



# Parshas Vayeishev

# פרשת וישב

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<b>Roller Coaster - Ori Putterman ('14)</b> .....	1
<b>A Short Vort - Akiva Kra ('21)</b> .....	2
<b>An Indirect Sale - Benny Cohen ('23)</b> .....	2
<b>Uncertain Righteousness– Meir Ness ('22)</b> .....	3
<b>Yosef’s Sale And the Ten Martyrs - Samuel Gorman ('21)</b> .....	3
<b>Where Should We Place Our Faith– Yonatan Burns ('22)</b> .....	4
<b>Do Snitches Really Get Stiches?– Ezra Schechter ('22)</b> ..	5
<b>Yosef And Channukah - Moshe Lieberman ('24)</b> .....	5
<b>5 Minute Lomdus - Shimi Kaufman ('21)</b> .....	6
<b>Chumash B’iyun - Rabbi Mayer Schiller</b> .....	7
<b>Gedolim Glimpse: Rav Tzvi Frank- Meir Morell ('22)</b> ....	8
<b>Chassidus On The Parsha - Yeshurin Sorscher ('21)</b> .....	9
<b>Wisdom From the Haftorah -</b> .....	9
<b>Halacha Hashavuah - Yosef Weiner ('23)</b> .....	10
<b>From The Editors’ Desk</b> .....	11
<b>Parsha Puzzlers</b> .....	11
<b>The Elephant in the Room- Yisrael Dovid Rosenberg('23)</b> .....	12

### Roller Coaster: Yosef In Vayeishev

*Ori Putterman ('14)*

*In honor of Shema Koleinu’s 25th anniversary, we are proud to present articles throughout the year from past editors of the publication. This week’s Dvar Torah comes from Ori Putterman, who served as Editor-In-Chief of Shema Koleinu in the 2013-14 school year. Since graduating MTA, Ori went on to learn in Yeshivat Har Etzion, before eventually joining the Israeli Defense Forces. He is currently studying psychology and economics in Hebrew University.*

*Sefer Bereishis is a book filled with toldos, generations. From the toldos of the heaven and earth (2:4), to the toldos of Adam (5:1) and Noach (6:9), and including the toldos of non-Jewish characters such as Yishmael (25:12) and Eisav (36:1), it is fair to characterize the entire book as organized around this structure. The tenth and last toldos mentioned in Bereishis occurs in this week’s parsha, when the possuk says "eileh toldos Yaakov: Yosef..." (37:2). The story of Yaakov’s generations, and the evident focus on Yosef from the start of the journey, will take us all the way from this week’s parsha until the end of the sefer. We will analyze Yosef’s character in this week’s parsha, hoping that a careful reading will enable us to understand the various trials and tribulations that Yosef goes through.*

*Yosef starts off the parsha as the clearly favored son, despite being extremely naïve. Yosef receives the Kesones Pasim, a garment worn by the children of kings (Shmuel II 13:18). When the brothers leave with the sheep, Yosef stays as Yaakov’s right hand man. However, Yosef does not realize the animosity that his behavior engenders. While the brothers hate him to such an extreme that it affects their daily interactions, Yosef seems oblivious to them, and only serves to antagonize them further by describing to them ego-centric dreams, with him at the center, and the brothers’ symbolic representatives bowing down to him.*

*Unsurprisingly, this extreme lack of humility leads to jealousy on the part of the brothers. Taking Yosef down from his imagined throne, they strip him of his clothes and throw him into the pit. One can only imagine the young Yosef begging for mercy, unable to comprehend why this had happened to him. How had one so great fallen so*

far?

Eventually, Yosef makes it down to Egypt, and from the depths of the pit, he begins a meteoric rise to the top. Yosef oversees his master's house, with nary a supervisor in sight. And yet, it seems that once again, Yosef lets the external trappings of power define him. He is described as well-built and handsome, certainly a far cry from the miserable slave who was dragged involuntarily to Egypt. This once again leads to a negative reaction from the surrounding environment; this time, from his master's wife. Despite Yosef's protestations, one can hear in his arguments a touch of pride. "No one is greater than me in this house!" he exclaims. "Nothing is withheld from me; everything is in my hands." And so, once again, Yosef is stripped of his identifying clothing (the shirt that serves as irrevocable proof in the eyes of the Egyptian surrounding that he had really committed the crime he was accused of), and once again, ends up in a pit (as Yosef calls it, 40:15) of Egyptian prison.

For a third time, Yosef ends up at the top. Again, he finds favor in the eyes of the one in charge, so much so that he exists under no supervision. However, whereas before, Yosef was chief of household for Pharaoh's captain of the guard, here, he is merely assistant warden of the pit. When Yosef describes his situation to the chief steward, he claims that he was stolen from the land of the Hebrews and that he is entirely blameless for his descent into the jail. However, this does not help his case - he ends up forgotten, rotting in the cell for another two years.

What is the meaning of this tripartite rise and fall? Why does God constantly uplift Yosef, only to have him fall (into Egypt) further and further (into the pit)?

We will suggest that God is trying to teach Yosef about leadership, humility, and taking responsibility. Although after his first fall, Yosef professes a fear of God which prevents him from sinning with Potiphar's wife, this fear is

overshadowed by his emphasis on external beauty and status, as we saw above. In his second fall, Yosef learns to be even more humble, and serves the prisoners (40:4), despite him being of higher status. However, he still seeks to avoid responsibility for his downfall, blaming others. Yosef only is redeemed from the pit when he learns to place God at the center of causality (41:16), and accepts responsibility for the entire people of Egypt by suggesting not just an interpretation to the dream, but also a solution to the problem.

That is what we must strive for in our leadership - leaders who know how to serve, who accept responsibility, who are humble, and do not "raise their hearts above their brothers" (*Devarim* 17:20). Leaders like that, as we see from the story of Yosef, can save the entire Jewish nation.

### An Indirect Sale

*Senny Cohen (23)*

In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Vayeishev*, we read about the sale of Yosef down to Egypt. The Rashbam has an interesting theory regarding this story. His posits that after the brothers put Yosef in the pit and sat down to have their meal, Yehudah came up with his plan. Yehudah sees a Yishmaeli caravan approaching from afar, and says, "what will we gain by killing our brother and covering up his blood (ie. hiding the murder)? Let us just sell him to the Yishmaelim." This was actually Plan C for the brothers: the first plan was to kill Yosef, and the second was Reuven's idea of throwing him into the pit. But, the brothers agree to Yehudah's plan, and sell Yosef.

If you look carefully at the text the next thing that happens, Midianite traders come first: the *possuk* says "and Midianite traders came, and they pulled Yosef out of the pit, and they

### A SHORT VORT

*Akiva Kra (21)*

וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כִּתְנֵי יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ שְׂעִיר עִזִּים וַיִּטְבְּלוּ אֶת־הַכִּתְנֵי בַדָּם׃

"And they (Yosef's brothers) took Yosef's tunic, and slaughtered a goat, and dipped the tunic in the blood."

The *Ben Ish Chai* comments that this act of dipping Yosef's tunic in blood is the first of two dippings associated with the exile from *Eretz Yisroel* to Egypt, which began as a result of *sinas chinam*, unjustified hatred, between Yosef and his brothers. Just like the start of the exile, the conclusion of the exile occurred when the Jews were commanded to dip a bundle of hyssop in the blood of the *Korban Pesach* and wipe the bundle on the window and two door posts.

There is a parallel, that just as the dipping put us into exile, the dipping got us out of exile. There is a similar concept in *kashrus* that states that "however something comes in is how it must come out" - that is, the same level of heat which transferred non-kosher material into a *kli* must be used to take it out.

This doesn't only apply to vessels and Jews in Egypt, but also to everyone today. What one surrounds himself in, is what he will absorb, and what will also come out of him. Hence, the Rambam says we should even eat and drink at the table of Rabbis.

May we all be able to surround ourselves with good, be the good that others want to surround themselves with, and continue to grow together.

sold him to the Yishmaeilim. This "they," the Rashbam argues, was not the brothers. "They" refers to the immediately aforementioned Midianites. The brothers saw the Yishmaeilim, but they did not see the Midianites, who were actually closer. The Midianites arrived at the pit first, and had the same idea as the brothers did. They pulled him up out of the pit, and they sold him to the Yishmaeilim. Now, the question that is left for us to ponder is: what are the implications of this Rashbam? If we accept Rashbam's theory, how does that affect our understanding of the story? What do we take away from this?

But let's zoom out for a second: the implications of this question could have a very real impact on our lives. In the *Yom Kippur* service that Ashkenazim say, for example, there are sections there that ascribe some of the terrible suffering that occurred later on in Jewish history—specifically with the ten martyrs that were killed by the Romans many generations later - as occurring as a Divine retribution for the sale of Yosef. According to the Rashbam, does that even make sense? The brothers didn't actually sell Yosef! For all intents and purposes, in the Rashbam's read, they should be blameless for what happened!

There's a fascinating statement that the Sages make in the *Gemara*, to the effect that "*grama binizakin patur midinei adam vichayev bidinei shamayim*" - indirect damage is not liable in earthly courts, but is liable in Heavenly courts. In general, regarding the laws of *nezikin*, there are different levels of responsibility. For example, someone who causes direct damage to another's belongings is "*chayev bidinei adam*", which means that a human court can actually require the perpetrator to pay for the damage that was committed. But, the *Gemara* says, if the damage caused was a '*grama*,' that is, that the accused did not perform the damage, but merely aligned the conditions such that they could come about, then they are "*patur bidinei adam*" - the human court cannot indict them in any crime. However, this type of damage is still "*chayev bidinei shamayim*", and the one who caused the *grama* will be held to task in the eyes of *Hashem*. People often think that *dinei shamayim* reflects some abstract moral obligation, but in truth, what this means is that from God's perspective, you are actually liable to pay, just that a human court cannot impose the requirement onto you.

In the Rashbam's view of the story, the brothers did exactly that - they created the conditions, in the end, that allowed for Yosef to be sold. They didn't actually sell him - that was left to the Midianites and Yishmaeilim. While this may have lessened their obligation in earthly courts, from God's perspective they were still responsible. When they brothers return to Yaakov, they make a sort of "white lie", claiming "we do not know what happened to him." While it was technically true that they were unaware of Yosef's true fate, they created the conditions for Yosef's sale. Earthly courts may not have held them responsible, but God certainly did.

### Uncertain Righteousness

*Meir Suss (22)*

In this week's *parsha*, we see the brothers throw Yosef into a pit because Reuven told them too. Reuven's reasoning

was simple: the brothers were originally going to kill Yosef, because they deemed him a *rodef*, someone who was attempting to kill them. Their basis for this was Yosef's dreams, which indicated that Yosef wanted to rule over the rest of his family. Reuven didn't agree with his brothers, so he told them to put Yosef in a pit instead, planning on going back later to rescue his younger brother and bring him to Yaakov. The *Midrash* says that if Reuven had known that *Hashem* was going to put Reuven's plan in the *Torah*, he would have picked up Yosef in a second and brought him to Yaakov right then and there. The *Midrash* similarly talks about two other people this way. The *Midrash* says that had Aharon known that *Hashem* would put in the *Torah* that he went out to greet Moshe after his return from Midyan, he would have come with an entire marching band. Additionally, by the story of Rus and Boaz, the *Midrash* says that had he known that Tanach would record that he fed Rus seeds, he would have thrown a huge feast for her. The question here is, did these people really think about the story that was going to be told about them? Was everything they were doing just a charade, with their efforts increasing or decreasing based on the perceived publicity?

Rabbi Yissocher Frand suggests an answer. He says that the hesitancy of these men was not about publicity, but about clarity. All of these great men did not know if what they were doing was right, but if they had seen that *Hashem* agreed with what they were doing (by writing it in the *Torah*), they would have made it even more grand. Reuven didn't know if saving Yosef was right, because his other brothers, the fathers of the future of *Klal Yisroel*, condemned Yosef to death. Reuven wanted to make sure what he was doing was right. so he told them to put Yosef in a pit while he figured out the right thing to do. In this case, if Reuven had known *Hashem* approved of him saving Yosef, then he would have ran and grabbed Yosef right then and there. By Aharon, he didn't know if it was right for him to bring such a scene to greet his younger brother, since he was the older brother, and perhaps it was inappropriate to show this much *kavod*. So, Aharon suppressed his urge to bring musicians, so their reunion wouldn't be such a public spectacle. But, if he knew *Hashem* approved, he would have made a huge scene for Moshe. The same thing happened to Boaz when he fed Rus the seeds; he thought people would look at him funny, and ask what he was doing with the young Rus. However, if he knew *Hashem* would have approved, he would have thrown a huge feast in her honor. The *Midrash* therefore concludes that if these people had known what they were doing were right, they would have gone all in. Rabbi Frand ties all this in, and says that one shouldn't look around and how others are acting, and allow that to influence his own decisions. We should do what we know to be right, no matter what other people will think or say about us.

### Yosef's Sale and the Ten Martyrs

*Samuel Gorman (21)*

On *Yom Kippur*, those who *daven nusach ashkenaz* or *nusach sefard* read the paragraphs of *Eileh Ezkerah* - the story of the ten martyrs - during *mussaf*. In these passages (Scherman, Nossan, et al. = *The Complete ArtScroll Machzor: Yom Kippur: a New Translation and Anthologized Commentary*. Mesorah Publications, 1986. Pages 620-

627), we recall the story of ten Jewish leaders who were sentenced to death by a brutal ruler. This ruler, as justification for his decision to execute the ten *rabbonim*, cites the *possuk* “*vegonev ish umecharo venimtza beyado mos yumas*” - one who was found to have sold a man into slavery shall be sentenced to death” (*Shemos* 21: 16). He claims that these ten *rabbonim* must die in order to atone for the actions of their forefathers, the *Shevatim*, who, in this week’s *parsha*, *Parshas Vayeishev*, sold Yosef into slavery (*Bereishis* 37: 28). As the story of *Eileh Ezkerah* goes on, it is revealed that this horrible decree of the ruler was indeed the will of God, as Rabbi Yishmael is told when he consults with the *Malach Gavriel*.

This story strikes me as quite confusing. The justification given for the death of the ten *rabbonim* is the sin of their forefathers when they sold Yosef into slavery. But how can that be? Is it not written in the *Torah* that “*banim lo yumasu al avos; ish bicheto yumasu* - sons are not killed on account of their fathers’ actions; a man shall be killed for his own transgressions” (*Devarim* 24: 16)? How can the ten *rabbonim* be sentenced to death in order to atone for the actions of their ancestors?

The *Chizkuni* (*Devarim* 24: 16, *d”h ubanim lo yumasu al avos*) writes something which, I think, helps to answer these questions. The *Chizkuni* explains that this *possuk* in *Devarim* is written only regarding man. Man does not have the authority to kill another man as punishment for the sins of his ancestors; however, God does have such power. This understanding of the *possuk* seemingly answers our questions. God does sentence people to death as punishment for the actions of their ancestors, and as Rabbi Yishmael was told by *Malach Gavriel*, the death of the ten *rabbonim* was decreed by God.

Even with the original questions based on the *possuk* in *Devarim* answered, questions still remain. While, as the *Chizkuni* explained, God does have the authority to kill people on account of the sins of their ancestors, there is a *possuk* in *Sefer Shemos* that makes it quite clear that God only punishes people for the sins of their ancestors for a maximum of three or four generations past the original sinner - “*poked avon avos al banim ve’al bnei banim al shilayshim ve’al ribayim*” (*Shemos* 34: 7). Yet these ten *rabbonim*, who were sentenced to death in order to atone for the *Shevatim* selling Yosef into slavery, were all well beyond four generations removed from the *Shevatim*. So how could God have decreed their death as punishment for the selling of Yosef so many generations earlier?

There is a truly fascinating Rabbeinu Bachya on *Parshas Vayeishev*, which, I believe, answers this question. Rabbeinu Bachya (*Bereishis* 38: 1 *d”h: vayehi be’ays ha-hee vayered Yehudah*), attempts to explain why the story of Yehudah and Tamar is juxtaposed to that of the sale of Yosef. According to Rabbeinu Bachya, one possible reason for the juxtaposition of these two chapters is that both involve *gilgul neshamos* - reincarnations. Rabbeinu Bachya writes that the ten *rabbonim* who eventually paid the price for the actions of the ten brothers who sold Yosef were, in fact, reincarnations of the ten *Shevatim*. This statement of Rabbeinu Bachya changes everything. If the ten *rabbonim* were actually reincarnations of the original transgressors, then, in a way, they were not being punished for the actions

of their distant ancestors, but rather, they were punished for their own transgressions. As such, there is no longer any issue of punishment beyond four generations.

## Where Should We Place Our Faith

*Jonathan Burns (22)*

This week’s *parsha*, *Parshas Vayeshev* is known for including the famous story of the imprisoned Yosef and his encounter with Pharaoh’s chief butler and chief baker. The two imprisoned palace workers were clearly disturbed, and explained to Yosef the peculiar dreams that they had had. Yosef, through *Hashem*’s help, interpreted the significance of each one.

At the end of their encounter, Yosef requests of the chief butler that he should “think of me when all is well with you again, and do me the kindness of mentioning me to Pharaoh, so as to free me from this place” (*Bereishis* 40:14). A few *pesukim* later, the *Torah* mentions that the chief butler “did not think of Yosef; he forgot him” (*Bereishis* 40:23). How strange this is that the chief butler should forget Yosef, the man who helped him and predicted his good fortune! Rashi explains that Yosef would remain in prison for two additional years due to the butler’s forgetfulness. But was this really forgetfulness? Rashi explains these two are truly linked. It was because of Yosef’s trust in both the butler and Pharaoh that he was punished with two more years. Had Yosef put his faith instead in *Hashem*, this would not have occurred.

Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt”l*, in his work *Darash Moshe*, gives some insight on two why Yosef was punished for two years rather than one. He cites the *mishnah* in *Ediyos* (2:10) which relays five instances in Tanach in which a group was punished for one year: the *Dor Hamabul*, the Egyptians, those who are sent to *gehenom*, *Iyov*, and *Gog and Magog*. So why, Rav Moshe asks, did Yosef receive a punishment for twice as long? He answers that Yosef did not simply make one mistake. Rather, he made multiple, each time not realizing the presence of the hand of *Hashem*. First, as Rashi points out, Yosef put his trust in a human rather than *Hashem*. Second, Yosef failed to realize that his entire encounter in prison had been orchestrated by *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* to begin with, that is, that the chief butler and chief baker had been sent by *Hashem* for the sake of his rescue. Lastly, Yosef should have recognized the arrogant nature of the Egyptians and turned away from them. In *Sefer Tehillim* (40:5), it is written “Praiseworthy is the man who makes *Hashem* his trust, who turns not to the arrogant or to followers of falsehood.” Rav Moshe explains that for Yosef to put his faith in an Egyptian man showed a sense of desperation. Only when one is desperate will he turn to those who are haughty for no reason, people who lack consideration for others. This was Yosef’s real mistake, reflecting desperation through lack of faith in *Hashem*.

It is through Yosef’s encounter that we learn a vital message relevant to this day: that the final outcome of a situation can only be influenced by the hand of *Hashem*, and of no other. This is one of the examples of “*ma’aseh avos siman labonim*”, translated as “the actions of the fathers are a sign for the children”, referring to a story in Tanach which has lasting lessons for us today. While we have watched

unwavering support for the State of Israel by the American government in recent years, through peace deals and military support, some are worried that recent events will put Israel in a compromising position. We, as *Klal Yisroel*, must not repeat the mistakes of Yosef! We cannot lead ourselves to believe that anyone other than *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will determine the safety of the Jewish people. It is only *Bi'ezras Hashem* that *Klal Yisroel* in Israel can acquire peace and safety.

### Do Snitches Really Get Stiches?

*Ezra Schechter (22)*

“Snitches get stiches” is a favorite phrase employed by bullies preying on the insecurities of their victims. Is the term true? Do you really get punished for telling on someone? We see in this week’s *parsha* that snitches really do get stiches. The second *possuk* of the *parsha* reads “... *vayavei Yosef es dibasam ra’ah el avihem*” - And Yosef brought negative reports on them [the *Shevatim*] to their father. This *possuk* is illustrating how Yosef would tattle on his brothers to his father when they appeared to be doing something bad. The *Sifsei Chachomim* notes that since it is written “*vayavei*” (and he brought) as opposed to *voyitzi* (and he took out), it means that everything reported by Yosef was factual. “*Vayotzi*” is written in the context of the *meraglim*, and it is translated as “they brought out”, meaning that they brought out falsehoods. This Rashi helps explain that Yosef did indeed get punished for this tattling. Rashi explains the three things he snitched on them for were that the brothers ate meat off of living animals, that they made fun of the sons of Billah and Zilpah that they were slaves, and that they lived immoral lives. Yosef got punished *middah kineged middah*, measure for measure, for telling Yaakov these three things: for telling him that they ate meat off of living animals, Yosef was made to sit in the pit while his brothers feasted; for telling that they made fun of the sons of Billah and Zilpah that they were slaves, Yosef was sold as a slave; and for telling that they lived immoral lives, Yosef was subject to the advances of *Eishes Potiphar*.

We see that Yosef did get punished, but is the reason he got punished because he tattled? The full case of Yosef snitching needs to be established before this question can be answered. *Beireishis Rabbah* brings that Yosef reported the bad actions about all the *Shevatim*, including the sons of the Bilhah and Zilpah, yet the Rashi before explains how the sons of Leah were mean to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, in contrast to Yosef’s close relationship with them. We can infer from the fact that Yosef reported the bad actions of even those brothers whom he was close with, that he likely had had good intentions, and had been trying to help and improve their *middos*. On the other hand, it’s possible that although Yosef had good intentions, he might have gotten a little carried away. The Rashbam says that Yosef was trying to uplift himself over his brothers by shining a light on the bad his brothers did in his father’s eyes. The reason Yosef got punished was probably because he tried to uplift himself, and not for the tattling because we see in *Hilchos Loshon Hora* that it is actually encouraged to tell an authority figure if someone is doing something wrong, if your intention is to help them. We see that while there can be positive reasons to tell on someone, one has to make sure that his motivations are pure. All in all, you seemingly

can’t get stiches for snitching if your intention is to help someone, but you can get stiches if there is another reason for the snitching.

### Is There a Connection Between Yosef and Channukah?

*Moshe Lieberman (24)*

In this week’s *parsha*, *Parshas Vayeishev*, Yosef is famously thrown into the pit by his brothers. As the *possuk* says, “The well was empty, there was no water inside it.” (*Bereishis* 37:24). But isn’t it obvious from the words, “the well was empty”, that there was no water inside of it? Rashi answers this question by quoting a *Gemara*, which states that this teaches you “that there was no water inside, but there were snakes and scorpions.” (*Shabbos* 22a).

What makes this *Midrash* fascinating is that it is found in the only *Gemara* in the whole of Talmud Bavli which deals with *Chanukah*. In this same *Gemara*, there is a *halachah* that one may not place candles on their *menorah* higher than twenty *amos* (thirty feet), because they cannot be seen clearly when placed that high.

Is there a connection between these two statements? It seems strange that the authors of the *Talmud* would place this *limud* about Yosef alongside *Hilchos Chanukah*. Maybe there is a deeper connection?

First, didn’t the brothers of Yosef notice that Yosef was miraculously not harmed by the snakes and scorpions? And if they did realize, wouldn’t they realize it’s a miracle from *Hashem*? The brothers didn’t notice the miracle, and sold Yosef as a slave, causing much suffering to Yosef and themselves.

*Chanukah* is the type of holiday which says: Rarely are things the way we see them on the surface. By lighting candles the whole week of *Chanukah*, we are committing ourselves to look below the surface of things into the “core”, to determine someone’s or something’s validity or falsity. The brothers’ perception of what was on the “surface” was different from what was happening in the “core”. Yosef was truly righteous, but his brothers missed out on his true character. They were able to see the olive, so to speak, but they overlooked the oil inside. It was as if the real essence of Yosef was completely out of their vision, just like if a *menorah*’s candles are placed higher than twenty *amos*, they are out of the vision of the average human eye and unclear. Perhaps, this is why these two statements are placed next to each other in the *Gemara*.

Our world is a confusing one, and there is much information going through our minds. Much of it is unnecessary, and may not even reflect the true or the right approach. It is crucial for us to understand the correct approach, and discard the false information. We can use this message of Yosef and his brothers, and the *menorah* in our generation, to find the true aspect of situations that we may find ourselves in.

## 5 Minute Lomdus

Shimi Kaufman (21)

**Q.** The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 21b) states that while the main *mitzvah* of *Chanukah* can be fulfilled through “*neir ish ubeiso*”, one candle to suffice for a man and his household, the *mehadrin* way to perform this *mitzvah* is through “*neir likol echad vi’echad*”, one candle per member of the household, and the *mehadrin min hamehadrin* (most beautiful) way is to be *mosif viholich*, to add one candle per night. There is debate amongst the *Rishonim* as to whether the *hiddur* of *mosif viholich*, the highest level of the *mitzvah*, includes the lower level of *neir likol echad vi’echad* as well. In other words, if there are 5 people in the house on the fourth night, would the *mehadrin min hamehadrin* be to light four candles, for the fourth night, or twenty, four for each person in the house? *Tosfos* rules that *mehadrin min hamehadrin* would only apply to *neir ish ubeiso*, not to *neir likol echad vi’echad*, and in such a case, only four candles would be lit. The *Rambam* contends that *mosif viholich* includes the *hiddur* of *neir likol echad*, and as a result, twenty candles should be lit. As mentioned, the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 671:2) rules in accordance with the opinion brought in *Tosfos*, while the *Rama* agrees with the *Rambam*. However, there is a discrepancy in how this *halachah* is brought in the *Rambam* versus how it is brought in the *Rama*. The *Rama* writes that each member of the house should light their own set of candles based on the night - so, in our aforementioned example, each person would light four candles, for a total of twenty in the entire house (as most of us are accustomed to doing). However, the *Rambam* seems to imply that the owner of the house should light the candles for everyone, meaning that the *ba'al habayis* himself would light twenty candles. What is the reason for the discrepancy in how the *Rama* brings this *halachah*, as opposed to how the *Rambam* formulates it?

**A.** The *Terumas Hadeshen* (*Siman* 101) brings a question regarding the status of *mehadrin* for someone who is away from home for one of the nights of *Chanukah*. The *halachah* is that someone who is away for *Chanukah* can fulfil his obligation of *Neir Chanukah* with the candles that are lit in his home. However, what is the *din* for someone who wants to fulfil the level of *mehadrin* while he is away? Perhaps he should light a candle himself, to fulfil *neir likol echad vi’echad*? The *Terumas Hadeshen* quotes from *echad min hagedolim* (one of the great minds of the generation) that this kind of *hiddur* is not tenable, since “*lo matzinu hiddur kazez biGemara*” - we do not find a *hiddur* like this in the *Gemara*. The *Terumas Hadeshen* himself argues that if one wants, he may light a candle himself even while away from home to fulfil *neir likol echad vi’echad*. Perhaps we can explain this *machlokes* as being about the fundamental nature of the *hiddur* of *neir likol echad vi’echad*. On the one hand, we can say that the *hiddur* is that there should be as many candles as possible, in order to maximize the *pirsumei nissah* (publicizing of the miracle). (The reason one cannot simply light as many candles as he owns to accomplish this *hiddur* is because each candle must still represent some sort of *chiyuv* in *Neir Chanukah*, that of each person in the house). Alternatively, the *hiddur* could simply be that it is better for everyone to perform the *mitzvah* individually, rather than one person being *yotzai* everyone. The *echad min hagedolim* cited by the *Terumas Hadeshen* would seem to believe that the *hiddur* of the *Gemara* is about there being more candles in the house, and therefore, someone lighting on his own in a different house would not reflect the *hiddur* found in the *Gemara*. The *Terumas Hadeshen* himself would maintain that the *hiddur* of *neir likol echad vi’echad* is in the fact that everyone fulfills the *mitzvah* individually, and as such, it would not matter whether one is actually fulfilling this *hiddur* in his house or elsewhere.

This distinction can also explain the divergence of the *Rama* from the *Rambam*’s formulation of this *hiddur*. The *Rambam* would appear to hold like the *echad min hagedolim*, that the *hiddur* of *neir likol echad vi’echad* is in the fact that more candles will lead to more *pirsum haneis*. Therefore, the *ba'al habayis* would still light all of the candles, since there is no reason to have everyone recite *berachos* unnecessarily when the *hiddur* can be accomplished by one person. The *Rama* contends that the *hiddur* is actually in line with the *Terumas Hadeshen*, that everyone should fulfil the *mitzvah* individually. Therefore, he rules that each member of the house should light candles in accordance with the number of the night to fulfil the highest level of the *mitzvah*.

- Based on a shiur by HaRav Elyahu Baruch Shulman shlit”a

# CHUMASH B'YUN

## Buyers and Sellers of Yosef

*Rabbi Mayer Schiller*

One of most difficult *parshiyos* to decipher is that which relates the sale of Yosef. The commentators on *Chumash* in general, and on Rashi in particular, have much to say on the matter. Let us review the problems, and then evaluate their varied solutions.

### The Problems

After Yosef is cast into the pit (*Bereishis* 37:24), the brothers "sat down to eat bread and they saw, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, and their camels were bearing spices. . ." (37:25) At this point, Yehudah states, "What gain will there be if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come let us sell him to Ishmaelites." (37:26 – 27)

Then the "Midianite men, traders" enter the narrative. They pull Yosef from the pit and they "sell Yosef to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver." (37:28) These men in turn – it is now unclear who – "brought Yosef to Egypt." At the chapter's end, yet another nation enters the story as we read, "And the Medanites had sold him to Egypt, to Potiphar. . ." (37:36). And, finally, to what is surely our total confusion, we read (39: 1), "And Yosef had been brought down to Egypt, Potiphar, a courtier of Pharaoh, the chamberlain of the butchers, a prominent Egyptian, purchased him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down." So, in sequence, we have mentioned Ishmaelites, Ishmaelites again, Midianites, Medanites, and Ishmaelites.

Rashi, as understood by R. Eliyahu Mizrahi, maintains that there were two caravans. After seeing the Ishmaelites from a distance, the sons of Yaakov then pulled Yosef from the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who then sold him to the Midianites, who finally sold him to Egypt. As Rashi says, "The verse lets you know that Yosef was sold many times." (37: 28) Thus, it adds up that it was the Midianites who did the selling to Egypt. The fact that the verse actually says "Medanites" at that final sale is seemingly glossed over by Rashi. However, the Mizrahi tells us that Medan and Midian are "brothers" and are "considered one people" with their "names used interchangeably." Yet, when the final verse (37:39) relates that it was the Ishmaelites who sold Yosef to Egypt, the Mizrahi says, "I don't know what to do with that verse."

However, he offers us the possibility given by *Masiach Ilmim* (commentary on Rashi written by R. Yehudah Kalatz of fifteenth century Spain) that, "Yaakov's sons sold him to the Ishmaelites, who in turn sold him to the Midianites. But the latter, although having concluded the sale, did not take physical possession of Yosef. Rather, it was the Ishmaelites who used their camels to bring him to Egypt with the rest of their wares. Thus, we read that 'Potiphar took him from the Ishmaelites who brought him there.'" (39:1) This means that there was no actual acquisition from the Ishmaelites. They were simply, at that point, Yosef's transporters, and thus Potiphar simply "took him from them." without a *kinyan*. This was executed by the Medanim. (39:1) Thus, if we assume that the Midianites and the Medanites were one and the same, we can understand the *possuk* (37:36) where it states the Medanites sold him, because they actually owned Yosef, and thus performed the sale. However, Potiphar literally took him from the hands of the Ishmaelites, who made the physical delivery.

### Ramban

The Ramban adopts a very different approach to the seeming contradictions of these verses. He sees the Ishmaelites, who the sons of Yaakov viewed from a distance (37:25) as a case of somewhat mistaken identity. Since they were riding on camels, the brothers thought they were an Ishmaelite caravan, as it was they who frequently used camels. However, when the caravan drew closer, they saw that the Midianites were the real owners of the merchandise, which was being carried by hired Ishmaelites on the latter's camels.

Accordingly, the *possuk* says, "they sold Yosef to the Ishmaelites", even though they really sold him to the Midianites, since it was the former they actually physically handed him over to. Then, the Ramban follows Rashi that in Egypt, the reference to Potiphar and Ishmaelites is due to the latter's handing Yosef over. Similarly, when it says the Medanites sold him, it is due to the fact that they were the actual sellers. The Ramban also sees Medan and Midian as the same.

### Ohr Hachayim

A novel reading of the *pesukim* is found in the *Ohr Hachayim*. He views the Ishmaelites as the true purchasers and owners of Yosef. They were, however, only involved previously in the acquisition and sale of spices. Hence, the *possuk* (37:25) specifies that they were "coming from Gilead, their camels bearing spices, balsam and lotus." Next, another group of "Midianite men, dealers, passed by . . . and sold Yosef to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver." The Ohr Hachaim sees the latter group as simply brokers. They knew the slave market. They were the ones with "the knowledge and expertise. . ." The party who "has the funds makes the deal based on the broker's recommendations." The broker then takes care of the technical aspects of buying and selling.

Finally, when arriving in Egypt, both parties were paid from the profits. Thus, it says the Midianites sold him, for they handled the financial details. Yet the Ishmaelites, being the camel drivers, delivered him to Potiphar. Both, the bro-

kers and the owners, received part of the profit.

### **Ibn Ezra and Rashbam**

As could be expected, the *Ibn Ezra* and *Rashbam* offer a simple unraveling of these *pesukim*. The former believes that all three peoples, Midianites, Ishmaelites and Medanites, were the same. They were intermarried nations who were referred to by all three names. Hence, there was only one caravan throughout. *Rashbam* avers that the Ishmaelites were seen from a distance, but the Midianites beat them to the pit. It was they who raised *Yosef*, and they who in turn sold him to the late-arriving Ishmaelites. (A seeming problem with this is, who are the Medanites who enter at the end of the story, if the Midianite's involvement ended after selling *Yosef* to the Ishmaelites?)

### **Digression and Conclusion**

(Incidentally, I simply cannot resist taking the opportunity here, in the midst of a discussion where camels are heavily featured, to note the current theories on the antiquity of camels. The notion that camels were not in the Middle East at the time of the events of *Sefer Bereishis* has been a staple of Biblical criticism for years. However, recent research points in a different direction. For a summary of the issue as it now stands, written in layman's terminology, see Dr. Elizabeth Mitchell's article here: <https://answersingenesis.org/is-the-bible-true/the-bible-wins-the-debate-with-carbon-dated-camel-bones/>)

Returning to the matter at hand, we have examined several approaches to the various peoples mentioned in the sake of *Yosef*. *Rashi* sees three sales taking place, which is in keeping with the *Midrash Tanchuma Yashan* (13). The *Ramban* and *Ohr Hachayim* do not see the Ishmaelites as ever taking possession of *Yosef*. *Ibn Ezra* also has only one sale prior to Egypt, as does the *Rashbam*, albeit for different reasons. Whatever the case may have been, (and it would seem difficult to reconcile all the perspectives), there is no doubt that *Yosef's* ordeal was varied and prolonged.

## **GEDOLIM GLIMPSE: RAV TZVI FRANK**

*Meir Morell (22)*

Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank (1873 – 1960) was born in Kovno, in the Vilna Governorate, the son of Rabbi Yehuda Leib Frank and Malka Silman, who were active in the *Chovevei Tzion* organization in Kovno. He studied in Lithuanian *yeshivas*, learning under Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, among others. In 1892, he emigrated to *Eretz Yisroel* with his brother Tanchum, his sister Zippora, and his first cousin, Rabbi Shmuel Hillel Shenker. His parents arrived in 1893. Tzvi Pesach continued his studies in *yeshivas* in Jerusalem. His father was one of the founders of Chadera. In 1907, Rabbi Frank was appointed *dayan* in the *Beis Din* of the *Eidah Hachareidis*, headed by Rabbi Shmuel Salant, the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. Rabbi Frank served on this *beis din* for nearly 60 years, eventually becoming *av beis din* (head of the rabbinical court) and Rav of Jerusalem. Rabbi Frank was active in establishing the office of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, and was instrumental in appointing Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook as the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi (for more on Rav Kook, see *Shema Koleinu* Vol. 24, Issue 36). Rabbi Frank was recognized for his efforts by The Pacific Club in 1917 for advancing American relationships in the region. However, although Rabbi Frank was a member of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate Council from its inception in 1921, he did not attend meetings of that body for six years prior to his death. One of his last acts was to send a letter to the meeting of rabbis in Tel Aviv, supporting the boycott of elections to the Chief Rabbinate.

As an important *posek*, Rabbi Frank authored many *halachic* decisions. Three of his decisions which became official Jerusalem rabbinate policy were:

1. That *kitniyos* derivatives are permissible on *Pesach* for Ashkenazi Jews
2. That, in the summer of 1944, it was permissible to drink powdered milk that was imported to Israel from the United States, removing powdered milk from the category of needing to be *Cholov Yisroel* (supervised by a Jew) (this ruling was opposed by the *Chazon Ish*);
3. That gelatin from non-slaughtered animal sources are permissible

Rabbi Frank also ruled that one may not use a non-battery electric *menorah* on *Chanukah*, since the *menorah* must contain enough fuel at the time of lighting to burn for at least half an hour after nightfall.

Rabbi Frank died on 10 December 1960/21 Kislev 5721, and was buried on *Har Hamenuchos*. His funeral was attended by many thousands of mourners. All of Israel's *batei din* were closed for the day, and the Cabinet adjourned so that ministers could attend the funeral. Eulogies were delivered by Rabbi Yitzchak Nissim, the Sephardi Chief rabbi; Rabbi Isser Yehuda Unterman, Chief rabbi of Tel Aviv; and Rabbi R. Katz, Chief Rabbi of Petach Tikva.

His son, Yaakov Frank, was a member of the Israeli Knesset from the Labor Party. His son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Sacks (Grandfather of Rabbi Yonason Sacks, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of Beis Medresh L'Talmud/Lander College for Men), was a leader in Jewish education in Chicago for nearly six decades. Another son-in-law, Shmuel Rozovsky (1913–1979), was a *Rosh Yeshiva* at the Ponevezh Yeshiva located in Bnei Brak, Israel, and was counted amongst the great rabbis of his generation. He wrote *Har Tzvi*, *Eretz Tzvi*, *Sha'ashuei Tzvi*, and *Mikra'ei Kodesh*, among others.

## CHASIDUS ON THE PARSHA

*Feshurim Sorscher (21)*

In this week's *parsha*, the opening *possuk* says "Yaakov settled in the land which his father had sojourned". The *Kedushas Levi* comments on this verse with a profound insight in our service to our Father in Heaven. The *Rebbe* explains that Yaakov was promised by *Hashem* that he would only have good things in his life, and yet, at the same time, he was worried that maybe he had done something wrong that would cause him to lose all this goodness. Our lot in this world is proportionate to how we allow God's commandments to influence our lives (The true scope of the question of why do the righteous suffer is beyond the scope of the current article, but the seeking reader would find Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler's article on the subject fascinating. It can be found in *Michatv MeiEliyahu* 1:1). This is why the opening *possuk* describes Yaakov in reference to his father Yitzchak, because the trait which Yitzchak personified was fear of God. This was the exact trait which Yaakov was thinking about when he thought of the challenges he would face in the future. We have to emulate this behavior in our own personal lives. When we have something good given to us from *Hashem*, we must rejoice in our good lot; if *chas veshalom* the opposite happens, then we must reflect on what we have done and see what wrongdoing is in our hands. May we all merit to have true fear of *Hashem* in our hearts.

## WISDOM FROM THE HAFTORAH

שנים זיתים עליה אחד מימין הגלה ואחד על-שמאלה

"And there were two olive trees, one to the right, and one to the left" (*Zechariyah* 4:3)

At the end of his vision, Zechariyah is shown two olive trees, to his right and left, with a giant, seven-pronged lamp in between. While the entire vision is esoteric, this scene is particularly interesting. What is the significance of two olive trees being on the right and left?

Perhaps we can explain, *al derech drush*, based on the *Gemara* in *Horiyos* (13a) which states that olives causes forgetfulness of *Torah*, while olive oil causes remembrance of *Torah*. The *possuk* famously instructs us "do not stray from the words that the *chachomim* tell you, neither right nor left." This is commonly taken as a command to follow the words of Chazal, and not to stray even from those *gezeiros* which are not commonly understood. Even if we are positive that there is a mistake in something which the *rabanan* said, the onus is on us to figure out where the misunderstanding is, and to try and correct it.

This is the purpose of learning *Gemara Bi'yun* - when confronted with difficulties in the *Gemara* and *Rishonim*, rather than assuming that there must be a mistake, we expend tremendous effort to understand what these Sages meant. Rav Aharon Kotler once made a *seudas hoda'ah* (thanksgiving meal) upon finally grasping a comment of the Vilna Gaon to the *Shulchan Aruch* which had plagued him for years. At the celebration, he declared "the only reason that I merited to understand the words of the Gaon, was because all the years that I struggled with this problem, I never once assumed that the problem was with the Gaon, and not with me." Our learning is not an attempt to take our own original ideas, and fit them into the words of the *Rishonim*; rather, we are trying to uncover the true intent of their words.

Thus, Zechariyah was presented with two trees of olives, with a lamp of olive oil in the center. The message may be that straying to the right or left, away from the true intent of Chazal, will lead us to olives, *Torah* which is bound to be forgotten, as it does not represent the true *dvar Hashem*. Staying on the straight path, and working to understand what the *Rishonim* intended, will lead us to olive oil, which is bound to remain as *amitas haTorah* forever.

### To the Editor:

As we have now come to expect, the *Shema Koleinu* of *Parshas Vayetzei* contained much in the way of serious Torah thought. A well deserved *yasher koach* to the editors and writers.

However, on page 7, there was a bit of a contradiction, the clarification of which, will yield a greater understanding of our history. The Table of Contents tells us that the "Gedolim Glimpse" of Meir Morell deals with the "Boyaner Rav." This title is restated on page 7, when he remains the Boyaner Rav in the article's title. However, in the body of the article, this same man is thrice referred to as the "Boyaner Rebbe." The contradiction itself is a matter of editorial inner workings. Yet, what needs be clarified is that in many areas of the Chassidic world, there were *Rebbes* and *Rabbonim*. The latter were appointed by and strictly subservient to the former. The Boyaner was (as is the current leader) a *Rebbe*, not a *Rav*. This was the case among Chassidim in the Ukraine, Lithuanian and Poland. In Galicia and north eastern Hungary (*unterland*), the *rebbes* were also the *rabbonim*. Think in this regard of Belz and Satmar, where the terms are used interchangeably. And often, particularly in Hungary, they were the *roshei yeshivos* as well. It would require a far more detailed presentation to explain why this was so, but for the moment, in the contradiction between title and article, it is the article, with sobriquet "*rebbe*", which is correct.

Sincerely,  
Mayer Schiller

## HALACHA HASHAVUAH

Yosef Weiner (23)

In this week's *parsha*, we learn about Yosef's interpretation of the dreams of the wine steward and the baker. Therefore, this week's column will focus on an aspect of food in *halachah*, more specifically, the *halachos* of eating before davening.

The prohibition to eat before davening is learned from two places. One, the *Gemara* interprets the *possuk* "lo sochlu al hadam" (lit. do not eat over blood) to mean that one should not eat until he has prayed for his blood, that being his life. Two, the *Gemara* learns that the king Yaram Ben Navat "cast *Hashem* behind is back", that is, he rejected *Hashem* because of his haughtiness. The *Gemara* then proceeds to say that one who eats before acknowledging *Hashem* is acting similarly, as it is considered haughty behavior (*Berachos* 10b). Thus, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules that one may not eat or drink before davening *Shacharis* (*Orach Chayim* 89:3). The *Mishnah Berurah* adds that the prohibition of eating applies even to just tasting (89:21).

However, there are several exceptions. First, the *Shulchan Aruch* writes that one may drink water before davening (O.C. 89:3). One may drink water because it is not considered haughty behavior (M.B. 89:22). However, the *Kaf Hachayim* writes that it is a proper stringency not to drink water before davening (O.C. 89:34). Also, one may consume food and drink for medicinal reasons (S.A. O.C. 89:3). This applies even if the food that one is eating for medicinal reasons tastes good (M.B. 89:24). Moreover, even if one is able to wait until after davening, they need not wait if they are eating for medicinal reasons (*Biyur Halacha* 89:"vichein"). Furthermore, the *Mishnah Berurah* writes that in places where people cannot concentrate without drinking coffee or tea, they may do so. He adds that one should not add sugar or milk, as this would be haughtiness (89:22). However, nowadays since everyone drinks coffee with sugar, and it is almost as if it is "impossible" to drink coffee without it, the Steipler and Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach write that one is allowed to drink coffee with sugar before davening. The *Da'as Torah* adds that for this reason, one may also drink coffee with milk. Rav Elyashiv is of the opinion that one may drink carbonated beverages prior to *tefilla*. The consumption of alcoholic beverages like beer or wine prior to davening is prohibited (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* footnote 89:29). Also, when one is drinking coffee or tea before davening, he should not do so in a group (M.B. 89:22).

With regard to eating on *Shabbos* and *yom tov*, another consideration must be taken into account, and that is the additional prohibition of eating before *kiddush*. The prohibition to eat before *kiddush* applies even to water, which is permitted before davening during the rest of the week. However, this rule only applies once one is obligated in the recitation of *kiddush* (*Orach Chayim* 289:1). Prior to *Shacharis*, one is not obligated to recite *kiddush* (M.B. 286:7). Therefore, before *Shacharis*, the normal rules apply, and one may drink water (*Orach Chayim* 289:1). However, once one davens *Shacharis*, even if he has not davened *mussaf* or heard the reading of the *sefer Torah*, one cannot even drink water, because at that point there is an obligation of *kiddush*.

One may not begin to consume food and drink before davening starting from half an hour prior to *alos hashachar* (M.B. 89:27, based upon the Rama 652:2). If one began eating at a permissible time (before thirty minutes prior to *alos hashachar*) the *Shulchan Aruch* cites a *machlokes* with regard to if one may continue (O.C. 89:5). The *Mishnah Berurah* writes that most are of the view that one should stop eating at *alos hashachar* (89:29). The *Kaf Hachayim*, based upon the *Zohar*, writes that if one wakes up in the middle of the night, which is well before thirty minutes prior to *alos hashachar*, one should not eat (89:43). The *Mishnah Berurah* writes that it is good to be stringent and follow this opinion (89:28). However, if one wakes up prior to thirty minutes before *alos hashachar* in order to learn *Torah*, the *Mishnah Berurah* writes that if not eating would worsen one's learning, then one does not have to follow this stringency (89:28).

The *Beis Yosef* writes that there are two ways to view one who is too weak to focus during davening without eating. First, perhaps this person is like a *choleh* (sick person) since he can't concentrate, and therefore he may eat. On the other hand, nowadays, we assume that no one has real *kavanah* anyways, and if one were to eat before davening with the reasoning that not eating is inhibiting his *kavanah*, then one is being haughty and saying that were it not for the lack of food, he would have *kavanah*! The *Shulchan Aruch* *paskens* that in such a scenario, one can eat, since he is like a *choleh* (O.C. 89:4). However, if one would be able to daven right away at home and then eat, he should do so, even though this will cause him to miss *tefillah bitzibbur*. After eating, he should go to a *minyán* in order to hear *kaddish*, *kedushah*, and *krias haTorah* (*Biyur Halacha* 89: "vichein"). If one is not able to daven even at home without eating, he should at least recite *birchas haTorah* and *krias shema* before eating (*Biyur Halacha* 89: "vilo"). A child, even one who is of the age of *chinuch*, does not need to wait to eat until after davening (M.B. 106:5).

# FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

## Were the Shevatim Jewish?

This week's *parsha* starts off with the story of *mechiras Yosef*, the sale of Yosef by his brothers. The *possuk* says that part of the reason that the *shevatim* resented Yosef was because he would constantly bring bad reports about them to their father, Yaakov. Rashi says that these reports included that the brothers would eat *eiver min hachai*, flesh from a live animal, in violation of one of the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*, the seven *mitzvos* which even *goyim* are required to follow. This Rashi seems to place us between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, it is impossible to believe that the righteous *Shevatim*, from whom all of *Klal Yisroel* would eventually descend, would commit such a seemingly basic sin. On the other hand, we cannot say that Yosef was baselessly slandering his brothers without any reason. How can we understand Yosef's report?

The *Prashas Derachim* comments on a *Midrash* which says that Yosef's brothers hated him in order that the *Yam Suf* would split for *Klal Yisroel* in the future. He explains that the *shevatim* and Yosef disagreed as to their exact status in regards to their obligation in *mitzvos*. The brothers felt that they should be considered Jews regarding both *chumros*, stringencies, and *kulos*, leniencies, while Yosef believed they should be considered like non-jews. When *Bnei Yisroel* were at the *Yam Suf*, there was an argument in Heaven that the Jews did not deserve to be saved, as they had worshipped idols in Egypt, and were therefore no different from the *Mitzrim*. *Hashem* countered that the Jews were in fact different, since they worshipped idols only when they were forced, while the *Mitzrim* did so willingly. Therefore, explains the *Prashas Derachim*, the *Shevatim* acted as Jews, with all the *halachos* which that entailed, since if at the *Yam Suf*, *Hashem* viewed the Jewish people as *goyim*, then they would have been destroyed along with the *Mitzrim*. Thus, the *Shevatim* acted like Jews so that their descendants would be considered Jews as well. They hated Yosef because his view endangered the fate of *Am Yisroel*.

We can use this *Prashas Derachim* to explain how the *Shevatim* could eat *eiver min hachai*. The *Riam* writes that the brothers would slaughter an animal, and while it was still moving, they would cut off a limb from it. They did this based on the *Gemara* in *Chullin* (76a), which says that this is a healthy thing to do. This type of case, where the animal is slaughtered but still moving, is called *mifareches*, and is *muttar* for a Jew to eat. However, this type of meat is *assur* for a *goy*. Therefore, according to the opinion of the brothers, they were not in violation of any commandments, because they were considered full Jews. However, in Yosef's eyes, they were considered *goyim*, and were therefore not allowed to consume these limbs. This was the *eiver min hachai* which Yosef reported to Yaakov.

When Yosef later meets the strange man on the way to Shechem, the man tells him that his brothers have "travelled away from here". Rashi explains that this means "they had moved away from him in brotherhood." The *Zera Shimshon* asks an interesting question on this Rashi. What does it mean that the *Shevatim* moved away from Yosef in brotherhood? Being a brother is not a choice, but a circumstance of birth. How could the *Shevatim* choose to stop being brothers with Yosef? He answers that while the *Shevatim* planned to kill Yosef, they could not bring themselves to kill their brother. They therefore appeased their conscience by saying that if Yosef felt that they were like *goyim*, then he must go according to the non-Jewish lineage, in which people are only considered to be brothers if they are from the same mother. Therefore, according to Yosef, the *Shevatim* were not even considered to be his brothers, since they were born from different mothers. Yehudah, however, objected to killing Yosef, asserting that "there will be no gain by killing our brother". The *Zera Shimshon* explains that Yehudah was arguing on the aforementioned logic, saying that even though according to Yosef, they were not brothers, according to their own opinion, which maintained that they were Jews, they were brothers, because for Jews, brothers from the father are considered brothers. Rather, it made more sense to punish Yosef as a non-Jew, according to his view. When Cham spoke *lashon hara* about his father Noach, he was cursed to be a slave for generations. Therefore, Yehudah reasoned, it would be appropriate to punish Yosef, who had spoken *lashon hara* about them, with slavery.

In life, we often try to find justifications for things we know are wrong. Often, we claim to be doing things in the name of justice or *Hashem's* honor, when our true motives are revenge or personal gain. We must learn from the *Shevatim* not to falsely justify our actions, and to ensure that everything we do is truly for the sake of being an *eved Hashem*.

Wishing everyone an amazing *Shabbos*,

-Shimi Kaufman

## PARSHA PUZZLERS

Submit your answers to [shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org](mailto:shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org) along with your name and cell phone number to be entered into a raffle at the end of the sefer! 1 answer = 1 entry!

(Hint: Use the commentaries in the Mekraos Gedolos Chumashim, along with the Toldos Aharon on the side to find relevant Gemaras and Midrashim)

1. What two places mentioned in this week's *parsha* are not mentioned by name anywhere else in Tanach?
2. In what two contexts is bread mentioned in this week's *parsha*?
3. **Challenge Question** (2 points): Which seven women have their death explicitly mentioned in the *Torah*?

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## THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: ANIMALS IN THE PARSHA

*Yisroel David Rosenberg (23)*  
Getting Over The Hump

”והנה ארחת ישמעאלים באה מגלעד; וגמליהם נשאים, נכאת...הולכים, להוריד מצרימה”  
“And behold a caravan of Yishmaelim was coming from Gila’ad, and their camels were carrying spicery...going down to Egypt” (*Bereishis* 37:25)

Rabbi Dr. Joshua Berman uses this *possuk*, among others, to debunk the claim that the presence of camels in *Bereishis* is anachronistic. This claim is based on the fact that there is no archaeological evidence of camels in Israel until around the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*. Rabbi Berman points out that camels, as they appear in Sefer *Bereishis*, never originate from *Eretz Yisroel*, but from the surrounding lands, which certainly had camels at the time.

The Yishmaelim, in this week's *parsha*, were bringing exotic spices from outside of *Eretz Yisroel*, and were presumably riding on camels of that same origin.

True, Avraham sent ten camels with his servant to look for a wife for Yitzchak, but Avraham was first given camels by Pharaoh in Egypt. Also true that Yaakov and his family rode on camels, but that was when they were on their way back from *Beis Lavan*, so the camels were not from *Eretz Yisroel*.

The camels were also clearly a sign of wealth for Avraham, and not commonplace. After all, he sent them along with all the other gifts on the trek to find Yitzchak a wife.

And when the *Shevatim* went down to Mitzrayim, they did so on donkeys, not camels. Likewise, Yosef gave them donkeys as gifts before they left, though he presumably could have given them camels, because they would have been more accustomed to handling donkeys.

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