



Parshas Mikeitz

פרשת מקץ

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Being a Proud and True Eved Hatorah - Avraham Friedenberg ('22)	1
A Short Vort - Akiva Kra ('21)	2
Trust Me! - Yaakov Weinstock ('22)	2
Yosef's Strange Behavior-- Yonatan Burns ('22)	3
5 Minute Lomdus - Shimi Kaufman ('21)	3
Yosef's Misplaced Bitachon - Aryeh Klein ('22)	4
Parsha Puzzlers	5
Chumash B'iyun - Rabbi Mayer Schiller	5
Gedolim Glimpse: Rav Chaim Shmulevitz- Meir Morell ('22)	7
The Elephant in the Room- Yisrael Dovid Rosenberg('23)	8
Chassidus On The Parsha - Yeshurin Sorscher ('21)	9
Wisdom From the Haftorah -	9
Halacha Hashavuah - Yosef Weiner ('23)	10
From The Editors' Desk	11

Being a Proud and True Eved Hatorah

Avraham Friedenberg ('22)

Throughout the past few *parshiyos*, we have learned about Yosef's journey to *Eretz Mitzrayim*, starting with the brothers' hostility towards Yosef, to them throwing him into a pit, and selling him, and ultimately his arrival in the land of Mitzrayim. There, Eishes Potifar attempts to act immorally with Yosef, but does not succeed in doing so, as Yosef escapes to safety. This leads Eishes Potifar to have Yosef incarcerated for twelve years on the false charges that he attempted to violate her. In the interim, Pharaoh has two mysterious dreams dealing with cows and grain. The Egyptian necromancers are summoned to attempt interpreting the meaning of these dreams, but they have no success in satisfying Pharaoh. As recommended by the *Sar Hamashkin*, Pharaoh orders that Yosef be taken out of the dungeon, where he sat for numerous years, to attempt to decode Paroh's unsettling dreams.

Let's take a step back to look at this scene. Yosef *Hatzaddik* has been sitting in jail for twelve years. Within moments, he is taken from the dungeon, cleaned up, and brought before Pharaoh. Yosef is given the opportunity of a lifetime. If he were to satisfy Pharaoh's restlessness, he would surely be rewarded greatly, but if he were to leave Pharaoh in a state of unease, he could be left in jail until the day he dies. All Yosef needed to do was appease Pharaoh. This moment could make it or break it for him. In spite of all this, what does Yosef do? He tells Pharaoh "*Elokim ya'aneh es shlom Pharaoh*" - it is not I who can help you, but only Hashem can help please you" (41:16). Why would Yosef *Hatzaddik* mention *Hashem's* name, if we know that the Egyptians believed in one god, Pharaoh himself! Nevertheless, Pharaoh still relays his dreams and awaits Yosef's response. As the interpretation is being given over, Yosef proud-

ly and fearlessly mentions *Hashem's* name again and again.

I believe that from this scene, the *Torah* is teaching us a valuable lesson. We learn what it means to be a proud and true *eved Hashem*. Yosef *Hatzaddik* did not care about Pharaoh's might, or possibly being put back into the dungeon. All that mattered to him was *Hashem*, nothing else. To be a true *eved Hashem*, we must model ourselves after Yosef *Hatzaddik*. We must care about one thing and one thing only, *Hashem*. Even in the toughest of times, we must not allow ourselves to hide our *ahavas* and *yiras Hashem*. Rather, we must display it, just as Yosef *Hatzaddik* did.

Trust Me!

Yaakov Weinstock (22)

In *Bereishis Rabbah* (89:3), the *Midrash* quotes the *possuk* from *Tehillim* which states "*ashrei hagever asher shem Hashem mivtacho*" (40:5) - fortunate is the man who makes *Hashem* his assurance. The *Midrash* applies this *possuk* to Yosef, who made a mistake in this area by placing his trust in the butler to get himself out of jail. The *Kli Yakar* explains that this *possuk* teaches us an important lesson about *hashgacha*. It is teaching us that *Hashem* is involved in the lives of the downtrodden, and those at the bottom of the totem pole of society. As the *Gemara* in *Megillah* (31a) states, "everywhere you find the greatness of *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*, you will find his humility." However, according to the *Kli Yakar*, if this is what the *possuk* is teaching us, then why does the

Midrash attribute this *possuk* to Yosef? Was Yosef, who was taught all the *Torah* of Shem and Eiver that his father had, and who lived in Yaakov Avinu's house, lacking in such a fundamental idea of Judaism such as this one?

The *Beis Halevi* explains this *Midrash* in the following way, that can help us answer this question. He explains that Yosef, who was a great *tzaddik*, didn't really lapse in this fundamental idea. Rather, he had a lapse of *bitachon* on his level. The *Beis Halevi* explains that a person's required *hishtadlus* (effort) that he must put into his endeavors is based on the level of *bitachon* which he has. According to the *Beis Halevi*, Yosef was simply telling the butler what would happen in the future, that he would remember Yosef and bring about his salvation. However, this small act was considered a sin, because Yosef *Hatzaddik* had such a high level of *bitachon*, that he should have said nothing!

With this, we can answer our question. Yosef was completely aware of the *hashgacha* that he had, and understood that *Hashem* was involved in every step of his journey through Mitzrayim. However, he should've understood this on a deeper level, that he should have not involved the butler at all. Therefore, Yosef was punished because, on his level, he had a lapse of these basic *yesodos*, even though to anyone else it would seem as if nothing was wrong.

This story of Yosef *Hatzaddik* shows the amount of *bitachon* we should strive for in our lives, and hopefully, with *Hashem's* help, the *possuk* of "*ashrei hagever asher shem Hashem mivtacho*" will be fulfilled to its fullest extent through all of us.

A SHORT VORT

Akiva Kra (21)

"וַיָּבֹא מִקֵּץ שְׁנַתִּים יָמִים" - "It came to pass at the end of two years".

Pharaoh had a dream that was interpreted to mean that there would be a famine in Egypt. The country would go from being the world superpower, to one that couldn't grow its own food. Bad fortune isn't something that only happens to Pharaoh though; it happens to everyone. In its commentary on this *possuk*, the *Midrash Tanchuma* reminds us that bad times eventually end. It points out that every time something bad happens to us, it has a set time to end, as it is written in *Sefer Iyov*, "*keitz sam lachosech* - an end He set to darkness. There also is a reminder that bad times always end in *Sefer Mishlei*: "*bichol eitzev yihiyeh mosar*", in every sorrow there is profit. May we all be able to remember these *pesukim*, and find our way through dark times in our lives.

Yosef's Strange Behavior

Ponatan Burns (22)

Parshas Miketz begins with Yosef's interpretation of Pharaoh's strange dreams. Yosef is appointed to implement a strategy to avoid famine in Mitzrayim. This ultimately brings Yosef in contact with his brothers after many years of separation.

The *Torah* writes about Yosef's encounter with his brothers, "When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them; but he acted like a stranger toward them and spoke harshly to them." Regardless if Yosef still held a grudge against them, this still seems strange. *Sforno* explains that Yosef spoke harshly as a means to mask his identity. To the brothers, not only did this *Mitzri* man not look like their long lost brother, but he also did not speak in the same manner as a son of Yaakov would. Yosef spoke in the Egyptian language, using an interpreter to interact with his brothers. The brothers would therefore have no reason to suspect that the man with whom they were speaking was in fact Yosef.

This raises the obvious question: why did Yosef need to act so strangely? Why was it so important that he not reveal his identity?

The Ramban in his commentary on the *Torah* gives some insight into this question. Before Yosef accuses his brother of coming to Mitzrayim as spies, the *Torah* writes "And Yosef remembered the dreams that he dreamed about them." This, the Ramban explains, is the key to understanding Yosef's strange behavior. He writes in his commentary that at this moment Yosef remembered the dreams he had, which predicted his ascent to rulership over his brothers, understanding that now was the moment for them to be fulfilled. But, Yosef realized that something, or rather someone, was missing. In his dream, he had pictured 11 sheaves of wheat bowing down to his own. Here, in his palace in Mitzrayim, only 10 brothers bowed before him.

At this moment, Yosef devised his plan to bring down the eleventh brother, Binyamin. (Yaakov had not allowed Binyamin to travel to Mitzrayim, afraid that he might get harmed. Yaakov could not bear to lose a second child of Rachel). Were it not for the purpose of ful-

5 Minute Lomdus

Shimi Kaufman (21)

הן כסף אשר מצאנו בפי אמתחתינו השיבנו אליך מארץ כנען ואיך נגנב מבית אדניך כסף או זהב

"Here we brought back to you, from the land of Canaan, the money that we found in the openings of our bags. How then could we have stolen any silver or gold from your master's house?!" (*Bereishis* 44:8)

Q. The *Magen Avraham* (*Orach Chayim* 637) brings, in the name of the *Yerai'im*, that even according to the minority opinion in the *Gemara* which maintains that there is no prohibition of theft from a *goy*, the stolen object would not then belong to the one who stole it. In other words, the thief cannot be prosecuted for his actions, but the **goy's** object is still not considered his. A similar idea is found in regards to the lost object of a *goy*, which is permitted to keep if one chooses to. The Bach (*Yoreh De'ah* 156) writes that although the lost object of a *goy* is permitted to use, and strictly speaking there is no obligation to return it, the *goy* is still deemed the halachic owner of the object. However, other *poskim* such as the *Divrei Chayim* (*Hilchos Geneivah* 2) and the Maharshal (*Gilyon Maharsha* *Yoreh De'ah* 156) maintain that a lost object of a *goy* is deemed as if it is ownerless, and whoever claims it becomes its halachic owner. According to these *poskim*, why would a lost object be different from a stolen one where, even according to the opinion that theft from a *goy* is *mutar*, all agree that the object does not become the property of the thief?

A. In order for someone who takes an object not to acquire it, there must be some mitigating factor in the situation which prevents his acquisition. In the case of the lost object, there is no requirement of returning the object which can halt the acquisition, nor are the owners in the immediate vicinity of the object. Thus, the object becomes the property of whoever takes it by default. However, when one steals something from a *goy*, while there may be no requirement to return it, the owner's immediate presence and connection to the object automatically prevents any legal acquisition from taking place. Thus, according to the *Divrei Chayim* and Maharshal, it still makes sense for the *Yerai'im* to rule that the stolen object of a *goy* does not belong to the thief.

- Source: *Mishmeres Chayim Chelek II*, "Inyanim Shonim Bichoshen Mishpat" 2

filling his dream, Yosef would not have acted in this manner. It was for this reason that Yosef kept Shimon hostage until Binyamin would be brought down to Mitzrayim.

Let us fast-forward in the *parsha* to when Yaakov's sons come back, this time with Binyamin, to purchase more food. Here, Yosef seems to play a trick on his brothers. Yosef instructs one of his servants "Fill the men's bags with food, as much as they can carry, and put each one's money in the mouth of his bag." But, he adds, "put my silver goblet in the mouth of the bag of the youngest one, together with his money for the rations." With this, Yosef would accuse Binyamin of stealing from the palace. The only question is, why would Yosef go through this additional step, rather than reveal himself to his brothers at this point?

Abarbanel offers a solution to this question. He notes that Yosef still did not know if the brothers felt hatred towards the sons of Rachel. It is possible, Yosef reasoned, that his brothers hated Binyamin as well. For this reason, Yosef tested them yet again, to see if they would try to save Binyamin. While one can criticize Yosef for not directly contacting his father sooner, we see that Yosef's actions were all part of a larger plan, one with a noble purpose.

The events recounted in the *Torah* detail Yosef's plan with much detail, further expounded in *Midrash* and *Aggadah*. Yosef's actions may appear like stalling, but his ultimate motivation in not revealing himself sooner was more noble. At every step of the way, Yosef offered his brothers the opportunity to do *teshuvah* for their earlier sin, and demonstrate that their actions were now consistent and righteous.

Yosef's Misplaced Bitachon

Avyeh Klein (22)

At the end of last week's *parsha*, *Parshas Vayeishev*, Yosef famously interprets the dreams of both the cupbearer of Pharaoh as well as Pharaoh's bread maker while in prison. He correctly interprets that in the coming three days, the baker would be killed, and the cupbearer would promptly be brought back

to serve Pharaoh. When the cupbearer is being taken out of prison, Yosef says two words to him: "*vezacharti*" (remember me), and "*vehizkartani*" (mention me). At this point, Yosef is probably filled with much hope, as his great talents are known to someone who could easily recommend him to Pharaoh. Unfortunately, as the *Torah* states, the cupbearer forgot about Yosef. Yosef remained forgotten for two years, coming into this week's *Parshas Mikeitz*. Yosef remains in prison until Pharaoh has a dream that none of his wise men can interpret; it was at this climactic moment that the cup bearer remembered Yosef and made mention of his abilities. The *Midrash* explains that the fact that the cupbearer had forgotten Yosef was a sign, and it showed that Yosef had seemingly done wrong.

This explanation from the *Midrash* is very strange. What could a man as holy as Yosef have done wrong? The *Bereishis Rabah* explains that the two years Yosef spent in prison were directly correlated to the way in which he last spoke to the cupbearer. Yosef said those two extra words of "*vezacharti*" (remember me), and "*vehizkartani*" (mention me). The *Midrash* further explains that the reason for his incarceration was Yosef's lack of *emunah* (belief) in *Hashem*. We see from this that for each extra word Yosef said to the cupbearer, he was in prison for another year. Rabbeinu Bachya comments on this, while listing different types of *bitachon* (faith). Rabbeinu Bachya explains that although there is a concept that one must do whatever one can to save themselves from distress, this is only true when your belief in God is not any less than it was before. We see from Yosef's actions by his request of the cupbearer that he had lost some faith. Rabbeinu Bachya explains that by making this request of the cupbearer, he was dictating to God how he should be saved. The *Midrash* further quotes *Tehillim* 40:5, where the text reads "Happy is the man that has made *Hashem* his trust." Yosef's actions in this story show how even the slightest loss of faith in *Hashem* can lead to bad consequences. Yosef was being ignorant, thinking he knew what was best for him, when he should have remained believing in *Hashem*. We can take this lesson from Yosef to be more careful about what we say, and make sure to never lose faith in *Hashem*.

CHUMASH B'YUN

Buyers and Sellers of Yosef

Rabbi Mayer Schiller

At times, the early commentators on the *Torah* will disagree as to the simple meaning of a word. This week, we encounter the word תִּסְרָאוּ - (*tisra'u*). It appears shortly after in the first mention of the famine, which was occurring "in all the lands." (*Bereishis* 41:54). The *possuk* reads as follows: "Yaakov saw that there was grain in Egypt; so Yaakov said to his sons, 'Why do you make yourselves *tisra'u*'?"

Artsroll translates *tisra'u* as "make yourselves conspicuous." The *Chumash* of Reverends M Silberman and AM Rosenbaum (originally published in 1935, and once the mainstay of those seeking an English language translation of Rashi) offers a very different translation. "Now when Jacob saw there was a sale of corn in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, Wherefore do you look to yourselves?" As we will soon see, both renderings find support in the commentators. (We leave aside the similarly intriguing debates which surround the word *shever*.)

Let us turn now to Rashi, where three explanations of *tisra'u* are offered. (It does seem, though, that only two are really from Rashi. The other is a later interpolation. More on that soon.) The text which appears in our *Chumashim* reads as follows. We have taken the liberty to number the three explanations in parentheses:

Make yourselves conspicuous – 1) Why do you display yourselves before the sons of Yismael and Esav as if you are satisfied? For at that time they still had produce. 2) But it appears to me that the simple meaning of 'why are you *tisra'u*' is, why should everyone look at you and be astonished at you, because you do not seek food for yourselves, while that which you possess has not yet been finished. 3) [I have heard] From the mouths of others, that it is an expression of "leanness. " Why should you be made made lean by hunger? And similar it is *yoreh* in "he who gives satisfaction will be satisfied." (*Mishlei* 11:25)

In the three earliest printed editions of Rashi on *Chumash*, the second explanation, "But it appears to me . . ." is not to be found. It similarly does not appear in those commentators who quote Rashi. R. Wolf Heddenheim, the famous German linguist and exegete, concludes in his work on Rashi that the second *pshat* is a later interpolation. And, he adds that the *possuk* cited at the end may apply to the first and third explanations, as we shall soon see. This not as uncommon as one might think. There are no copies of Rashi's commentary in his own handwriting, and hundreds of years elapsed from Rashi's passing in 1105 till the first printed versions in Rome (c. 1470), Calabria, in what is now Italy (1475, often errantly referred to as the "first printing), and Guadalajara, Spain (1476).

It was this gap, combined with Rashi's amazing (Divinely guided?) rapid popularity that, paradoxically, accounts for the current poor state of our texts. A handwritten text copied over and over again across an entire continent will produce many variants.

Here in particular, Rashi's commentators grapple with how to differentiate between the first *pshat* and the second, thereby lending credence to the notion that the second is a gloss or explanation of the first.

Let us now turn to the key point of Rashi's first approach; what is the definition of *tisra'u*. The verb is, according to the *Sefer Zikaron*, who often deals with grammatical Rashis, in the *hispael* form, which is often used in the sense of causing another to see that which isn't true or may be counter productive. Here then, it can mean, following the *Gur Aryeh*, "Why are you causing yourselves to be seen before the children of Yishmael and Eisav when you are still satiated?" *Tisra'u* thus means to "cause to be seen in a self defeating manner. Others, including the *Mizrachi*, say that there is no reference to seeing; rather, *tisra'u* comes from the root of R.V.H., which means satisfied. The

PARSHA PUZZLERS

Submit your answers to 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 object appears fifteen times in this week's *parsha*, but nowhere else in the whole of Tanach?
2. What three professions are found nowhere else in the *Torah* except for this week's *parsha*?
3. Why did all ten brothers go down to Egypt to buy food, as opposed to just some of them?

“looking” upon the satisfaction is only implied in the text.

The word “*ki’ilu*” in Rashi is also a matter of debate. Why is it only “as if”? The *Divrei Dovid* explains that, in reality, they still had food, but that it was only for a short period. The Rashbam goes a step further, and sees this as the root of the problem. Why are you acting as if we have plenty of food, when in truth we don’t? This is somewhat along the lines of the *Targum Yerushalmi*, who sees the word *tisra’u* as meaning “Why are you making yourselves fearful of going to Egypt?”

However, the word *ki’ilu* does not appear in all texts of Rashi. In fact, in the *Gemara* (*Taanis* 10b) on which the Rashi seems to be based, the word is missing. Instead we read, “Do not show yourselves when you are satisfied? This could well mean that they were in fact satisfied completely, and their food was not running out. The *Tanchuma Yashan* (91) says explicitly that *tisra’u* means, “Do not be seen outside eating a loaf of bread because of complaints.” This could mean that they did in fact have food.

But if they had food, what was the fear? Wouldn’t the others in Cana’an be in the same position of having food, for either short or long term? On this, many see the *Gemara* in *Taanis*, with its reference only to Yishmael and Eisav, as crucial. The Maharsha on the *Gemara* states that only they would be jealous, because they were family. The Ramban goes even further, and offers that the problem was not with the nations of Cana’an. It was with Yishmael and Eisav, who did not live in Cana’an, but outside its borders. They would be passing through Cana’an on their way to Egypt, and if they saw that Yaakov’s family still had food, they would become jealous, and might be apt to demand food from them by virtue of being their relatives.

The Ramban, and all those who believe that Cana’an still had some food, have to deal with the next *posuk* (42:2), where Yaakov says that the brothers should go down to Egypt so that we “may live and not die.” What fear of death was there if they had food? The Ramban offers that this was long term, not short term fear. Therefore, the Ramban concludes that *tisra’u* means “why are you still showing yourselves here?” The brothers believed that there was enough food at the present. Therefore, they had to be told to go down to Egypt.

The final *pshat* of Rashi is that *tisra’u* means making yourselves thin by not going to Egypt. This is also cited by *Tosfos* in *Taanis* (10b). According to the *Mizrachi*, the final proof from *Mishlei* (11:25) is that R.V.H. is a root that can mean either “to be satisfied” or “to be made hungry.”

To sum up, the word *tisra’u* presents the commentators with a major difficulty even in terms of its simple translation. Each position has much to offer, and much effort is devoted to unraveling the puzzle. We have only presented the bare bones of the sources for further explorations.

EDITOR’S NOTE: WHAT IS CHUMASH B’IYUN?

As of late, there has been some confusion as to the exact nature of Rabbi Mayer Schiller’s weekly column “Chumash B’Iyun”, insofar as to how it differs from the various other *divrei Torah* in the publication, which also attempt to provide deeper perspective on the stories and events of the weekly *parsha*. As is somewhat well known, there are four different types of interpretation employed in the study of *Torah*: *pshat*, *drush*, *remez*, and *sod*. The exact nature of each of these four is subject to interpretation, but it should suffice for our purpose that *pshat* refers to the simple meaning of the text as presented, while *drush* refers to homiletic interpretations intended to teach particular lessons or ideas. The difference between the “Chumash B’Iyun” column and the other articles in *Shema Koleinu* is that most of the *divrei Torah* focus on *drush*, while Rabbi Schiller’s column focuses on “*omek hapshat*”, deep analysis of the *pesukim*’s simple interpretations as found in the *Rishonim*. One should not be misled to believe that one method is less difficult or less well-founded than the other; both methods of interpretation have their place, and can yield equally captivating *Torah*. To enhance this point, we have included below, at Rabbi Schiller’s request, an excerpt from the introduction to Rabbi Shelomoh Danziger’s *sefer*, titled “Bi’orach Mishor”. Rabbi Danziger’s *sefer* focuses on questions of *omek hapshat*, and his introduction provides an excellent formulation of this method of *Torah* study. We hope that the interested reader will find it both illuminating and informative.



The Editorial Staff

This sefer is not a peirush [an interpretation of the Torah], as it does not comment on most of the pesukim in the Torah. Rather, it is a leket, a collection of examples of investigations and analyses into the depth of peshuto shel mikra [the simple understanding of the text], in various places in the Torah.

Many seforim have come out in our days, which comment on the parshiyos with the methodology of drush and mussar, the straight path of agadita [lessons and teachings of Sages] which has served for many generations. However, the method of the Rishonim (Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, Chizkuni, Bechor Shor, Seforno, and so on), who wrote explanations of peshuto shel mikra, has been completely abandoned. The writing of such seforim in our days, by serious Torah scholars, has become an almost lost art.

The intent of this sefer is to show, through examples, that the “gates of pesuhto shel mikra” have not

closed, and that there is yet place for us, even in our generation, to delve into the depth of the pesukim based only on their simple interpretation. The way to do this is through analyses, questions and answers, similar to the methods employed in the study of Gemara. We are not speaking about the reading of the pesukim which is obvious to anyone who reads them; rather, we are speaking about omek hapshat, depth in understanding the various pshat interpretations of the text through investigative methods.

Rabbi Schiller notes: "In 1966 - 1967, Rabbi Shelomoh Danziger was my tenth grade *rebbe* in Yeshiva Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch. In those days the German Orthodox community of Washington was large and flourishing, with close to two hundred boys in its high school and dozens more in the *beis medrash*. Rabbi Danziger took his duties as a *maggid shiur* most seriously as he prepared his *Gemara shiur* for hours, often adding his own *chiddushim* when he taught us. What made the experience as his *talmid* unique, though, was that he devoted equal efforts to his one hour *Chumash* Rashi and Ramban shiur. It was in this forum that we were introduced to Rashi *b'iyun*, featuring commentaries such as the *Mizrachi*, *Gur Aryeh* and *Divrei Dovid*, not to mention the detailed endnotes in the Rosenbaum/Silverman Rashi *Chumash*. Many are those of that era who have told me over the years that it was their year with Rabbi Danziger which prompted them to buy a *Mizrachi* or Dr. Charles Chavel's translation of Ramban.

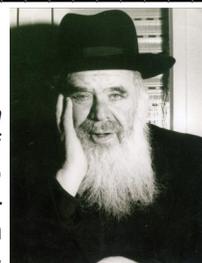
Being a devoted Hirschian, Rabbi Danziger could speak at length on everything from classical music to the linguistic virtues of Yemenite Hebrew pronunciation. And, never one to shy from a battle if he felt appropriate *hashkafah* was distorted, he wrote long articles in the pages of the *Jewish Observer* and *Tradition* on many aspects of *emunah*.

Today in his high nineties he still manages to spend his days learning *daf yomi* four times (with assorted *meforshim*) and appreciating his Mozart collection. My gratitude goes out to him in many areas, not the least of which was his devotion to *Chumash b'iyun*."

GEDOLIM GLIMPSE: RAV CHAIM SHMUELEVITZ

Meir Morell ('22)

Rabbi Chaim Leib Shmuelewitz (1902–1979) was born on the second day of *Rosh Hashanah* 5663 in Kovno, Lithuania, to Rabbi Refoel Alter and Ettel Shmuelewitz (Horowitz), a daughter of Rabbi Yosef Yozel Horowitz, known as the *Alter* of Novardok. In his youth, his family moved to Stutchin. Until the age of 16, he was educated by his father, who was among the leading *rabbonim* in Lithuania. In 1919, Rav Alter, who was then the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Shaar HaTorah* in Grodno, died suddenly. Within a very short time, his mother died too, orphaning Rav Shmuelewitz, his younger brother Shlomo, and two sisters.



Rav Alter's position at the *yeshiva* was taken up by Rav Shimon Shkop (for more about Rav Shkop, see *Shema Koleinu* Vol. 24, Issue 26). Rav Shmuelewitz developed a close bond with Rav Shkop. At the age of 18, Rav Shmuelewitz was invited to deliver the third-level *shiur* in the lower division of the *yeshiva*. He held this position for a few years before transferring to the *yeshiva* in Mir. Many of his students of those years later became great *Torah* leaders, and his own four years in Grodno with Rav Shkop had a profound influence on his approach to learning. At the age of 22, Rav Shmuelewitz headed a group of students who transferred from Grodno to Mir. In accordance with contemporary practice in the *yeshiva* world, Rav Shmuelewitz became known as Chaim Stutchiner, after the *shtetl* in which he grew up. The *Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Leizer Yudel (Eliezer Yehudah) Finkel, set his sights on Rav Shmuelewitz as his eventual spiritual heir.

Rav Shmuelewitz married Chana Miriam, the *rosh yeshiva's* daughter, on the last day of *Chanukah*, 3 Teves 5690. A few years later, at the relatively young age of 31, he was appointed as a *maggid shiur*, delivering regular lectures to students in the *yeshiva*. Rav Shmuelewitz's *shiurim* were modeled on the study strategy of his *rebbe*, Rav Shkop, personalized in a style of his own. The hallmark of his *shiurim* was depth combined with breadth; it was not uncommon for him to cite 20 or 30 different sources from all corners of *Shas* and its *meforshim* during a single *shiur*. These classes attracted a wide audience, including some of the most advanced *talmidim* in Mir.

With the outbreak of World War II, the Mir *Yeshiva* was forced into exile. The students and faculty fled from Mir to Vilna, where they stayed for about two months, after which they moved to Keidan, where they managed to set up the *yeshiva* once more in 1940. After being ordered out of Keidan seven months later by the Communist authorities, the *yeshiva* divided into four groups, each having between eighty and one hundred *talmidim*. Rav Shmuelewitz's *shiurim* continued with almost no interruption throughout the early period of World War II, despite the *yeshiva* being continually in transit. In late 1940, hundreds of Mir *yeshiva* students obtained visas from Chiune Sugihara to travel via Siberia and Vladivostok to Japan.

The *yeshiva* stayed in Kobe, Japan, for about six months, and then relocated to Shanghai for the next five years. Although living conditions were extremely difficult, the *yeshiva* prospered. As Rav Leizer Yudel had gone to what was then Palestine to obtain visas for the *yeshiva* and was forced to remain there, Rav Shmuelevitz and the famed *mashgiach*, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, assumed responsibility for the day-to-day running of the *yeshiva*.

In 1947, the *yeshiva* moved to the United States, where Rav Shmuelevitz spent six months before rejoining his father-in-law, Rav Leizer Yudel, in the Mirrer Yeshiva in Yerushalayim. For the next 32 years, until his death in 1978, Rav Shmuelevitz remained in the branch of the *yeshiva* in Yerushalayim.

He became active in Agudath Israel in Israel, and its *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages), on which he served. He also became the father-in-law of Rabbi Nochum Partzovitz, his successor as *Rosh Yeshiva*. A few days after *Sukkos* of 1978, Rav Shmuelevitz was rushed to the hospital and, for the next two months, was gravely ill. Jews worldwide prayed for his recovery, but two months later, on 3 *Teves*, 5739, Rav Shmuelevitz died at the age of 76. Nearly 100,000 mourners attended his funeral. He is buried on *Har Hamenuchos*. No less of an authority than Rav Moshe Feinstein declared, upon his death, that "the world rested upon Reb Chaim's shoulders."

He published the *sefer Sichos Mussar*, which contained his famous *mussar schmoozen* given in Mir-Yerushalayim.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: ANIMALS IN THE PARSHA

Yisroel David Rosenberg (23)

Self Perception

As we know, Pharaoh's famous dream with the cows took place right by the Nile River. The question is, where exactly was Pharaoh standing in the dream?

The first *possuk* of the *parsha* says "*Pharaoh choleim vehinei omed al hayeor*" - "Pharaoh was dreaming, and behold was standing over the Nile" (*Bereishis* 41:1) - but when Pharaoh retells his dream to Yosef, he instead says "*hineni omeid al sefas hayeor*" - "I was standing on the bank of the Nile". So, why the change? What exactly is the difference between "above" and "beside"?

The Pharaoh in ancient Egypt was viewed by himself and his people as a deity. He was a reigning, omnipotent being in the eyes of all Mitzrayim. This is in fact described in *Sefer Yechezkel*, when it discusses Mitzrayim's fate after Pharaoh's actions and the events of *Sefer Shemos*.

פֶּרְעָה מֶלֶךְ-מִצְרַיִם, הַתְּנִים הַגְּדוֹל, הַרְבֵּץ בְּתוֹךְ יַאֲרֵיו; אֲשֶׁר אָמַר לִי יְאֵרִי, וְאֲנִי עֹשִׂיתִנִּי"

"Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great crocodile, that bathes in his Nile, that said 'the Nile is mine and I made it myself'" (*Yechezkel* 29:3). A haughty Pharaoh is the one described here, one who believes that he is omniscient, the god of Egypt and creator of the Nile.

So what is the difference between "above" and "beside"? It is clear that Pharaoh believed himself to be the true creator of the Nile river, and he therefore dreamt himself standing literally atop it! But, just before Pharaoh retold his dream to Yosef, Yosef made sure to mention that the interpretation he would give to Pharaoh was not from Yosef's own wisdom, but an interpretation given to him by *Hashem*. Yosef practically interrupts Pharaoh before he can begin discussing his dream to make this point. It's in the following *possuk* that Pharaoh decides to say "*al sefas*" - "on the bank" of the river. In order for Pharaoh to even listen to Yosef, he has to acknowledge, at least for the moment, that only *Hashem* is the real God, not him, and therefore, He can give an explanation for his dream. In the *Shir Shel Yom* of Thursday, there is a line about Yosef. In it, the *possuk* says "*sefas lo yadati eshma*" (*Tehillim* 81:6). This is typically understood as "I heard a language I did not understand", that Yosef was in Egypt, a foreign land where he could not even understand the language. However, it can also be read as follows: "*Sefas lo yadati? Eshma*" - "I didn't know the 'sefas'? I heard." In other words, the *possuk* is saying to Pharaoh, "did you really think that I wouldn't notice your use of the word 'sefas'? I know exactly how you saw yourself in that dream, O Great Crocodile."

CHASIDUS ON THE PARSHA

Yeshurun Gorscher (21)

The Ramban on this week's *parsha* asks, how is it possible that the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream by Yosef did not come to fruition? At the end of the day, Yosef said that the seven skinny cows were fortelling that there were going to be seven years of famine; yet when Yakkov descended to Egypt later on, the famine was cut short. How are we to understand the power that a righteous person has on decrees on humanity? The *Kedushas Levi*, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, writes that *Hashem*, in his kindness, allows a *tzaddik* to change a degree which would be detrimental to humanity. The righteous person has the tremendous power, through his connection to *Hashem*, to literally change the very destiny of the world. Even from the very beginning, Yosef was cognizant of this fact, as when he told the meaning of the dream to Pharaoh, he said "what God is about to do", thus leaving the opportunity for change in God's hands. We in our lives have the tremendous power, through prayer, to connect with *Hashem* and change the world.

WISDOM FROM THE HAFTORAH:

Melachim I 3:15-4:1

Summary: Two women came before the newly appointed king, Shlomo, with one claiming that the other stole her baby, since hers had died. The other woman denied this, and said that it was the other woman's son who had died. To settle the dispute, Shlomo decreed that a sword be brought to him; he would divide the baby in half, and each woman would get part of the baby as a compromise! The second woman agreed to this, but the first woman began to cry hysterically, saying that she would rather the other woman keep the baby than see him killed. Upon hearing this, Shlomo declared "the one who cried must be the mother." Since she would rather give up the child than see him harmed, it was obvious that the child must have been hers.

The story of Shlomo and the baby is one of the most well-known in all of Tanach. Often, it is cited as a fairy tale of sorts, demonstrating the wisdom of the "Wise King Solomon" in rendering his judgement. But seeing the story actually written in the *pesukim* brings to mind the apparent absurdity of the entire tale. Even if we grant that Shlomo Hamelech knew that the true mother of the child would not want him to be cut in half, why on earth would the other woman voice enthusiasm for the murder of the child. Even if she did not recognize Shlomo's ploy, what benefit would there be in stealing a child only to have him murdered? Why was Shlomo so certain that the woman who was not the mother would agree to his preposterous suggestion?

The *Metzudos Dovid* answers this question by saying that the second woman's motivation was not to get the child for herself, but simply to rob the first woman of her own opportunity to raise a child. In light of this, it made no difference to her whether or not the child lived, as long as the first woman would not get to keep her son. However, this answer would appear insufficient: how could Shlomo count on such depravity on the part of the second woman? Perhaps her true motivation was in fact to steal the child for herself, in which case she would be against killing him! How could Shlomo possibly have known this woman's plan?

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, the late *mashgiach* of the Mir Yeshiva in Yerushalayim, gives a more nuanced answer in his *sefer Sichos Mussar (Ma'amar 12)*. He explains that Shlomo based his decision based on a deep insight into human psychology. Shlomo understood that evil is a slippery slope; often, one sin or negative action can snowball before our eyes into something far bigger, before we even realize what is happening. Shlomo realized that if one of these women already sunk so far as to actually steal a baby, then she was incredibly far along on the path of wickedness. Even if her original goal was to steal the baby for herself, once the tension of the courtroom reached a boiling point and the king himself issued his judgement, Shlomo knew that the woman would certainly seize the opportunity to harm the true mother, even if this was not her original goal. If a person yields even an inch to the *yetzer hara*, there is no telling the places which it will lead them.

We should add that this *yesod* of Rav Shmuelevitz does not preclude the possibility of *teshuvah* at any moment - rather, the more evil a person does, the more difficult it becomes to return to the path of righteousness. Neither was Shlomo Hamelech discounting the possibility of *teshuvah* in his calculations, since if this woman suddenly decided to repent, she would admit her theft of her own accord!

One of the most common tactics of the *yetzer hara* is to convince us that what we are doing is not so terrible, in the grand scheme of things. Often, we will break a commitment or do a small sin just once, reasoning that this one action will not be what makes or breaks us as *bonei Torah*. We must remember every decision we make in life represents a battle with the *yetzer hara*, and for every inch we give, he will take a mile.

HALACHA HASHAVUAH

Yosef Weiner (23)

In this week's *parsha*, we learn of Pharaoh's unsettling dreams, and how he summons Yosef to interpret them. Thus, this week's *Halacha Hashavuah* will focus on *Hatavas Chalom*, a procedure in which one rectifies their disturbing dream by reciting a specific *nusach* (liturgy) in front of three people. However, this article will not discuss other responses to bad dreams, such as fasting.

The *Gemara* writes that when one has a bad dream, they should go in front of three people, who rectify it by interpreting it as a positive dream (*Berachos* 55b). The rationale behind *Hatavas Chalom* is based upon the principle that "all dreams follow the mouth" (*Berachos* 56a), meaning that the interpretation of a dream determines its effect. Thus, when the panel of three people states that the dream was in fact good, they are retroactively making the disturbing dream a good one by their positive interpretation.

The *Shulchan Aruch* clarifies that one must do this only if they are distressed by the dream (*Orach Chayim* 220:1). The *Mishnah Berurah* adds that if one is distressed by a dream, even if it was not negative per se, they should still perform this ritual (220:1). Furthermore, the three people who are acting as the "rectifiers" should be friends of the dreamer (S.A. O.C. 220:1). Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik was extremely careful to perform the ceremony with three people who were close to him, even if they were his relatives (*Teshuvos Vihanhagos* Vol.2 156). During the *Hatavas Chalom*, one should think about their disturbing dream (M.B. 220:2).

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv writes that three women should not be used for *Hatavas Chalom*, even if it is another woman who had the disturbing dream (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* footnote 220:6). Furthermore, according to Rav Elyashiv, appointing a messenger to go before the three people and perform *Hatavas Chalom* does not work, even if it is a husband acting as the messenger for his wife (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* footnote 220:5). If one cannot find three adults to perform *Hatavas Chalom*, three children may be used, as long as they understand *lashon hakodesh* and learn *Chumash* well (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* footnote 220:6). The *Aruch Hashulchan* writes that in some places, instead of going in front of three men, the one who had a disturbing dream performs *Hatavas Chalom* in front of the *Rav* of the town. The reason for this is that by monetary law, although three people are usually required to judge a case, we consider one expert to be the equivalent of three people. The same would therefore apply here: when *Hatavas Chalom* is performed before the *Rav*, it is like it is being done in front of three people. Moreover, since a *Rav* typically loves his congregants, it is considered like it is being performed in front of three people who love the dreamer (220:4). Furthermore, the *Mishnah Berurah* writes that one should try to be one of the rectifiers of a bad dream for others (220:3).

Hatavas Chalom should be performed in the morning, because of the principle of *zerizim makdimim limitzvos*, that we should rush to do *mitzvos* as soon as we can. The procedure of *Hatavas Chalom* may be performed even on *Shabbos* (M.B. 220:2). Furthermore, one may perform *Hatavas Chalom* when they are fasting; however, when the one who had the dream is fasting, then the three people should not say the line at the end of *Hatavas Chalom* which reads "go with joy, eat your bread and drink your wine with a glad heart" (M.B. 220:2).

There are certain times where dreams should be ignored. First, one need not be concerned about a distressing dream following a fast, as it is assumed the pain of fasting caused it. Furthermore, if one had a painful experience during the day and then a distressing dream at night, he need not be concerned, as it is assumed to have been caused by this experience (*Shaar Hatziyun* 220:1). The *Aruch Hashulchan* writes that if one ate until he was full and then went to sleep, he should not pay any attention to dreams from that night (220:1). In addition, Rav Elyashiv writes that a *katan's* dreams carry no significance, and thus nothing must be done to rectify a *katan's* dreams (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* footnote 220:2). Lastly, it is important to note that the *Chazon Ish* was of the opinion that nowadays, all dreams carry no spiritual significance, as they are all caused by our thoughts during the day. Thus, he believed that nothing must be done to rectify any distressing dreams (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* footnote 220:3).

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

Forget About It!

Throughout Shas, one gets the impression that there are few things which are worse than forgetting one's *Torah* learning. The *mishnah* (*Avos* 3:8) tells us that one who forgets something which he learned deserves to be put to death, and the *Gemara* (*Menachos* 99b) has a laundry list of prohibitions and curses incurred by somebody who does not take care to remember the *Torah* which he has acquired. Likewise, there are many everyday actions which we are warned to abstain from, as they are "*kasheh lishikchah*" - that is, they cause one to forget their *Torah*. Things which are *kasheh lishikchah* include, but are not limited to: eating something which a cat ate from, sleeping with clothing as a pillow, eating olives, wearing one's shirt backwards, and drinking water which was used for washing one's hands (see *Horayos* 13b). Clearly, we are instructed to be very wary of anything which could cause us to forget our *Torah* learning. This would appear to be the intention of the *Midrash* (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 79:5), which tells us that the *possuk* (*Bereishis* 33:18) "and Yaakov came [from Lavan's house] complete" teaches us that Yaakov did not forget any of his learning despite his dire circumstances. In contrast, says the *Midrash*, Yosef Hatzaddik did forget his learning while in Mitzrayim, as the *possuk* in this week's *parsha* says "*ki nishani Elokim es kol amali*" - for Hashem has caused me to forget all of my toil (*Bereishis* 41:51) The *Midrash* proves that the word "toil" often refers to learning *Torah*, thereby demonstrating that this *possuk* refers to Yosef forgetting his learning. We can imagine that Yosef was aghast at this fate - he was a top student in his father's house, and now, he had forgotten everything! We would expect the aforementioned *possuk* to be an instance of Yosef wailing over the *Torah* which he had forgotten over the course of his ordeals. But if we look at the context, we find that this was far from a negative expression from Yosef. In fact, Yosef says this phrase in naming his firstborn child Menashe, after the word *nishan!* On a simple level, this *possuk* is Yosef expressing gratitude to Hashem for helping him to forget the worst of his experiences in Mitzrayim. But according to the *derashah* of the *Midrash*, why would Yosef express gratitude for having forgotten all of his learning?

Rav Shimon Schwab, in his *sefer Mei'ein Beis Hashoeivah*, explains this puzzling *Midrash* based on a *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (24a), which compares the *talmidei chachomim* of *Eretz Yisroel* to those of Bavel. The *Gemara* says, based on *pesukim*, that the scholars of *Eretz Yisroel* respected one another and agreed with one another in learning, while the residents of Bavel constantly quarreled and argued over their learning. The *Gemara* uses the *pesukim* to say that the *talmidei chachomim* of *Eretz Yisroel* "flowed smoothly like olive oil", while the ones in Bavel "crushed each other like olives." (Perhaps we can suggest that this distinction can explain the different structure of the Talmud Bavli and Talmud Yerushalmi - the Yerushalmi is an orderly codification of various *halachos*, in line with the respectful nature of the debates, whereas the Bavli is a far more disorganized and messy transcription of debates and conversations between different Amoraim.) Rav Schwab clarifies that there are two ways in which *chavrusas* can learn. Some people will say a potential *pshat* in a *sugya*, and then carefully listen to how their *chavrusa* understood the *Gemara*. After careful deliberation, they may conclude that they themselves were right, but they make sure to consider the alternative understanding before rejecting it out of hand. Others, however, are unequivocally attached to how they first understood the *Gemara*, and if their *chavrusa* disagrees, he looks at them as if they are from Mars. They will violently defend their *pshat*, refusing to even consider another explanation unless they are shown to be clearly and blatantly incorrect. This, says Rav Schwab, was the difference between the scholars of Bavel and *Eretz Yisroel* - the *talmidei chachomim* in *Eretz Yisroel*, cared only about finding the truth of *Torah*, regardless of whether they came up with the explanation. In contrast, the Amoraim of Bavel were more driven to prove themselves correct, working on defending their opinion rather than working together to try and figure out which *pshat* was closer to *emes*.

This, says Rav Schwab, can explain why Yosef was grateful for having forgotten his learning. Yosef, as well as his brothers, were locked into the mindset of Bavel, each one believing that they were justified, and that the other side was crazy. Thus, when the brothers convened their *beis din* to sentence Yosef to death, they never even considered that their brother might have actually been righteous. As many *meforshim* explain, the divisions between Yosef and his brothers were often regarding fundamental matters of *halachah* (see, for example, last week's *From The Editor's Desk*), and neither side could concede that the other was anything more than foolish at best, or malicious at worst. Yosef was therefore thanking Hashem for allowing him to realize that his brothers were acting *lisheim shamayim*, for the sake of Heaven, and not out of pure cruelty. Yosef was thanking Hashem for allowing him to forget the method of learning of Bavel, which saw him stuck in his line of thought, and allowing him to see the justification behind what others believed.

The goal of our *Torah* learning is to come closer to understanding the wisdom of Hashem, to the extent that it is revealed to us through the *Torah Shebichsav* and *Torah Sheba'al Peh*. Often, it is easy to lose track of this, and become caught up with proving our own intellectual capabilities, rather than doing our utmost to arrive at the most correct conclusion. Such a mindset distorts the entire purpose of *Torah*, as we are no longer aiming to figure out the truth of the words, but to show that our initial understanding was the correct one. We must remember that our learning is a collaborative process, not a competition, and that our end goal is to come to a better understanding of the *chochmas Elokim*.

Wishing everyone an amazing *Shabbos*,
-Shimi Kaufman

Parsha Summary

The *parsha* begins by relating two strange dreams which Pharaoh had, one which depicted seven healthy cows being eaten by seven disheveled ones, and one which depicted seven healthy bundles of grain being swallowed by seven small ones. Pharaoh searched across Mitzrayim for someone who could interpret the dreams, until the *Sar Hamashkin* remembered Yosef, who interpreted his dream correctly when he was in prison. Yosef was brought to Pharaoh, and he explained that the dreams symbolized seven imminent years of plenty for Egypt, followed by seven years of famine. Yosef recommended someone be appointed to save grain during the years of plenty, so that the country would survive through the famine. Pharaoh was impressed by the interpretation, and he appointed Yosef to oversee the collection of the grain, making him second to only the king. Yosef married Osnas, the daughter of his former master Potiphar, and had two sons, Menashe and Ephrayim. When the famine began, Yosef's brothers came down to Mitzrayim to buy food, but they did not recognize Yosef. Yosef, however, recognized them, and insisted that they were spies who had come to destroy the country. Yosef "proved" this with an inconsistency in their story, where they claimed to have another brother, Binyamin, who had not come with them. Yosef demanded that they bring this extra brother down to Egypt, keeping Shimon as a prisoner to ensure they would come back. When the brothers came back, Yosef prepared a feast for them, and sent them back with gifts. Hidden in Binyamin's bag, however, was Yosef's goblet, with which he pretended to see the future and practice divination. Yosef made a show of calling the brothers back to Mitzrayim and "discovering" the goblet in Binyamin's bag, declaring that the punishment for such a heinous crime was to remain a slave in Mitzrayim. With this, Yosef hoped to test if his brothers had done *teshuvah* for selling him, and would be willing to defend their brother from being brought into slavery.

Rosh Yeshiva: Rabbi Michael Taubes

Head of School: Rabbi Joshua Kahn

Associate Principal: Rabbi Shimon Schenker

Rabbinic Advisor: Rabbi Baruch Pesach Mendelson

Editors in Chief: Yisroel Hochman, Shimi Kaufman

Head Writer: Yeshurin Sorscher

Assistant Head Writer: Yosef Flamenbaum

Executive Editors: Yitzchak Hagler, Meir Morell

Distribution Manager: Noam Steinmetz

שבת שלום!!!

This Publication contains Torah matters and should be treated accordingly.

To receive Shema Koleinu in your community, or to sponsor a week of Shema Koleinu, please email shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org