited the Lubavitcher Rebbe to ask his advice on which career I should follow. I did the usual thing: I sent him a note with the options, A, B or C, expecting him to indicate which one I should follow. The options were to become a barrister, or an economist, or an academic philosopher, either as a fellow of my college in Cambridge or as a professor somewhere else.

The Rebbe read out the list and said "No" to all three. My mission, he said, was to train Rabbis at Jews' College (now the London School of Jewish Studies) and to become a congregational Rabbi myself. So, overnight, I found myself saying goodbye to all my aspirations, to everything for which I had been trained.

The strange thing is that ultimately I fulfilled all those ambitions despite walking in the opposite direction. I became an honorary barrister (Bencher)

of the Inner Temple and delivered a law lecture in front of 600 barristers and the Lord Chief Justice. I delivered Britain's two leading economics lectures, the Mais Lecture and the Hayek Lecture at the Institute of Economic Affairs. I became a fellow of my Cambridge college and a philosophy professor at several universities. I identified with the biblical Joseph because, so often, what I had dreamed of came to be at the very moment that I had given up hope. Only in retrospect did I discover that the Rebbe was not telling me to give up my career plans. He was simply charting a different route and a more beneficial one.

I believe that the way we write the next chapter in our lives affects all the others that have come before. By action in the future, we can redeem much of the pain of the past.

Shabbat Shalom

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com
from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>
to: weeklydt@torahweb2.org
subject: TorahWeb
www.torahweb.org/thisweek.html

torahweb.org

Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg

The Lasting Impact of a Religious Experience (Yaakov Avinu, Eretz Yisroel, and the Siyum Hashas)

In Parshas Vayigash, as Yaakov Avinu is preparing to travel down to Mitzrayim, Hashem appears to him "b'maros ha'lailah - in the visions of the night" (46:2). Similarly, when Yaakov begins his journey to Lavan in Parshas Vayeitzei, Hashem appears to him in a dream (28:12). This image of receiving prophecy at night through the medium of a dream is something unique to Yaakov Avinu. The Torah never mentions an instance when Hashem spoke with Avraham or Yitzchak in a dream. Why is Yaakov the only one of the Avos to receive prophecy in a dream of the night?

The Meshech Chochma explains that Hashem appears to Yaakov in a dream when he is preparing to leave Eretz Yisrael to allude to the fact that the Shechina can appear to a navi even in the darkness of golus, but only if he already saw prophecy in Eretz Yisrael (see Moed Katan 25a). Hashem was reassuring Yaakov that He will still appear to him even in Mitzrayim because he had already received prophecy in Eretz Yisrael. Hashem shares this message specifically with Yaakov Avinu because he is the first of the Avos who leaves Eretz Yisrael for an extended period of time. Yaakov's life experience serves as a model for every future golus of Klal Yisrael. As Chazal say (Megillah 29a), "(Even when) they were exiled to Bavel, the Shechina was with them." Once the Shechina established a connection with Klal Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael, it continued to dwell amongst them even after they were exiled to Bavel.

This idea - that a connection to the Shechina that is established by day can be maintained even into the night - is also hinted to in the tefilla of ma'ariv which Yaakov Avinu instituted (see Brachos 26b). This tefilla corresponds to the sacrificing of the fats and limbs in the Beis HaMikdash. As long as an animal is slaughtered and its blood is sprinkled on the mizbei'ach during the day, its fats and limbs may be burned on the mizbei'ach any time during the night afterward. But the slaughtering of the animal or the sprinkling of its blood may not be performed at night. Only if the process of bringing the korban has begun during the day may it be completed at night, because avodah is permitted at night only if it is a continuation of the avodah of the daytime.

Yaakov is the one who instituted the tefilla of ma'ariv corresponding to the burning of the fats and limbs because it was he who demonstrated, at different times during his life, that once a person establishes a close relationship with the Shechina when he is surrounded by the kedusha of Eretz Yisrael, he can maintain that connection even in golus when he is no longer exposed to the kedusha of Eretz Yisrael.

The Rambam (Hilchos Beis Habechira 6:14-16) echoes a similar idea regarding the relationship between the kedusha of the Beis HaMikdash and that of Eretz Yisrael. He distinguishes between the first kedusha of Eretz Yisrael that was endowed at the time of Yehoshua and the kedusha of Eretz Yisrael that was endowed at the time of Ezra. Since the first kedusha was a result of the kibush (conquest) of Eretz Yisrael at the time of Yehoshua, it disappeared when Klal Yisrael were exiled after the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash. But the second kedusha of Eretz Yisrael was not a result of kibush but of chazaka, namely the fact that Klal Yisrael settled the land when they returned from Bavel. Therefore, it did not disappear even when Klal Yisrael were exiled after the destruction of the second Beis HaMikdash. Rav Soloveitchik explains (see Nefesh HaRav, p. 77) that at the time of Ezra, Klal Yisrael initially settled around the Beis HaMikdash and Yerushalayim, and slowly moved outward until they settled the entire land. By resettling Eretz Yisrael in this manner, they drew the kedusha of the Beis HaMikdash to the rest of Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, since the kedusha of the Beis HaMikdash, which is due to the presence of the Shechina, can never be nullified, the second kedusha of Eretz Yisrael, which drew its strength from the Beis HaMikdash, also could never be canceled, even when Klal Yisrael were exiled a second time.

A third area in which we see the far-reaching effect of a source of kedusha is the day of Shabbos. "Let us go greet Shabbos, for it is the source of all blessing. (Lecha Dodi)" Why is Shabbos considered the source of all blessing? The answer is that Shabbos is a weekly reminder that Hashem created the world (Yisro 20:11) and that he took Klal Yisrael out of Mitzrayim (Va'eschanan 5:15). Yetzias Mitzrayim highlighted that Hashem is in control of the world and that He is the Source of all blessing. Through our tefillos on Shabbos, our recitation of Kiddush, the activities we engage in on Shabbos, and the way we bid farewell to Shabbos at its conclusion (melave malka), we demonstrate how much we have internalized the messages of Shabbos and that we appreciate how dependent we are on the Ribbono Shel Olam, and that can help us draw from the kedusha and the bracha of Shabbos to the rest of the week.

This week Klal Yisrael is celebrating the 13th Siyum HaShas of the Daf Yomi. Finishing all of Talmud Bavli is certainly a monumental achievement. But what is equally remarkable is how many of the individuals who took on learning daf yomi related that the daily commitment of daf yomi not only broadened their horizons in Torah learning, but it had a ripple effect on how they and their families live their lives. It affected how they observe mitzvos in general, how they act in the workplace, how they spend their free time, even what they choose to speak about at their Shabbos tables. Sometimes we underestimate the profound impact that a religious experience can have on us. But the fact is when we infuse our lives with mitzvos and ma'asim tovim - whether it's finishing shas or simply elevating a regular Shabbos meal - we stand to benefit not just from the mitzvos themselves, but from the transformative effect that these experiences of kedusha can have on ourselves and our families.

Copyright © 2019 by TorahWeb.org

hefkervelt.blogspot.com **Recap: Speeches At the Siyum Hashas**

Rav Yissochor Frand: The Brisker Rav said the time of a siyum of one masechta is an es Ratzon can we begin to fathom what a siyum hashas is of thousands of yiddin finishing shas. The emotions we should feel is to have a sense of gratitude how far we've come in the last 75 years since churban europe to part of this vast olam haTorah that should lead us to a sense of gratitude to hkbh who built the olam hatorah. The nazis ym"s had a hatred for the talmud they gave from Jews the title of Talmud Lerers and decreed no exit visas should be accepted they proclaimed the lerners and teachers of the talmud have the power to rebuild judaism in America. They were 100% correct and YOU are those talmud lehrers and Talmudishe yidden.

Finishing shas begins with 1 blatt The Torah has kept us all these years, לולי תורתך שעשועי

Rav Aaron Shiff: Daf Hayomi symbolizes the unity of klal yisrael with the torah, Rav Meir Shapiro foresaw what the gemara in the end of Sotah says that the torah will keep us through the ages and bikvasa demeshicha. said a story of Reb Dovid Weiss a who suffers from ALS was approached by his doctor from Colombia hospital a secular Jew who said i have everything in life, successful family, money homes anything I want but have no happiness and feel an emptiness yet you are like a dead person you can't live much yet everyday you have a happiness how do you have such happiness, he said i don't have wealth or health but i have the daf yomi that gives me life and happiness if you didnt taste it you cant understand it. How happy should we be after all these blatt gemara this is true simchas hachaim We all gather together on their festival when the omos haolam celebrate by wasting time, we are here giving kavod hatorah to thousands of Yidden who are finishing shas this keeps us as a nation.

HaRav Ahron Feldman: The first mishna of מאמתי is the beginning of the first seder in shas, Zeraim that deals with laws of produce of the fields which portion you your give to kohanim leviim and the poor and of Masechta Brachos that deals with the blessings we say before we partake in our food the question is that this mishna makes no mention of any of these halachos but talks about the laws of krias shema and why was this mishna chosen to be placed at the head of Shas? Seder Zeraim says the earth is not ours but Hashem's we first have to give away to those who hashem designated it too Masechtes Brachos says that the world is not ours. Krias shema says that our lives are not ours and belongs to hashem our lives and possessions we have to give up therefore this mishna is the logical beginning of Seder Zeraim masechte brachos. Shas is the blue print of our lives and shema tells us to live by this blue print. Shema is followed by the next parsha vehaya im shom Hashems will is for us to study Torah. This gathering probably the biggest since the churban bayis, is a recognition of what totah means its an expression of the words ki heim chayeinu torah is the life blood of the Jewish people. Without the learning of Torah and its support we can not survive.

Harav Uren Reich: This weeks parsha Yosef was still alive od yosef Chai he sent a message through the agalos it was a remez to Yaakov avinu that yosef was still spiritually alive as to the same way he was prior to going to mitzrayim. The Remez of Eglah Arufa was that being alone puts you in great jeopardy but when a person is melava you and accompanies him its symbolically as if hes accompanied all the way. Yosef sent a message to Yaakov that he accompanied him all the way through not physically but spiritually. Yaakov gave Yosef the strength to refuse they were miles apart physically but spiritually there was a connection despite being in the house of potifar. Yes im firmly in mitzrayim but you are accompanying me all the way. the message that yosef sent was to uplift him and he was succesful in giving yaakov a new life. Yaakov new that Yosef was the first who went through galus but wont be the last he said the pasuk of Hamalach hagoel should bless all the generations that come after Menashe and ephraim but they should be called in my name bnei yisrael they will be llike fish who swim in water so too klal yisrael will be together with Yaakov throughout the generations there should be a multitude of yiddin who are engaged in the world bekerev Haaretz but have the capacity to make torah part of their lives. The thoudsands that are here today are sending the same message we are clinging to the torah in all circumstances. In the last 7 and a half years there have been many milestones and siyumim there are gedolei torah and amcha bais yisrael yiddin whose wives and children are all part of a lifestyle of Veyidgu Larov we are not only hear to rejoice with the milestones and achievements of the past but to make commitments for the future more kvias itim latorah more consistency concentration anf focus so we can truly say

yaakov Avinu Lo Mes. Like fish in water who jump for every drop we should realize the preciousness of every word of Torah. The tefillah of ahava Rabbah we say every morning before krias shema, we are all ahava rabbah yiddin and we should spend a few extra seconds focusing by saying this tefillah. Let us cherish the last few minutes to commit to further intensity of limud hatorah more shiurim more concentration and more kavana by ahava rabba and we will be zoche to vehaishiv lev avos albanim velev Banim Al avosam.

...

<https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Defying-history-transcending-time-612695>

Jerusalem Post

Defying history, transcending time

Rabbi Warren Goldstein (chief rabbi of South Africa)

My rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Azriel Chaim Goldfein, once told me a story he heard directly from Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, under whom he learned as a devoted student.

The story takes place in the years immediately after the Second World War. Rav Gifter is in New York City with Rabbi Elya Meir Bloch, the co-founding rosh yeshiva of Telz in Cleveland, Ohio, and they happen to be in a bookstore.

Rav Elya Meir turns to the storekeeper and asks for a copy of the Ketzot HaChoshen – a classic commentary and analysis of the Talmud’s civil law. The storekeeper climbs up to the attic and comes down with a dusty old copy of the Ketzot. As he hands the book over to Rav Elya Meir, he says it is one of only a handful in the United States of America, in all probability the very last to be sold – never to be printed again. The very last Ketzot. The end of Torah learning, he says.

Rav Elya Meir doesn’t respond.

As they leave the store, he turns to Rav Gifter and tells him that the storekeeper is right. He says that in accordance with the normal laws and social forces of history, there is no chance that Torah will be rebuilt in America, or anywhere else. And that this dusty, old Ketzot HaChoshen in his hand will never be published again.

But, he says, Torah does not subscribe to convention or laws of probability. Torah, he says, comes from somewhere else. A place that is above convention, above this world, unfettered by its laws and patterns. Torah, authored by God, comes from a higher place, and – no matter how unlikely it may seem – ultimately, it will triumph and be the force of vitality, vision, purpose, wisdom and energy for the Jewish people.

How right he was.

We stand today on the eve of perhaps the greatest public celebration of Torah learning that has ever taken place. The siyum celebration of the 13th complete cycle of Daf Yomi, a seven-and-a-half-year program in which all 2,711 double-sided pages of the Talmud are learned in unison, one page at a time.

The first Siyum HaShas took place on February 2, 1931. The celebrations were confined to Jerusalem and to a few cities in Europe. A couple of thousand people took part. Seven-and-a-half years later there was another. And the Daf Yomi program, almost inconceivably, continued throughout the Holocaust. A Siyum HaShas took place in 1945 in a displaced persons camp called Feldafing, 30 miles south of Dachau, with broken survivors of the death camps gathering to mark the occasion.

Fast forward to today.

An estimated half a million Jews will celebrate finishing the Talmud together. More than 100,000 are expected at a headline event in New Jersey’s MetLife Stadium alone – one of many such events all over the world.

HOW DID we get here?

Just 75 years ago, a crippled people staggered out of the ruins of the Holocaust, intent on starting life in a new world completely transformed by revolutions in science, technology, medicine, communication and social values and norms. It seemed Torah would not find its place in our hearts and minds.

In the intervening years, the world hasn’t become any more hospitable to the ancient practice of Torah learning. Dramatic advances in science and technology, radical changes in social norms and values, quantum leaps in the way we communicate, have fundamentally altered the fabric of our society. So complete is the transformation and modernization that the world we inhabit is simply unrecognizable from that of just a few decades ago. The pace of change has threatened to relegate Torah living and Torah learning to a relic displayed in museums, to render an ancient system of knowledge and ideas obsolete and irrelevant.

But God formulated the Torah to be the blueprint of our lives, eternally relevant and fresh for all times and places. And so here we are, learning our ancient holy texts in the same Hebrew and Aramaic, holding on to each and every precious word.

We are more vibrant than ever, with more people learning Torah than at any point in history. Rav Elya Meir and his generation of Holocaust survivors and heroes established yeshivot all over the world, which are today bursting with countless young and eager students. More Torah books are being published than at any other time in history.

When that storekeeper climbed down from the ladder and handed over that dusty old copy of the Ketzot HaChoshen to Rav Elya Meir – “the last Ketzot to be sold in America,” who would have imagined in their wildest dreams that its holy words would reverberate in the corridors of schools, in the halls of batei midrash and yeshivot, and around dining room tables in every corner of the modern world? Who would have thought that that “last Ketzot to be sold in America” would be published once more – and republished, over and over again?

Our generation has lived through the greatest darkness, but now we have been privileged to see the great light of Divine miracles. As hundreds of thousands of Jews unite across the globe to celebrate the bar mitzvah of the Daf Yomi program, we should know – and we should make sure that our children know – the awesome miracles of the rebirth of Torah life and learning that we have witnessed. Let us pause, appreciate and give thanks to God for the ever-fresh and pulsating Divine energy and light that He infuses into Jewish life through His Torah.

The Torah belongs to each and every one of us. Let us learn it and live it. And let us go forward together, as partners with God, filled with gratitude, deeply aware that we live in times of miracles and wonder, and inspired to reach even greater heights.

<https://agudathisrael.org/the-jewish-observer-vol-30-no-9-november-1997cheshvan-5758/>

10th Siyum Hashas 1997

The **Jewish Observer, November 1997** – Rabbi Nisson Wolpin Editor
The Messages from the Event ...

The Radiance of Resolution to Learn

Rabbi Avrohom Pam Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath (Siyum Hashas 1997)

I wonder whether those who succeeded in learning through Shas fully realize how much they have accomplished! I do not know if a person can truly comprehend what he has achieved by learning a page of Gemora. And learning a complete volume in the entire Talmud – how the neshama radiates with Torah, how a person is elevated! How much spiritual gratification and joy is brought to one’s ancestors, grandparents, great-grandparents in Gan Eden, through their descendants’ preoccupation with learning Torah, in spite of occasions of difficulty. Nor can the Daf Yomi

participants truly assess the influence of their learning on the members of their families and on their neighbors.

The Vilna Gaon says: every single word of Torah is a mitzva unto itself. How many words are there on a page of Gemora, in a volume, in the entire 13.lmud? How great is your accomplishment!

To those who are not yet involved in a program of Torah study, and are contemplating linking up with this endeavor, may I offer a few words of encouragement before they embark on this seven-and-a-half year journey:

Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner says (in Ruach Chaim on Avos) that when a person resolves to perform a mitzva, he becomes enveloped with a radiance that directs him, that guides him, and helps him succeed in his holy endeavor, and which is put in reserve for him to illuminate his Olam Habba. May the luminescence generated by the resolution of all those gathered here to apply themselves to the DafYomi program light up the way for Moshiach's arrival!

Rabbi Elya Svei Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva of Philadelphia (Siyum Hashas 1997)

As Reb Meir Simcha Would Have Appreciated This Gathering

It is with a sense of great responsibility that I address thousands of Jews, including distinguished representatives of Orthodox Judaism, who have assembled together to participate the joy of those who were privileged conclude Shas. This occasion is also one of joy for their families. Indeed, these families have a great share in enabling them to finish the Talmud. In fact, participating in this Siyum is a rare privilege for the entire Jewish people.

The Ohr Sornayach, Reb Meir Simcha, the revered Rav of Dvinsk, says in his work Meshech Chochma: in all their wanderings, the Jewish people always merit Divine Providence, just as our patriarchs and our ancestors had benefited from Divine Providence. Similarly, the Torah tells us that in exile and diaspora, we also see Divine Providence as He protects the Jewish people "as a nation that dwells alone." Yes, the nations oppress and pursue Jews from all sides, but when the situation becomes a little tranquil or placid, Jews uplift themselves, and tower over all nations, as they remain dedicated to Torah, loyal in their ethical conduct, and faithful to their sacred roots, to the source of their spiritual identity which formed them. The Jew's ability to remain faithful, loyal and committed to Torah in all circumstances and under all conditions of diaspora and exile, was a result of Divine Providence.

As Reb Meir Simcha explains it, the Jewish people's fidelity to Torah and mitzvos throughout their wanderings parallels a great miracle that had occurred in the Holy Temple: the fire on the holy altar was constantly burning; no wind could possibly extinguish it. Nor could a breeze cause it to waver in one direction or another. Similarly, says Reb Meir Simcha, the Jewish people somehow manage to remain loyal to Torah even when they go into exile.

Jews came to America with such meager resources. Yet they established congregations for worship, they convened groups to learn Torah, and organized for charity and many other virtuous undertakings. This tenacity testifies to the Divine Providence of G-d.

As I entered this room, I thought: what would Reb Meir Simcha say if he would be here at this Siyum HaShas? If he would have seen that after the devastating Holocaust, we are experiencing this great revival of Judaism? Undoubtedly, he would thank G-d that we merited to have a generation of young men dedicated to learning Torah, of Torah sages, oflaymen setting aside time daily, faithfully to learn Daf Yomi. How deeply he would have been moved, how profoundly he would have reacted to this phenomenon! Surely he would have expressed his appreciation for how all this reflects the Divine Providence of G-d, demonstrating that the Shechina, the Divine Presence, abides amongst the Jewish people.

We must bear in mind as the great Rosh Hayeshiva, Rabbi Aaron Kotler zt'l often impressed on his talmidim that Torah is compared to fire. And

indeed, like fire, it has the power to transform us, to elevate us from ordinary people involved in mundane pursuits to people dedicated to becoming bnei aliya, engaged in spiritual growth.

Wiping Away Hashem's Tear

Rabbi Mattisyahu Solomon Mashgiach of Rais Medrash Govoha, Lakewood (Siyum Hashas 1997)

The Prophet (in Yirmiyahu) describes the Ribbono Shel Olam's pain in galus "dima ki nishba eider Hashem. "He says that the Ribbono Shel Olam cries, "My eyes shed a tear because the flock of Hashem has gone into exile:"

The Gemora notes three mentionings of a tear. The first one responds to the destruction of the First Beis Hamikdash, the second to that of the Second Beis Hamikdash, and the third tear because of bittul Torah. The Gemora asks, "But it says in the passuk 'ki nishba eider Hashem,' that the tear that the Ribbono Shel Olam shed at that moment was because Kial Yisroel went into galus?" The Gemora answers, "Keshegalu Yisroel ein lecha bittul Torah gedola mezu - chief among all of the difficulties that galus has brought upon Kial Yisroel is bittul Torah: 'We're not referring to the aveira of losing time from Torah study, but bittul Torah in the context of bittul chameitz: The people have relegated Torah to a state of non-existence, as if it's not even there. The world is meant to be filled with Torah, and galus drastically reduces the possibilities of doing so; so the Ribbono Shel Olam thus sheds a tear for the bittul Torah.

The world's state of perfection in the time of Moshiach is described as "Malaa ha'aretz de'ah es Hashem kemayim layam mechasim" - when the world will be covered with Torah "like the seas are bedecked with water" - a time when everyone will be studying Torah, Kial Yisroel will be involved in Torah, breathing Torah, shteiging in Torah. As long as that is not achieved, the Ribbono Shel Olam sheds a tear. And as our galus gets longer, it would seem that the Ribbono Shel Olam's tear grows larger.

We came here this evening, saying to Hashem Yisborach, "Mini koleich mibechi enayich midima-wipe away the tear from Your eyes, Ribbono Shel Olam." We who devote time to learn Torah, we who appreciate that the world must be filled with Torah, and do our bit to fill the world with Torah, we are telling the Ribbono Shel Olam that we are doing our best to wipe away the Divine tears.

Many tears are shed in galus, and there is a prophecy of "Umacha Hashem dimaa mei' al kal pannim - Hashem will brush away the tears from everyone's cheeks." What better way is there to beg Hashem Yisborach to wipe away our tears than to say to Hashem Yisborach: "We are prepared to wipe away Your tears:'

We cannot fill the world with Torah, but let us resolve to make our homes filled with Torah, in addition to the public shiurim that we attend. We'll prepare the shiur, we'll renew the shiur, we'll learn with our children, we'll create moments to fill our homes with Torah. All of those who learn the Daf Hayomi and those who have come to show respect to the Daf Hayomi students should recognize that this gathering on the first day of Selichos is a commitment to initiate the era of "Umalaa ha'aretz de'ah es Hashem kamayim layam mechasim."

The Chofetz Chaim explains this passuk to indicate that in the time of Moshiach, the Ribbono Shel Olam will pour forth mei daas (waters of knowledge), filling the entire world with de'ah es Hashem, with Torah knowledge. When you look at the ocean, points out the Chofetz Chaim, it's level at the top. It would seem that the waters covering the ocean floor are of identical depth. But we all know that there is a range of depths, from the shallow waters at the seashore to the depth of many fathoms of water far off shore. Why is one place deep and another place more shallow? It depends on the degree to which the ocean's bottom is hollowed out, on how great its capacity for water is. In some places, the ocean floor rises like a mountain, and the waters are just over the top of the sand, leaving the waters very shallow. We may think that in the time of Moshiach when the Ribbono Shel Olam is going to pour the mei daas over us, we are all going to be equal in

our spiritual awareness. But whoever has a stronger association with Torah is going to receive an additional amount of Torah when the waters are poured over him. For as deep as he has hollowed himself out, as much as he has hewed out a receptacle for Torah within his own heart, so great will his capacity be.

How much time and effort in galus did you give away for Torah? To what degree were you maser nefesh for Torah? How much did you want to appreciate and understand Torah? The Ribbono Shel Olam will accordingly pour out that great mei daas and will fill the depths that you yourself hewed out in the difficult times. •

..

from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>

to: ravfrand@torah.org

date: Jan 2, 2020, 5:31 PM

subject: Rav Frand - The Rest of the Story

Yosef Rules in the Entire Land of Egypt—The Rest of the Story

Yosef finally reveals his true identity to his brothers and tells them, “It was not you who sent me here, but G-d; He has set me as a father to Pharaoh, and as a master of his entire household, and as a ruler in the entire land of Egypt.” [Bereshis 45:8] He tells his brothers not to be upset at what they caused; everything that transpired was all personal Divine Providence (Hashgacha Pratis).

However, technically speaking, Yosef’s statement is not correct. Although he states that G-d made him “the ruler in the entire land of Egypt,” in fact he was not the ruler in the entire land of Egypt. He is clearly only second in command. L’Havdil, when Ronald Reagan was shot and temporarily incapacitated during an assassination attempt (March 1981), his Chief of Staff at the time—Alexander Haig—made the inaccurate and much ridiculed statement to the press that, “I am in charge here now.” Observers suggest that with that faux pas he ruined his chances of ever becoming president. Someone who is not president does not make such a statement! So how could Yosef tell his brothers “Ani moshel b’chol Eretz Mitzrayim” (I rule over all Egypt)?

It is also interesting to note that when the brothers returned to Yaakov and reported to him, “Yosef is still alive, and he is ruler over the entire land of Egypt” [Bereshis 45:26] they do not give all the titles and functions that Yosef had previously mentioned to them. They ONLY say that he ruled the entire land of Egypt. What happened to “father to Pharaoh”? What happened to “master of his entire household”?

The Chasam Sofer says a single thought that answers both these questions. When the brothers came back and told Yaakov that Yosef had been living in Egypt all these years (20+ years), Yaakov was not interested in what his title was, he was not interested in how much money he was making, he was not interested in what his position was. He was only interested in one thing: Has he remained a Jew or not? Here you have a young boy separated from his father, separated from his family, separated from the entire spiritually enriching environment in which he grew up. He is thrust into a corrupt and spiritually hostile environment. What has happened with him?

Yaakov Avinu was interested in one thing, and that is the message the brothers delivered to him. They told him that Yosef was moshel b’chol Eretz Mitzraim (he ruled over the entire land of Egypt). This meant that rather than Egypt controlling him, he controlled Egypt. This answers our first question as well. How could Yosef make the claim that he ruled over all Egypt? The answer is that he was not stating his political position in the country. He was speaking spiritually. Who got the best of whom? Did Egyptian culture influence me or did I remain above it? U’moshel b’chol Eretz Mitzraim means I remained above the culture, I did not allow it to influence me. This was what Yaakov wanted to hear from the brothers, and this is what they told him. Yosef ruled over Egypt rather than vice versa.

The next pasuk (verse) following the previously quoted portion of the report from the brothers to Yaakov reads as follows: “And they related to him all the words of Yosef that he had spoken to them, and he saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to transport him, and then the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived.” [Bereshis 45:27]. There is a famous Rashi on the words “and he saw the wagons that Yosef sent”. Rashi quotes Chazal that the wagons are a hint to the passage of the Eglah Arufa (the calf whose neck is broken), which was the Torah portion Yosef was studying with his father immediately prior to their separation. There almost appears to be an unwritten rule that a person may not publish a book of Torah thoughts on Sefer Bereshis without giving at least one homiletic explanation of what this teaching of Chazal symbolizes.

I heard a beautiful insight on the deeper meaning of this Rashi in the name of a Dayan from Manchester, England who is no longer alive. He Anglicized the lesson he learns from here; I will transform the analogy somewhat to give it an American flavor:

To what can the matter be compared? Imagine an elderly pious Jewish couple. They had a son to whom they had given a good Jewish education. They sent him to Day School, and then they sent him off to Yeshiva. But then the son went off to University, to College, and he became very prominent in his field—whether it is law, medicine or business—and he moved away. Where is he living? He is living in Alabama. The parents are thinking to themselves, “What must be with our son’s religiosity?” They sent a single boy to Alabama. He is a good son. He calls every Erev Shabbos to wish them a Good Shabbos. Now he is already 30-35 years old. Imagine that for some reason, the parents do not really know about this boy’s life. What must be with a successful single fellow living in Alabama? Is he married or not? Does he have a Jewish wife? Does he have children or not? In our imaginary story, the parents are clueless to all these private aspects of his life.

One Erev Shabbos he calls up and his parents say to him, “You know what, we haven’t seen you in all these years. We want to come visit you.” The son says, “You know what, I have a better idea. I will come visit you, instead!” Why doesn’t he want them to come to Alabama? If they come to Alabama they will see what’s doing there with him. It is not going to be a pretty scene. Therefore, he tells his parents, “No. Don’t come to me. I’ll come to you.” Yaakov saw the wagons Yosef sent for him to come meet him in Egypt! If Yosef was embarrassed about what happened to him in Egypt, he would come to visit Yaakov, he would not let Yaakov come down to Egypt to see him in his own environment! That is what rejuvenated the spirit of Yaakov. The wagons proved that Yosef was not afraid to have Yaakov come visit him. This proves that indeed “Yosef rules in the entire land of Egypt.” He has not lost his Yiddishkeit!

The Cedars of Beer-Sheva Accompany Klal Yisrael to Egypt and Back
The next thought I would like to share is a beautiful observation by Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky on the next pasuk: “So Israel set out with all that he had and he came to Beer-Sheva where he slaughtered sacrifices to the G-d of his father Yitzchak.” [Bereshis 46:1] Rav Kamenetsky in his Emes L’Yaakov says something he mentioned previously in Chumash as well. Beer-Sheva occupies a special place in the hearts of the patriarchs. What happened in Beer-Sheva? Chazal say that when Avraham Avinu came to Beer-Sheva, he planted cedars. These cedar trees were going to be the wood from which the Mishkan (Tabernacle) was going to be built.

Avraham Avinu already knew prophetically that his children were going to be oppressed strangers in a land that was not theirs for 400 years [Bereshis 15:13]. Therefore, he already planted the trees to build a Mishkan when they emerge from this exile and return to Eretz Yisrael. This, Rav Yaakov says, is why when Yitzchak came to Beer-Sheva it was spiritually invigorating for him. He knew that his father planted those trees there, and he came there to receive spiritual nourishment. Now when Yaakov, on his way to Egypt, comes down to Beer-Sheva, what does he do? Chazal say he cuts down the trees and transports them to Egypt.

Why? Yaakov Avinu understood full well what was about to happen. He was very afraid. The Almighty had to reassure him. Yaakov understood that his offspring were about to remain in Egypt for a very long time. He feared that they would assimilate. That is, in fact, what happened. They reached the 49th of fifty levels of spiritual impurity there. Yaakov was legitimately afraid.

However, Yaakov Avinu, in his wisdom, cut down those trees when he journeyed to Egypt, and he told his children, “Kinderlach (my children), one day we are going to come out of here and these are the trees you are going to use to build a place of worship for the Almighty when you return to Eretz Yisrael.” Therefore, while they were in the land of Egypt, they still had this connection to the Land of Israel. From generation to generation, they would give over the wood from the trees. Every generation would be told the family tradition: These are the trees Avraham planted in Beer-Sheva and one day we are going to leave. One day we are going to get out of this bondage. One day we are going to build a Sanctuary to the G-d who created Heaven and Earth! That gave them this connection and link to the Holy Land so that they would not totally become impure and assimilated amongst the nations.

Rav Yaakov then says an interesting interpretation to a Gemara in Tractate Megilla [31b]. The Gemara says that Avraham Avinu asked the Ribono shel Olam – what is going to be with Klal Yisrael in galus? The Ribono shel Olam responded, they will bring sacrifices and have atonement. Avraham persists: “That is fine when the Beis HaMikdash is in existence. What will be when the Beis HaMikdash is not in existence?” The Ribono shel Olam responded, “I have already established the order of the sacrificial service, as long as they read it before me, I will consider it as if they have offered sacrifices and I will forgive them.”

Rav Yaakov said that the simple interpretation of this Talmudic passage is that when someone reads the section of “Korbonos” it is as if he offered the sacrifices. (Whoever reads before Me the chapter of the burnt offering, it is as if he offered before Me a burnt offering...) Rav Yaakov says that there is a deeper interpretation here as well. At the time the Beis HaMikdash was standing, we had a connection to Eretz Yisrael, but we will go into Galus. We have no cedars there. What will keep us attached to the idea that one day there will be a Beis HaMikdash again? In the Egyptian exile, they had the cedar wood to tell them that one day they would get out of this exile—here are the trees! But now, in our current exile, we have no such cedar wood. Lacking that, what will preserve our connection with Eretz Yisrael and allow us to continue to hope to return? The answer is that every day we recite Korbonos (as part of the preparatory prayer service).

Why do we say Korbonos? It is because, G-d willing, there will be Korbonos again one day. Reciting Korbonos provides the same affect that the cedar trees had in Egypt—to connect Klal Yisrael with Eretz Yisrael. It provides a concrete reminder that we will not be lost here forever.

Avraham was worried: What is going to be with Klal Yisrael when there will be no Beis HaMikdash? The Almighty responded: They will read Parshas Korbonos. The Almighty was not just addressing the atonement that such reading will provide. He was telling Avraham that this reading will reinforce the idea that one day—hopefully speedily in our time—He will rebuild the Beis HaMikdash and we will go there and offer sacrifices once again. The reading of Parshas Korbonos, thus, will remind us that our existence here in galus is merely temporary.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD
dhoffman@torah.org

This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org (410) 602-1350

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

from: Torah in Action /Shema Yisrael <parsha@torahinaction.com>

subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Shema Yisrael Torah Network
Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Vayigash
פרשת ויגש תשפ

ויתן את קולו בבכי וישמעו מצרים וישמע בית פרעה

He cried in a loud voice. Egypt heard and Pharaoh’s household heard. (45:2)

When Yosef wept, the entire country heard; so respected was he in Egypt. Word quickly spread throughout the palace and then throughout the country: Yosef was weeping! *Chazal (Bereishis Rabbah)* state that Yosef’s cries were conciliatory in nature, meant to assuage his brothers’ feelings of guilt and shame. Why was he appeasing them? He was the victim. They were the “aggressors.” It should be the other way around. *Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl* (cited by *Bad Kodosh*), posits that herein lies an important concept concerning interpersonal relationships. Just as the “*Shulchan Aruch*,” Code of Law, addresses the rights of the victim who was slighted, hurt by his fellow, so, too, a complete set of laws addresses how the victim should act *vis-à-vis* his assailant. We have laws concerning the method and the amount of payment that the *mazik*, damager, must pay his victim. We have laws that teach how one asks for forgiveness, and how he expiates his sin. Likewise, we have laws regarding the manner in which the victim should accept the apology, admission of guilt and ensuing penance in order to absolve the perpetrator.

Let us face it; when someone harms us, we neither jump for joy, nor are we ready to forgive the aggressor. Let him sweat it out, just as I sweated it out. I suffered; let him suffer. I am going to stretch this out for all it is worth. This is human nature, and it is, thus, natural for people who have been hurt to act in this manner. We are different. Our Torah, as interpreted by *Chazal*, teaches us not to be vengeful, not to make our provoker, assailant, antagonist, suffer as we have suffered. When someone seriously offends me, I am not interested in his apology. Let him leave me alone. He has done enough damage. I am neither interested in seeing his face, nor in hearing his contrition. If anything, I want to see him squirm. I would like him to owe me forever. Let him not feel that he has gotten off with an apology.

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

Likewise, when someone begs my forgiveness, I should respond positively, with a smile: “Sure, I forgive you.” This was Yosef’s message to his brothers: “I bear no grudge. I forgive you wholeheartedly. As I have nothing against my younger brother, Binyamin, so, too, are my feelings toward you amicable.”

ויאמר יוסף אל אחיו אני יוסף העוד אבי חי ... ויאמר יוסף אל אחיו גשו נא אלי ... ויאמר
אני יוסף אחיכם אשר מכרתם אותי מצרימה

And Yosef said to his brothers, “I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?” ... The Yosef said to his brothers, “Come close to me, if you please,” and he said, “I am Yosef, your brother... me, whom you sold to Egypt.” (45:3,4)

Anyone who reads these *pesukim* is struck with the same questions: Why did Yosef repeat, “I am Yosef”? He stated in *pasuk* 3, “I am Yosef,” and immediately in *pasuk* 4, he repeated, “I am Yosef.” Furthermore, the first time that he “introduced” himself, his brothers’ reaction was one of fear and disconcertment. Why in his second “introduction” did he reiterate, “Whom you sold to Egypt”? Obviously, this was a sore point, as their reaction evinces. Why rub it in? The *Sfas Emes* offers a powerful explanation which teaches us an important lesson in *avodas Hashem*, serving the Almighty. When Yosef originally introduced himself by saying, “Ani Yosef,” the brothers were frightened. They saw before them a wholly righteous, totally committed Yosef, who, despite having lived in the decadence of Egypt, far removed from the spiritually pristine environment of his home, had been able to maintain himself on a spiritually refined plateau. Imagine, had he not been deprived of a Jewish home for this period, he would have been that much greater. This was a compelling reason to be frightened.

When Yosef observed his brothers’ reaction, he became concerned, because they were wrong in their assumption. Thus, he countered, “Ani Yosef...whom you sold to Egypt.” He was in effect saying, “Do you want to know how I achieved such spiritual distinction? It was specifically because I was in Egypt, away from home. My eminence in Egypt is a result of my ability to overcome temptation, pain, loneliness, filth and a harsh physical and spiritual environment. All these years of travail since ‘you sold me’ to Egypt transformed me from the Yosef at home with remarkable potential, to the Yosef, viceroy of Egypt, replete in my spiritual observance and commitment. Egypt was the spiritual crucible that honed and tempered me for this position.”

We have no idea what catalyzes our spiritual achievement, but, in all probability, the very travail that might have embittered us and provoked serious questioning on our part has become the catalyst for our success. A distinguished *rosh yeshivah*, who has earned a reputation as a *gaon* and *tzaddik*, related how he had achieved such distinction. During his youth, he was among the elite students in a premier *yeshivah* in *Eretz Yisrael*. A well-to-do businessman chose him as a *chosson*, son-in-law (obviously the young couple met and were attracted to one another). Sadly, this man used much of his wealth to pamper his spoiled children. (This is not always readily apparent when boy meets girl.) Thus, it did not take long before the young husband realized that as far as his wife was concerned, his primary function in their marriage was to cater to her irrational whims. She acted as if he were another one of the many toys that her father had purchased for her. In short time, they divorced, and the girl’s family initiated a smear campaign that practically destroyed his reputation and emotional well-being. One of his friends encouraged him to pay a visit to the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. He listened and spent some time there immersed in fervent and passionate prayer, storming the Heavens for a positive ending to his travail. One night, thinking that he was alone, he raised his voice in prayer, “Hashem! I can no longer take it ... I am about to give up hope...Please have mercy on me in the merit of the holy *tzaddik* who is buried here. Help me!” As soon as he concluded his prayer, he noticed that another Jew had been in the room where he was praying. The man approached him and asked, “Please tell me your story. Perhaps I could help. If not, I can at least listen. At times, having someone who will listen is in and of itself comforting.”

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

are certainly aware that the *tzaddik* that is interred here (Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai) endured much travail and pain, years of living in hiding without family, so that the government who wanted him dead would not succeed with their plans. He had no food, no clothing, but he kept on studying Torah amid terrible deprivation. It is because of what he experienced that he was able to reach the pinnacle of success that he achieved. You should know that some of our greatest and most illustrious *gedolim*, Torah giants, climbed the ladder of success on rungs of pain and affliction. They reached the apex of Torah scholarship through toil, sweat and tears. Your present experience will catalyze your ascension to the heights of Torah and *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven. Never lose faith; never give up hope. Follow the lesson taught by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, and you, too, will one day look back at this travail as the catalyst for your success in Torah.”

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

The stranger continued, “Let me tell you about someone whom I personally know, an individual who achieved the epitome of righteousness, a miracle worker whose connection with Heaven was evident, who was guided by *Ruach HaKodesh*, Divine Inspiration, on a regular basis. I refer to *Horav David Moshe, zl, m’Kretchnif, Admor* of Rehovot. One day, a close student asked him what turning point in his life had catalyzed his incredible rise to spiritual eminence. The *Rebbe* replied: ‘Auschwitz. Prior to the Holocaust, I was just another student. When I came to Auschwitz, I decided that I was dedicating my life wholly to Hashem. I would do it all: keep every *mitzvah* with utmost *mesiras nefesh*; self-sacrifice; study Torah, regardless of the danger; sing *zemiros* on *Shabbos*, even though there was no such thing as a *Shabbos* meal. As I carried heavy cinder blocks on my shoulders, however, I sang *Shabbos zemiros*. Whatever I have achieved in the realm of spirituality is solely due to my experience in Auschwitz!’”

The Jew concluded with a simple, but profound, insight, “Do you know the difference between a train and an airplane? An airplane can go anywhere with great speed. A train can only go so fast and is limited to areas that can support rails. The real difference, however, is something else. A plane is not encumbered, while a train is land-based and, thus, can only travel where there are no obstacles in its path. A plane simply flies over the obstacles. Once you detach yourself from the ground, from your attachment to earthiness, you will soar. Hashem has mercifully taken you ‘off the ground.’ The world that you lived in until now turned against you. You have been granted the opportunity to soar to the Heavens. Change your life and return to the *bais hamedrash* which used to be your home, and you will see in due time that nothing will stand in your way.”

The young man listened and, for ten years, he immersed himself in Torah study. His fear of Heaven became strengthened, as did his Torah erudition. These ten years were his spiritual gestation period during which he merited an unprecedented feeling of closeness to Hashem, an encyclopedic knowledge of Torah, and a lofty attitude toward *mitzvah* observance – achievements which could not have been realized without the travail that refined him by “lifting him off the ground,” so that he could soar to the Heavens.

ולא יכלו אחיו לענות אותו כי נבהלו מפניו

But his brothers could not answer him, because they were left disconcerted before him. (45:3)

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

is an acceptable reaction at such a time, but shame? Why should shame take center stage over fear? Indeed, at the end of *Parashas Va'yechi* (50:15) when the brothers acknowledged that now that Yaakov *Avinu* had left this world, and it was they and Yosef – without any parental interference – they had reason to become anxious. They wondered if now that their father's protection was history, Yosef might take revenge. Even after years of reconciliation with Yosef, and living in Egypt as beneficiaries of his extraordinary generosity, they feared repercussions. If this is how they felt now, they surely felt fear when they first heard the words, "Ani Yosef, I am Yosef." Why does *Rashi* say that they were disconcerted due to the *bushah*, embarrassment?

Horav Gershon Liebman, zl, Rosh Yeshivah of Novoradok in France, explains that this allows us a window into the extraordinary level of *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, evinced by the *Shivtei Kah*, tribes of Hashem, the brothers/sons of Yaakov *Avinu*. For them the emotion of embarrassment superseded the emotion of (personal) fear. Fear is an unknown: Will I be punished? Will I not be punished? Will I get into trouble for what I did? Will I not? *Bushah*, embarrassment is an absolute reality. It is the cognitive realization and acknowledgement that one has done something negative for which he is ashamed. When this *bushah* involves men of such spiritual stature as the *Shivtei Kah*, it constitutes *bushah nitzchis*, eternal shame. Such shame trumps any physical fear that they might have felt. Thus, all they were concerned about was the spiritual humiliation with which they would now be compelled to live.

ויפול על צוארי בנימן אחיו ובנימן בכה על צואריו

Then he fell upon his brother Binyamin's neck and wept; and Binyamin wept upon his neck. (45:14)

Chazal (quoted by *Rashi*) comment that Yosef and Binyamin wept over the destruction of the Sanctuaries that would be burnt in their respective territories: the two *Batei Mikdash* that would stand in Binyamin's portion of *Eretz Yisrael*, and *Mishkan Shiloh* in the portion of Yosef's son, Ephraim. The question is obvious: Why weep over the destruction of the other's territory? What about his own personal loss? Yosef should have wept over the *Mishkan*, and Binyamin should have poured out his emotion over the *Batei Mikdash*. The question came up during the emotional meeting between two *Admorim*, *Chassidic* leaders, who, albeit having survived the Holocaust by escaping from Europe, saw the tragic decimation of their *Chassidus* with the murder of thousands of their followers. The *Belzer Rebbe* and the *Gerrer Rebbe*, the *Imrei Emes*, met in *Eretz Yisrael*. These two leaders of the largest *Chassidic* courts in Poland were devastated by the destruction. The anomaly of Yosef and Binyamin's "misplaced" fears arose. Their answer was succinct and typical: "One weeps for his friend's destruction. One does not cry over his own losses. He moves on and rebuilds."

One takes the pain of loss and replants it as the foundation of his next achievement. The *Ponovezher Rav, zl*, lost his *yeshivah* and most of his family during the Holocaust. He came to *Eretz Yisrael* physically broken and emotionally distraught. Yet, he did not for one moment defer to his pain. He made up his mind to apply all of his strength to rebuilding. He was asked how he was able to reconcile himself with the pain of the loss of his congregation, his *yeshivah* and his family. He replied, "Every tear is another brick in the Ponovezh infrastructure. Every *krechtz*, moan, is another *shtender*, lectern, in its *bais hamedrash*. I am applying the pain as a building block, as the muscle, the source of energy, for continuing to build."

Perhaps we may supplement an alternative thought. When a community sustains a major calamity, its leader experiences a dual misfortune. He feels for the loss of the community; its pain, its deprivation. He also feels a personal and private bereavement. These were "his" community, "his" students, "his" friends, "his" colleagues. A true leader does not allow his personal pain to control him. He moves on. He has to think of others. Another leader, however, can be sensitive to his colleague's personal pain. Yosef wept for Binyamin's personal loss, his

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

ובני בנימין בלע, ובכר ... חופים וארד

Binyamin's sons: Bela, Becher...Chuppim and Ard. (46:21)

The names that Binyamin gave his sons were unique in the sense that each name in some way alluded to Yosef and the troubles that he had encountered. *Chazal* (*Sotah* 36b) elaborate upon the meaning of each name. It demonstrates to us how overcome with grief Binyamin was over the loss of his only brother (from the same mother, Rachel *Imeinu*). Of particular interest is the name *Chuppim*, which he gave "because he (Yosef) did not see my *chupah*, marriage canopy, and I did not see his *chupah*." The lesson to be derived from here, comments the *Ponovezher Rav, zl*, is the degree of grief with which Binyamin lived his life. During all the years that Yosef was missing, never did Binyamin's faith and hope waver that perhaps, by some remote chance, Yosef, his lost brother, would return. What a powerful lesson and example of *hishtatfus b'tzaar ha'zulas*, sharing in the pain of another Jew. Every time Binyamin would call or speak to one of his ten sons – and it was often – he was reminded of Yosef and of the travail that he was experiencing. If his brother was suffering, so would he. How did his personal suffering ease Yosef's plight? It did not, but, when one Jew suffers pain, his brother should feel it, because we are all family.

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, was wont to underscore the name *Chuppim*, Binyamin's second youngest son. With this name, Binyamin recalled two aspects of his separation from Yosef: "He did not see my *chupah*; and I did not see his *chupah*." The *Rosh Yeshivah* taught that this is an understandable milestone for Binyamin to record. How much he would have wanted his brother to share in his *simchah*, joy; to dance with him, to play an integral role at this special event in his life. This is all comprehensible and acceptable. The fact that he grieved over his personal lack of attendance at Yosef's marriage canopy is in and of itself a plateau of emotional sharing and caring which goes beyond the norm. Imagine, Binyamin lamented the fact that he could not share in his brother's joy. This is pure selflessness at its apex. He wanted to share and give joy to his brother on his auspicious day, and, if he could not, he had a reason to grieve. This is the pinnacle of *hishtatfus*, sharing, because it is all about "him," not "me." The only way that one can achieve such an elevated level of caring is by always thinking only of others and not of oneself.

Sponsored in memory of our dear father and grandfather

Harry Weiss צבי בן יואל ז"ל

By Morry & Judy Weiss, Erwin & Myra Weiss and Grandchildren Gary & Hildee Weiss, Jeff & Karen Weiss, Zev & Rachel Weiss, Elie & Sara Weiss, & Brian

"Love and memories are gifts from G-d that death cannot destroy"

Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, ©All rights reserved

prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum