

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON VAYEISHEV - 5758

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"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Parshas Vayeishev

Nice Guy's Finish Second -- Second in Command to Pharaoh!
(Rabbi Frand quotes both insights this week from the book 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 Pharaoh's Court were also thrown into jail. We need to understand what it was like to be in jail with two officers of Pharaoh'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 Pharaoh 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 Pharaoh'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 Pharaoh 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: "Madua peneichem ra'im hayom?" (Why are your faces troubled today?) 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 [The Jewish Nation's].

The Significance of 'Eight' -- Outside the Forces of Nature Earlier in the parsha, we learn about the incident of Yosef with the wife of Potiphar. She tried to seduce Yosef. Yosef refused -- "...How can I do this terribly wicked deed?..." [Bereshis 39:9] Finally, when she cornered him alone and grabbed hold of his garment, rather than accede to her will, he fled and ran out of the house (va'yanos vayetze haChutzah). There is a very famous Medrash in Tehillim on the verse "The Sea saw and fled..." [Psalms 114:3] The Medrash says that when the Jewish people came to the Red Sea, the Sea saw the coffin of Yosef and fled. In the words of the Medrash, "It fled because of the one who fled." In the merit of the one who withheld and did not succumb to his passions, the Sea split for Israel. What is the connection between the merit of Yosef and the splitting of the Red Sea? If one looks in the parsha one will notice a peculiar thing. The expression "va'yanos haChutzah" (and he fled outside) is repeated four times in the narrative. What is the significance of this? We should all be familiar with the term "Vayotze oso ha'Chutzah" (and He took him outside). That

terminology was used in Parshas Lech Lecha in the Covenant between the Pieces [Bereshis 15:5]. We find there that G-d took out Avraham -- haChutzah (outside). The Medrash comments that G-d told Avraham, "Go out from your constellation" -- go out from the normal forces of nature. "You, Avraham, are above nature. You are not beholden to the powers of nature. Even if by nature, you shouldn't have children, you will in fact be the father of great nations. You are bigger than nature." Implicit in the words "Vayotze oso ha'Chutzah" is the power to overcome nature. That ability of a Jew to be superior to nature and nature's dictates was the attribute that Yosef employed over here. When everything in nature would suggest that he had to succumb to the seductions of Potiphar's wife, Yosef was able to invoke the power of Avraham his great-grandfather, who was outside the power of nature and Yosef too overcame his particular nature and did not succumb. Therefore, when his coffin came to the Red Sea, whose nature it is to flow, in Yosef's merit, the Red Sea split. Nature was suspended. The sea fled before the one who fled. The one who overcame nature has the power to suspend the nature of the sea. The Shemen HaTov goes one step further. He brings a Sefer HaPardes who says a fascinating insight. (We are delving here onto the fringes of Kabbalah and we can only speculate what the Sefer HaPardes means.) The Sefer HaPardes says that there are 112 verses in Parshas VaYeishev. Out of those 112 verses, every single verse begins with a vov, with the exception of 8 verses! [NOTE: The count of eight verses begins only after Pasuk 3 where the series of Vov verses actually begin. Do not count from the beginning of the parsha, but rather from Pasuk 3.] The Sefer HaPardes says the 8 verses that do not begin with a vov correspond to the 8 days between the birth of a boy and his circumcision. They allude to Milah, which is done on the 8th day. The Shemen HaTov suggests that all the incidents of Parshas VaYeishev are one big vov. And this happened, and this happened, and this happened... It is all one big story -- one event emerging from the other. It is all one big cause and effect. The Torah tells us that this may be the way things work in the outside world. History is one thing leading to another to another. But the life of a Jew is above nature. The 8 verses correspond to Milah. According to traditional literature, 7 connotes nature -- the number of days in a week; while 8 connotes the property of being above nature. That is why circumcision is on the 8th day, because Milah is I'maaleh min haTeva (above nature). Jews are above nature, because that is what G-d told Avraham Avinu. He took him outside and told him "You are above nature." The 8 verses that don't have the vov tell us something about the entire remainder of the parsha. None of it is a 'vov'. Nothing is just cause and effect. It is not just a story. It is not just natural happenstance. It is all above nature. There is, in effect, a grand plan. Nothing in history is just coincidence. Israel has no Mazal -- we are above all that! One does not have to be a genius to make the connection to the 8 days of Chanukah, which are also supra natural. We all understand that the miracle of the jug of oil was a miracle. But we also have to know that the miracle of the oil reveals that the victory in battle is also not nature -- because nothing is nature. The Jewish people live a miraculous existence -- outside the forces of nature.

Sources and Personalities Sefer HaPardes -- Halachic compendium, from the school of Rashi, includes some of his legal decisions. Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.com Technical Assistance by David Hoffman; Balt, MD dhoffman@torah.org - RavFrاند, Copyright (c) 1997 by Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc. <http://www.torah.org/>

Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz Vayeishev

We read in this week's parashah of Yosef's dream in which he saw his eleven brothers as eleven stars. At the end of the Pesach Seder, we sing of these eleven stars: "Who knows 'eleven'? I know 'eleven!' 'Eleven' are the stars." We mention these stars at the Seder to remind us, explains R' Elazar Shach shlita (the Ponovezh Rosh Hayeshiva), that even when the brothers sold Yosef, they remained as lofty as the stars. This is so because their act was based upon halachic reasoning and their understanding of how the Torah called upon them to react towards Yosef. Thus, when the brothers stood before Yosef almost 22 years later - before he revealed his identity to them, they were able to say to each other (42:21), "Indeed we are guilty concerning our brother inasmuch as we saw his heartfelt anguish when he pleaded with us and we paid

no heed." They did not recriminate over their decision to sell, or even kill, Yosef, merely over the fact that they ignored his pleas for mercy. From the time that the brothers sold Yosef until the time they stood before him in Egypt, 22 years passed - 22 Rosh Hashanahs, 22 Yom Kippurs, and 22 months of Elul, i.e., 22 seasons of repentance. Undoubtedly, the brothers constantly revisited their actions and searched themselves for any sin. The only sin that they could identify, the Torah implies, is that they did not answer Yosef's cries. And yet, when Yosef revealed himself to the brothers (in the parashah read two weeks from now), when they heard the two words, "I'm Yosef," "They could not answer him, for they were shaken before him" (45:3). Why did Yosef's words have such an impact? R' Shach explains that when the brothers engaged in introspection during those 22 years, Yosef was not before them. Literally or figuratively, his striped coat was before them, but they never saw Yosef as a person. Only when their brother declared "I am Yosef" did they first assess him as a person, rather than because of his outer trappings. Chazal observe, "If Yosef's brothers could not withstand the two words, 'I am Yosef,' how will we withstand G-d's rebuke after we have lived our lives"? The brothers' mistake is a common one, R' Schach explains, except that we not only judge others, we judge ourselves superficially. What will be, however, when we stand before G-d without our outer trappings?!

(Haggadah Shel Pesach Avi Ezri)...

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DRASHA PARSHAS VAYEISHEV -- PRISONER OF UNCONSCIOUS

Near the end of this week's parsha, the Torah tells how Yoseph is falsely accused of adultery and is sent to prison. During Yoseph's detention "Hashem was with Yoseph, He was endowed with charm and had much favor in the eyes of the warden. In fact, the warden placed all the other prisoners in Yoseph's custody and Yoseph was in charge of all their duties. The warden trusted everything that Yoseph did and, everything that Yoseph discharged was successful" (Genesis 39:21-23). In addition to the Divine Providence that cloaked Yoseph, another striking incident occurred. Back at Pharaoh's palace, the king's was served wine with an insect floating in it, and a foreign substance was baked into Pharaoh's bread. The baker and butler were both jailed for those breaches, and were placed in Yoseph's charge. After a year in prison, they both dreamt a strange dream. Yoseph, Divinely ordained, interpreted each dream in amazingly accurate fashion. He predicted that the baker would be executed for his infraction while the wine steward would be returned to his former position and stature. Yoseph, convinced at the power of his predictions, did not stop with mere interpretations. He implored the wine steward to discuss his own plight with Pharaoh. "If only you would think of me when Pharaoh benefits you, and mention me to Pharaoh, then you will get me out of here," pleaded Yoseph (Genesis 40:14). Yoseph erred. The wine-steward completely ignored Yoseph's requests and left him to languish in prison for another two years. In fact, upon mentioning Yoseph to Pharaoh, the butler even referred to him in a very disparaging manner. The midrash explains that this response, or lack thereof, was a heavenly punishment. Yoseph should not have urged a mortal man to be the vehicle of his release. He should have rather placed more faith in Hashem. Many commentaries are bothered by this midrash. They ask, "is it not one's duty to employ the help of others? Why should Yoseph have relied solely on Hashem? What is wrong with asking for help from below instead of relying solely on the One Above?"

My grandfather, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, of blessed memory, had a keen sense of direction, not only in spiritual life, but on the mundane streets of the city as well. He was once in a car together with a colleague, a Rosh Yeshiva (dean) of a prestigious Yeshiva. That particular Rosh Yeshiva was a nervous individual and panicked when the driver, a student of his, lost his way in an area of the city that was not accustomed to welcoming rabbis with open arms. The young man wanted desperately to get back on the highway.

"Please," pleaded the Rosh Yeshiva of his student, "freg a politzmahn (ask a policeman)!" Reb Yaakov interrupted. "You needn't ask. I know the way." Reb Yaakov turned his attention to the driver. "Continue for two blocks, make a left. After the first light, you make another left. Make an immediate right and you will see the entrance to the highway that

we need." Reb Yaakov's colleague was not convinced. "Please," he insisted of the driver, "ask a policeman!" The student felt obliged to listen to his Rosh Yeshiva, and spotted a police car on the other side of the street, two blocks away. Quickly he made a U-turn, drove the two blocks, and stopped the officer. "Excuse me, officer, asked the nervous driver, "how do you get back on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway?" The officer saw the two sages in the back seat of the car and realized the severity of the situation. He began to explain the directions. "First of all, turn back around and go four blocks. Then make a left. After the first light, you make another left. Make an immediate right and you will see the entrance to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway." My grandfather turned to his colleague and smiled. "Nu, my friend," whispered Reb Yaakov, "now that a stranger said it, do you feel better?"

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (who incidentally was not the other Rosh Yeshiva) explains that there are two types of individuals. There are those who have no heavenly signs, and the thought of Hashem is quite distant from them. Then there are those whose every action is blessed with the guidance of a spiritual force. It is almost as if Hashem is walking hand in hand with them or even as if Hashem is sitting next to them. Yoseph should have realized that the events that transpired in the prison cell were supernaturally divine. Within one year of entering prison, he is charged with the welfare of every prisoner. Then, two Egyptian stewards were sent to be with him, and each had a dream that Yoseph, divinely inspired, interpreted in prophetic fashion. At that point, Yoseph should have understood that his freedom was imminent. Hashem, through His own mysterious yet miraculous ways would surely get him out of jail. The wine-steward was extremely impressed when Yoseph's interpretation proved correct. Yoseph did not have to implore the steward twice with requests for mercy. When G-d is really in the backseat, there is no need to ask for directions. Good Shabbos!

Dedicated in memory of Joseph Jungreis -- Reb Yoel Zvi ben Reb Tuvia HaLevi By Joel & Marilyn Mandel (C) 1997 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Yeshiva of South Shore <http://www.yoss.org/> - rmk@torah.org 516-328-2490 Fax 516-328-2553 <http://www.torah.org/learning/drasha/Drasha>, Copyright (c) 1997 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis, Inc. Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Mesivta at Mesivta Ateres Yaakov, the High School Division of Yeshiva of South Shore, <http://www.yoss.org/>

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH PARASHAT VAYESHEV SICHAN OF HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT" A

A Portrait of Yaakov - In Praise of Self-Restraint
Summarized by Danny Orenbuch

Parashat Vayeshev marks the beginning of a revolution in Sefer Bereishit, a revolution both in Yaakov's personal status and in the status of his family - the fundamental kernel of the Jewish nation. Until now, Sefer Bereishit has recounted inspiring stories - parshiot of ascent and elevation towards the establishment of Am Yisrael. It is true that in these parshiyot we have encountered conflict - between Yitzhak and Yishmael, between Yitzhak and the shepherds - but the avot invariably emerge victorious. Yaakov, too, encounters serious conflict - first with Esav and later with Lavan, with the angel and with the camp of Esav's messengers - but in each case he wins. And now, specifically here, when it seems that everything is coming together - things start falling apart, and as Rashi comments in the name of the midrash: "Yaakov wished to dwell in peace, but Yosef's problems plagued him. Tzaddikim wish to dwell in peace, God says to them: Is that which is set aside for them in Olam Ha-Ba not enough for them, that they also want peace and quiet in this world?!" (37:2) Indeed, Yaakov's status is undermined at every step of the way. First in dreams, where he becomes a servant prostrating himself before Yosef, and then in the story that the brothers concoct regarding Yosef's violent demise. And later, when they are forced to seek food for a second time in Egypt, the midrash recounts: "Yehuda said to them, 'Wait for the old man until all the bread in the house is gone.'" (Tanchuma 8). This attitude towards Yaakov, calling him "the old man," points to an erosion of his status. All in all, throughout these parshiyot, Yaakov slowly changes from someone who leads into someone who is led. We see no initiative on his part, sometimes even a deafening silence which we find difficult to understand: "But his

father kept the matter in mind" (37:11).

Moreover, this descent is a descent of the entire family. If until now the disputes and problems were generated from without, here we are faced with internal, family strife - hatred between brothers, sale into slavery - and Yaakov is unsuccessful in dealing with it. It seems that the entire structure is beginning to crumble and topple... But it is specifically in Yaakov's descent that we find his greatness. Precisely that deafening silence which we find in these parshiyot is the great message which Yaakov is conveying to us. We have encountered his silence in the past - following the incident of Shimon and Levi. Although Yaakov does convey a reproach ("You have brought trouble on me to make me odious among the inhabitants of the land"), he takes no action. Yaakov knows that sometimes it is necessary to keep quiet and restrain oneself - because any reaction will cause division and even more serious danger. In the case of Reuven, too ("And it came to pass when Israel dwelt in that land, Reuven went and lay with Bilha, his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it" [35:22]) - Israel hears but does not react. And the midrash there points out Yaakov's wisdom in that he knew that any reaction on his part would cause Reuven to cross over to Esav's camp, and therefore he chose to restrain himself and keep silent. Another example is that of Yosef's dream, in which he reveals his assumption of "royal status", as it were, to his brothers and his father - another seeming slight of Yaakov's honor. He does scold his son, but does nothing beyond that - "but his father kept the matter in mind." Yaakov is aware of the mistake he has made in his sons' upbringing, as even the Rambam writes: A person must never favor one child over the others.

Yaakov, by favoring Yosef, ultimately causes the brotherly hatred and all its consequences. Yaakov is aware of this, and chooses silence and self-restraint - for fear of making things even worse. And indeed it is only through this silence and restraint that the unity of the family is ultimately maintained, and Sefer Bereishit closes on a note of unity between the brothers, presenting a sound beginning for the building of Am Yisrael.

In Yaakov's behavior there is a message for each one of us. Very often it is difficult for a person to control himself and keep silent, whether in education or in any other area. But sometimes an unnecessary word is simply harmful. Therefore sometimes it is important, despite the pain involved, to know how to strangle the shout before it escapes, to understand that silence will contribute more, and that specifically through that restraint it is possible to achieve one's true aims.

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<http://www.ou.org/torah/ti/> Torah Insights for Shabbat Parshat Vayeshev 5758 December_20, 1997 Upon reviewing the stories of two of Yaakov's twelve sons, Yosef and Yehudah, one may wonder why Yehudah's descendants were ultimately crowned with the kingship of Israel rather than those of Yosef. Stories regarding their chastity are told of both. After her first and second husbands died, both sons of Yehudah, Tamar dressed as a prostitute and seduced her former father-in-law. Yosef, on the other hand, when confronted by his master Potiphar's wife, who propositioned him in the privacy of her mansion, ran away. Yehudah acceded to temptation; Yosef resisted. Earlier in the Parshah the Torah tells us that Yosef was thrown into a pit by his brothers and about to be killed. What does Yehudah do? He suggests that the brothers sell Yosef to a passing caravan of Ishmaelite merchants. Though he is the leader of the brothers, he does not recommend that Yosef be retrieved from the pit and brought back to their father. Moreover, Yehudah, according to certain midrashim, married a Canaanite woman--something even Esav did not do--at a time when his family was anxious about the children intermarrying. Why, one wonders, was Yehudah rewarded with the sovereign leadership of Israel?_ A good leader is not one who is perfect, but one who falters and finds the strength of purpose to make a fresh start through repentance and improved actions.

The Talmud tells us, "Four died through the serpent's machinations"--that is, they died because all people are doomed to die and

not on account of their personal sins: Binyamin, Amram, Yishai and Caleiv. Binyamin was the most perfect of Yaakov's sons, but he was never featured as a leader. The son accepted as leader, by the brothers and their father, was Yehudah. Yehudah's public admission of his relations with Tamar made a great impact in Heaven. Following G-d's forgiveness of him, the angels pronounced the blessing (which later formed part of the Amidah), "Blessed are you, Lord, who is gracious and forgives repeatedly." While the sincere confession acknowledges imperfection, it demonstrates moral maturity and responsibility. The baal teshuvah has the courage to admit his failures and uses those setbacks to better himself. Leaders are not born perfect, but they constantly strive toward that goal. This is Yehudah and his claim to royalty.

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Part One: It's All in the Details One of the fundamental suppositions of RASHI is that there are not--nay there cannot be--in the Torah any unnecessary or "trivial" details. Whenever such an ostensible detail appears in the Torah text, RASHI is quick to summon an Aggadah which attributes to it the significance it lacks on superficial appearance. Here is an illustration from this week's Parsha: Bereishit 37: 24-25: "[Yosef's brothers] took him and cast him into a pit, an empty pit lacking water. And they sat down to eat bread; and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, an Ishmaelite caravan approaching from Gilead, its camels laden with balm, balsam, and ladanum, which they were transporting to Egypt."

QUESTION: Which details in these verses appear "trivial"? ANSWER 1: The reference to the empty pit being containing no water. RASHI treats this classic redundancy by arguing that the Torah emphasizes the lack of water to indicate that it was only water which was absent in that pit, but other items--particularly snakes and scorpions--were present in it. In other words, Yosef's life was still in danger at this point in time! ANSWER 2: The identification of the cargo is "unnecessary." With Yosef's life hanging in the balance; with his fate about to be determined between death and slavery; who cares what the Ishmaelite camels carried? QUESTION: What significance does RASHI attach to these last details? ANSWER: They remind us that God provides recompense for every deed. Ishmaelite caravans ordinarily carried foul-smelling cargoes, such as kerosene and tar on account of Yosef's merit, however, this one's cargo was sweet-smelling [Considering the first point, however, we might add that Yosef has demerits as well, otherwise why emphasize (via the redundancy) that he was still in mortal jeopardy in the pit?]

Part Two: Where the Details Are The relevant details of a story, however, are not always readily apparent. In the story of the sale of Yosef, for instance, some pertinent details are withheld from us for a while. Read the following verse: Bereishit 42:21: "[The brothers] said one to another: We are guilty regarding our brother because we saw his distress as he implored us, and we didn't listen. That is why we are now in distress."

QUESTION: Which of these details are absent in the earlier story (chapter. 37)? ANSWER: In the earlier narrative, Yosef is not described as imploring his brothers. QUESTION: Why is that information "withheld" from us at that stage in the narrative? [HINT: See RAMBAN on 42:21!] ANSWER: RAMBAN provides three answers. (1) In chapter 37, Yosef as well, as his brothers have their faults. Yosef tattles and lords it over them, and they are too quick to condemn him. Were the Torah to take note of Yosef crying out, it would tip the affective balance entirely in his favor. In chapter 42, on the other hand, we are dealing with the brothers' remorse, not their earlier cruelty. (2) It would have been natural for Yosef to have cried out in that predicament; whatever is natural is also self-understood; and whatever is self-understood need not be explicitly mentioned. [See the very first point we made in the Parsha of VAYISHLAH.] (3) Abbreviating the "event" and elongating the "account" is an appropriate literary device. The detail of Yosef's crying out is cited in the account because there it affects the brothers, whereas it appears to have had no effect on them at the time of the event itself.

Part Three: Who's That Man I Saw You With? "That's No Man, That's...." When Yosef goes out to find his brothers in Shekhem, he suffers an initial setback: Unbeknownst to him they have moved on to Dotan. Yosef wanders about the outskirts of the city until "a man" sets him straight. A comparison between RASHI's commentary and those of IBN EZRA and RAMBAN (all to 37:15) will be most illuminating.

A. Man or Angel? RASHI: "It was [the archangel] Gavriel, as it is written (Daniel 9:11): "Gavriel, the man." IBN EZRA: "According to the PESHAT, a passerby." QUESTION: What compelled RASHI to abandon the straightforward sense of the verse (PESHAT)--as determined by IBN EZRA--and seek refuge in an Aggadah? ANSWER: Two considerations might have influenced his decision: the striking "coincidental"

nature of their encounter, and the man's knowledge of the brothers' whereabouts.

QUESTION: How might IBN EZRA treat these issues? ANSWER: Given the history of Yosef's brothers and the city of Shekhem (i.e., the rape of Dinah), it would have been more remarkable if anyone in the vicinity was not aware of their every move! [In contemporary terms we would venture that their photos adorned the walls of every post-office in Shekhem bearing their picture with the caption: WANTED: DEAD.]

B. Is there "Coincidence?" RAMBAN: God summoned for him a guide--unaware--so he would fall into [his brothers'] hands. This is what our Sages meant when they referred to these persons as "angels." This episode is not narrated for naught, but to inform us that "God's counsel will triumph." RAMBAN is trying to synthesize, here, the commentaries of his predecessors. [This is, by the way, a deliberate trait as outlined in his Prologue to the Humash.] In essence, he says, both are correct. IBN EZRA is correct and the "man" was a mortal passerby; RASHI, however, is correct, too, since mortals who serve as divine agents are regarded, rabbinically, as "angels." Their appearance is due to Providence, not coincidence.

[EXTRA: The word "angel" derives from the Greek "angelos" which, literally, means a messenger. In contemporary English we usually reserve "angel" for divine messengers, although such expressions as "angel of mercy"--for a nurse--preserve the other usage. Take several English translation of the TORAH and see whether they translate all occurrences of MAL'AKH the same way. Compare them, if you wish with the Aramaic TARGUM of ONKELOS; sometimes he translates MAL'AKH as IZGEDA--a messenger--and other times as MAL'AKHA--an angel. QUESTION: Can you see a pattern to the different usages?]

C. Why did Yosef Merit? In the commentary of RASHI (to 37:25) which we cited in the opening passage, Yosef's merit earned him a trip to Egypt in an incense bearing caravan, rather than one carrying the usual Ishmaelite cargo of tar and naphtha. QUESTION: What was that merit? ANSWER: Apparently, the respect he showed his father by following his instructions to report on the health of his brothers and their sheep. QUESTION: Does ordinary reverence for parents entitle one to a reward? Isn't Yosef expected to honor his father's wishes? ANSWER: Yosef's reverence, here, was extraordinary. As RASHBAM notes (to 37:15): This [episode] was written to tell Yosef's praise, that he didn't want to return but he searched for them until he found them. Even though he knew that they were jealous of him, he went and sought them out since his father had ordered him to "report to me."

[EXTRA: 37:11 states, explicitly, "His brothers envied him and father kept it in mind." Since Yaakov knew (a) that Yosef's brothers harbored him ill will, and (b) since Shekhem was dangerous territory for any son of Yaakov at any time (see 34:30) how could he have sent Yosef there--alone!?!]

II. "KEMO" AND "KELOMAR" -- WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? As we have explained previously, one of Rashi's goals in his commentary is to explain new and unusual words or expressions in the Torah. One way of explaining is by paraphrasing a word or expression. Rashi often accomplishes this by using the Hebrew word "KELOMAR," which translates "in other words." However, Rashi also uses another Hebrew word, "KEMO," which seems to connote the same idea. Are these words interchangeable or not? If these words have different usages, then when does Rashi use the word "KELOMAR" and when does he use the word "KEMO"?

Although Rashi uses both these words quite frequently ("KEMO" 883 times and "KELOMAR" 82 times in his Torah commentary), there are 24 instances when Rashi uses BOTH these expressions to explain the same word. These instances, then, can clearly demonstrate the differences between these two words. One of those times occurs in our Parsha. Referring to the brothers who saw Yosef approaching, the Torah (Genesis 37:18) tell us "And when they saw him from far away, even before he came near to them, (VAYITNAKLU OTO) they conspired against him to slay him." On this verse, commenting on the word OTO, Rashi says "KEMO ITO, IMO, KELOMAR EILAV." This translates as: "This is similar to with him (ITO) or with him (IMO), or equivalent to against him (EILAV)." Before we analyze the difference between KELOMAR and KEMO, we must first understand what bothered Rashi that he needed to explain this rather common word (OTO) in the first place. The verb VAYITNAKLU-The conspired is written in the HITPAEL form, which means that it is reflexive, i.e. it is a verb one does to oneself (for example HITLABESH-he dressed himself). This HITPAEL form, then, can never take a direct object. And yet, in this verse, this reflexive verb has the direct object of "OTO". This forces Rashi to explain that the word OTO in this situation cannot mean simply him, as even in English, the phrase "they conspired him" makes no sense. Thus, Rashi explains ITO as either with him or toward him.

Returning to our original question, what, then, is the difference between KELOMAR and KEMO? When Rashi wishes to use a similar word to help us understand (ITO or IMO for OTO), he says "KEMO." However, when the words are explained only with an equivalent phrase, which is not close to the original word (like EILAV-against him), he says "KELOMAR."

Two further illustrations make this difference even clearer. On the verse "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, (BISHAGAM) for he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years" (Genesis 6:3), Rashi explains the unusual word "BISHAGAM." Rashi says (KEMO) like BISHAGAM with a SEGOL

(and not a PATACH under the SHIN, as in our verse)." He continues "(KELOMAR) This is equivalent to saying 'because': there is also this about him; that he is only flesh and, nevertheless, he does not humble himself before Me." The explanation of KEMO is similar in wording and root of the original word in the text, while the KELOMAR explanation is equivalent, but very removed from the original word. In a similar vein, Rashi tries to explain the unusual expression of "OD KOL YIMAI" in "(OD KOL YIMAI) so long as the earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22). First Rashi says "KELOMAR TAMID-this is equivalent to always," and then Rashi continues "KEMO 'OD TUMATO VO'-as in 'the defilement continues with him'." Thus, when Rashi uses the same word and root (OD) to help explain the word, he employs KEMO, but when he gives an equivalent translation, which is far from the word itself, he uses KELOMAR.

III. WHAT THE TORAH TELLS US BY NOT SAYING ANYTHING In Parshat Toldot, we explained that a Torah dialogue often consists of "VAYOMER... VAYOMER... VAYOMER... etc." The speakers always alternate, usually without mentioning their names after their initial words. We also explained that when the name of the speaker is again mentioned later in the dialogue (totally unnecessary), it connotes hesitation and deliberation before speaking those words. Our Parsha shows a variation of this theme.

When the brothers were deciding what to do with Yosef, the verse says "And Reuben heard it, and he saved him from their hands; and said, Let us not kill him" (Genesis 37:21). But the following verse then says "AND REUBEN SAID TO THEM, Shed no blood, but throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him from their hands, to deliver him to his father again." We already know that Reuven was speaking. Why was it necessary to again say "Reuben said to them" if the second verse is merely a continuation of his speech in the previous verse? Why does the Torah insert these "extra" words of "VAYOMER ALEIHEM REUVEN"? Therefore, Nehama points out that this unusual wording signifies that there were two separate "speeches" spoken at two different times by Reuven. Between verses 21 and 22, there was a break -- something happened. A fight ensued between the brothers and Reuven, and they accused him of taking Yosef's side against them. It is then, to save face with his brothers, that Reuven amended his original suggestion to refrain from killing Yosef at all and spoke a second time. He suggested in verse 22 that Yosef die by throwing him into the pit, killing him passively, rather than actively (while, all the time, intending to return later and save Yosef). Thus, while not actually describing this fight, the Torah tells us what happened merely by repeating the words "Reuben said."

* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Vayeshev Insights

Time Flies "Yosef, at the age of seventeen ... but he was a youth." (37:2) Have you noticed that the older you get, the quicker everything seems to go? Birthdays seem about nine months apart. Pesach gets closer to Succos every year. It seems as though our perception of the passage of time is proportional to the span of our years. When you're young, a day seems forever, and a week is beyond measurement. It's difficult to tell children to be patient because for them time has an entirely different reality. How many times do we buy the kids a present and say "Wait till we get home before you open it!" When we get home we find the wrapping is all over the back of the car. Rashi comments on the above verse that being "a youth" means that Yosef would "fix his hair." Can it be that Yosef the Tzadik was so vain? Or is Rashi hinting to something deeper? A king is obliged to have a haircut every day, in keeping with the dignity of his station in life. Yosef knew through prophecy that he would one day be a king, and in the impatience of youth, he couldn't wait for the prophecy to come true, so he "fixed his hair," trying, as it were, to hurry that moment closer by going through the motions of kingship. Ironically, when he eventually becomes a king in Egypt, it is not he who gives himself a haircut, but others. As much as we may try to force events in our impetuosity, to every thing there is a time and a place and a season under Heaven.

When Half Of Two Is Zero Yosef said to the Chamberlain of the Cupbearers: "If only you would think of me... and you will do me a kindness, if you please, and mention me to Pharaoh, then you would get me out of this building." (40:14) Every Rosh Hashana, all those who have come to this world pass before the King of Kings like sheep. One at a time, we are judged. The entire following year is decided at that moment. If everything is decided on Rosh Hashana and sealed on Yom Kippur, why should I bother to go out to work? If everything's decided anyway, why don't I just stay in bed and eat chocolates, and let my pay check arrive in the mail? Even though all our needs are met miraculously, Hashem requires that we make an effort, that we do

hishtadlus. The essential reason is so that we may cover up the miracle of G-d's providing for us. By making an effort, we make it look like our livelihood is a result of natural forces. We must never think that this effort has any connection with the results it seems to bring. If I get to work a little earlier and the sales figures show an increase, I shouldn't let myself think that my early mornings were the cause. Rather, everything at every moment is sent to me from Heaven. But how much effort is called hishtadlus and how much betrays a lack of faith? Yosef asked the Chamberlain of the Cupbearers twice to intercede on his behalf to Pharaoh. By his lack of trust in Hashem by asking the Chamberlain twice, Yosef languished in jail for two further years. Rabbi Chaim Brisker once asked Rabbi Shimon Shkop how long Yosef would have been kept in prison if he had only asked the Chamberlain once to help secure his release. Rabbi Shimon replied that had Yosef only asked once, he would have only spent one year in prison. Rabbi Chaim disagreed. "He wouldn't have had to spend any more time in prison at all. To try to secure his release by asking once is considered to be hishtadlus -- the human effort that Hashem expects of each of us. To ask twice showed a lack of trust in Hashem. So it would have been two years or nothing."

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman
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Business-Halacha Hilchos Choshen Mishpat Week Of Parshas Vayeishev

Purchasing Stolen Goods Question: Is it permitted to purchase items from a pawn shop that is suspected of being a front for stolen goods? If you are approached on a street corner and are offered the option of purchasing items at a very low price, are you allowed to do so?

Answer: A. It is forbidden to assist a thief in any way, whether in the actual act of stealing, transporting the stolen item, or helping to dispose of it. (Of course, it is permitted to help him transport it to return it to the original owner.)

Therefore, it is forbidden to purchase an item that is known to be stolen, or even an item that was probably stolen. We should therefore refrain from purchasing items on street corners, or at pawn shops that have a shady reputation. We should also be aware that if the price is too good to be true, the item being sold may have been stolen, and should be checked out. We should especially be careful when purchasing Tashmishi Kedusha, i.e. Sifrei Torah (Torah Scrolls), Tefillin, Mezuzos, and Seforim, even if new, to buy only from reputable people and not from someone unknown, even if he seems to have a valid story as to how he ended up with these items.

B. Despite all of the above, if an item has already been purchased at one of the above mentioned places, the probability is that the original owner has given up hope of ever seeing it again. Therefore, the sale is effective and the article belongs to the buyer.

Sources: The Halacha that it is forbidden to purchase a stolen article from a thief is stated in Bava Kama 118b-119a, Kiddushin 56b, and is brought down in the Rambam in Hilchos Geneivah (5:1-3) and in the Shulchan Oruch, Choshen Mishpat (356:1). The explanation given is that anyone who assists a thief is strengthening the hand of sinners, and is encouraging the thief to continue to steal. Our Rabbis have an expression for this - "It's not the rat that steals, it's the hole that steals". In other words, if the rat (aka the thief) would know that he wouldn't have a hole to conceal what he steals from others, he wouldn't steal. In our situation, the one who purchases from the thief is the "hole". This also applies to any other assistance that one might give a thief to aid him to be successful in his trade.

The Rivash in his Teshuvos (Ch. 108) says that the prohibition to assist a thief applies even if the buyer is uncertain that the object was stolen, but there are indications that it was (Raglayim L'Davar). For example, if the price is very low for no apparent reason, there is no warranty, or the seller clearly wants to get rid of the item as quickly as possible. The statement of the Rivash is mentioned in the Taz in Choshen Mishpat 356:1.

In the Shulchan Oruch, Choshen Mishpat (353:3), it says that if someone were to buy a stolen object from the thief after the owner has given up hope of ever receiving it again, the buyer acquires the object Halachically. This is because we have a combination of the original owner giving up hope (Yiyush) and the buyer transferring the object into his domain (Shinui Reshus).

Therefore, objects that were confiscated by the government, even if it was determined that they were taken for reasons that aren't Halachically valid (an example of this would be if it was taken as a lien on a blatantly unfair tax), or lost items that have been turned over to the police and are now being sold because no owner has stepped forward to claim them, although we should not assist them in the sale of the items, if a long time has elapsed from the time of the confiscation, they may be purchased. This is because the original owners have given up hope of ever getting their articles returned, and we have a situation of Yiyush and Shinui Reshus. Purchasing this item (in the case of improper confiscation) cannot be considered "providing a hole for the rat", since they would be confiscated whether there are buyers or not.

This week's class is based on a column by Rabbi Tzvi Shpitz, who is an Av Bet Din and Rosh Kollel in the Ramot neighborhood of Jerusalem. His column originally appears in Hebrew in Toda'ah, a weekly publication in Jerusalem. It has been translated and reprinted here with his permission and approval. Business-Halacha, Copyright (c) 1997 by Project Genesis, Inc. This class is translated and moderated by Rabbi Aaron Tendler of Yeshivas Ner Yisroel in Baltimore. atendler@torah.org. Project Genesis <http://www.torah.org/>

Looking High and Low Two statements may sometimes appear side by side in the Talmud even though the only thing connecting them is that they have the same author. This seems to be the case of one statement quoting Rabbi Tanchum regarding how high a Chanukah lamp may be placed above street level and another citing his interpretation of a passage in Chumash (Bereishis 37:24) about the pit into which Yosef's brothers cast him.

A closer look at this second statement may, however, suggest a subtle link between the subjects of both statements. "The pit was empty, with no water in it," says the Torah, and Rabbi Tanchum asks why it is necessary to repeat that there was no water in it if we have already been informed that it was empty. His conclusion is that the Torah wishes to stress that the pit was empty only of water but that it was inhabited by snakes and scorpions which miraculously did not harm the righteous Yosef. "Were his brothers aware of the presence of these deadly creatures?" asks Rambam. If so, they certainly would have been so impressed with this Heavenly sign of Yosef's righteousness that they would have ceased conspiring against him. His conclusion is that because the brothers were so high above the bottom of the pit where these creatures crept they did not notice them. Now, suggests one of the commentaries, we may see a link between Rabbi Tanchum's two statements. The Chanukah lamp, which is supposed to publicize the Chanukah miracle, cannot be noticed by those walking below if it is more than 20 cubits high. Yosef's brothers, on the other hand, could not notice the dangerous creatures at the bottom of the pit because it was too far below them. Shabbos 22a

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INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Har Nof Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld

SHABBOS 16 HALACHAH: USING A SHABBOS-CLOCK OPINIONS: The Gemara cites a Beraisa that says that a person is allowed to open his sluice gate, before Shabbos, to allow water to flow into his garden or field on Shabbos. Also, mid'Oraisa one may put wheat into a watermill before Shabbos and have the mill grind the wheat all Shabbos. The Rabanan, however, forbid letting a mill operate on Shabbos because it makes too much noise (according to Rabah). Can we learn from this Gemara whether or not it is permitted to set a Shabbos clock prior to Shabbos to perform Melachah on Shabbos?

(a) RAV MOSHE FEINSTEIN (IGROS MOSHE OC 4:60) forbids doing Melachah through a pre-set Shabbos timer. He says that although the Gemara permits certain actions to be done prior to Shabbos when the results of those actions will occur on Shabbos, that applies only when the process of the Melachah began prior to Shabbos. With Shabbos clocks, however, the entire Melachah begins on Shabbos. Rav Moshe writes two reasons why it should be prohibited to use a Shabbos timer. (1) One may not tell a non-Jew to do Melachah for him on Shabbos. The same way, one may not "tell," or program, a mechanical device to do Melachah for him on Shabbos. (2) Rashi (DH she'Yitchanu) in our Sugya explains that having a millstone operate on Shabbos is forbidden because the noise that it makes is a disgrace to Shabbos, and if people were to have their mills running on Shabbos, they would be transgressing the Mitzvah of honoring the Shabbos. Similarly, setting a Shabbos timer to do Melachah on Shabbos is a disgrace to Shabbos and a violation of the Mitzvah of Kavod Shabbos. Rav Moshe does, however, permit the use of a Shabbos timer for setting lights to go on and off. Even though he prefers to forbid the use of a Shabbos timer altogether, he permits using it for lights, because it was the accepted common practice in Europe to have a non-Jew extinguish and re-kindle the lights in the homes of Jews at given hours. We do not have to be more stringent with regard to a Shabbos timer. (b) Other authorities differ with Rav Moshe's ruling. The CHAZON ISH (OC 38:2,3) permits setting a Shabbos clock to perform Melachah on Shabbos. SHEMIRAS SHABBOS K'HILCHASAH also permits it. RAV SHLOMO ZALMAN AUERBACH (MINCHAS SHLOMO #11) even permits changing -- on Shabbos -- the time that a Shabbos timer is set to perform a Melachah by "turning the dial" in such a way that one "delays" the action that the Shabbos clock would have caused, because doing so is not considered to be performing any Melachah. ...