

לעילוי נשמות ר' אברהם יוסף שמואל אלתר בן ר' טובי ז"ל ורעייתו רישא רחל בת ר' אברהם שלמה ע"ה
 נמשל A "בן זקונים" is not simply a child born to elderly parents. Such a child also has the unique ability to imbibe his parents' "years" - their wisdom, experience and knowledge, and make it his own. Thus, **Targum Yonason**

famously translates "בן זקונים" and describes the young boy Yosef, as "a wise son." Yosef managed to take the "elderly years of Yaakov and turn them into knowledge which made him wiser than all his brothers.

A SERIES IN HALACHAH
 LIVING A "TORAH" DAY
Halachos Pertaining to the "Torah" Table (9)

Chanukah. Celebrating by Eating. The Shulchan Aruch (1) rules that there is no point in celebrating *Chanukah* by eating a *seudah*. Since it was a spiritual and ideological war and victory, *Chazal* enacted our celebration by way of saying "Hallel" and "Al Hanissim" which are spiritual activities and not done at the table. (Even according to this opinion, though, one cannot fast on *Chanukah* even for half a day.) Other *Poskim* (2) argue and say that one should celebrate with special meals, either because such a spiritual salvation justifies festive meals or because any of the following reasons: 1) When the *Mishkan* was built in the desert, the work was finished on the 25th day of *Kislev* and it was ready to be put into service. *Hashem* postponed it to the special month of *Nisan* when Yitzchok was born. Finishing the work and *Bnei Yisroel's* good intentions to start (which is like actually doing it (3)) are reasons to celebrate. 2) After the victory of *Chanukah*, the *Chashmonaim* actually made a new festive inauguration of the *mizbeach* (altar) and *Mikdash*, filled with food and drink like the one made in the days of *Shlomo Hamelech*. We relive this with our special *Chanukah* meals.

The **RM'A** (4) concludes that we should add songs and praises to *Hashem* at the meal(s) and then they are definitely considered *Seudos Mitzvos* (*mitzvah* meals). This is the custom and most people do indeed have lively inspiring parties.

Special Foods. The custom is to eat certain special foods at some point during *Chanukah* to remember different aspects of

מאת מו"ה ר' יצחק אהרן שניידר
 רב וקהל אהבת ישראל, קליבלנד הייטס

the many miracles. Some eat cheese, or other cooked foods that contain cheese, to remember how Yehudis managed to kill the opposing general after getting him tired and drunk with cheese and wine (5). There is also a custom to eat potato latkes that are fried in oil as a remembrance of the miracle of the oil in the *Bais Hamikdosh*. **NOTE:** If the latkes are made from potato puree the *beracha* is "Shehakol" (6). Yet, if one said "Ha'adama" it exempts the latkes (7). If it's made from grated potatoes the correct *beracha* is "Ha'adama". If one eats it with apple sauce, he doesn't say any *beracha* on the apple sauce since it is considered as used to enhance the taste of the latkes. If a little apple sauce was left on the plate after the latkes are finished, one may finish it off without requiring a new *beracha* (8).

Chizuk and a Timely Challenge. This year *Shabbos Chanukah* is on *Rosh Chodesh Teves*. Three times on this day, we will *IY"H* recite the longest possible *bentching* containing "Al Hanissim" "Retzai" and "Ya'ale Veyavo". During this hard economic downturn, we should try to remember the words of the **Chinuch** (9) that whoever recites *bentching* with gratitude and concentration will not be lacking *parnassa* (livelihood). If we "storm the Heavens" with our *bentching* and the special additions on this 3-level holy day it will be a great merit to help us with good *parnassa*. It takes preparation to make sure that one knows the simple basic translation of this large *bentching*. It also requires gearing oneself up to actually feel the thanks that he verbalizes, and truly wish that his requests be fulfilled.

הוא היה אומר ...

R' Yisroel Baal Shem Tov ZT"L would say:

"There are three *mitzvos* which are worthwhile even if one performed them without *kavanah*: Learning *Torah* - because regardless of one's intention, he has acquired greater *Torah* knowledge; *Tzedakah* - because whether he wanted to or not, the poor have benefited; and *Mikveh* - because there is no way to emerge from it without becoming pure!"

R' Menachem Mendel Morgenstern ZT"L (Kotzker Rebbe) would say:

"When Yaakov sent Yosef to the fields to locate his brothers, he met the Angel Gavriel, who asked him, 'What are you looking for?' The angel was teaching Yosef a lesson that whenever he found himself 'wandering' in the paths of life, confused and unsure of himself, he should first clarify his objectives and aspirations. The first tactic on the road to certainty and success, is to clarify what exactly 'he is looking for' in order to achieve his goals."

R' Eliezer Papu ZT"L (Pele Yoetz - Erech Savlonus) would say:

"It is so important that a person talks with care. Because before you say them, your words are your prisoners; once you've said them, you are their prisoners!"

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Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev

כ"ג כסלו תשס"ט - December 20, 2008

טיב התבלין

הגה צרבי גמליאל הכהן רבינוביץ שליט"א
 ראש ישיבת שער השמים בירושלים עיה"ק

ויתאבל על בנו ימים רבים וגו' (לז-לח) - גודל הזהירות הנצרכת בכבוד אב ואם

לדרוש אמרו"ר שליט"א על הפסוק (תהלים קכח, ו) "וראה בנים לבניך שלום על ישראל", שכאשר זוכה האדם לראות בנים לבניו, היינו נכדים, אז נעשה שלום בין האבות לבנים עצמם, משום שכשרואים הבנים איך ביניהם מתנהגים איתם, הם מתחילים להבין את אביהם, ומתחרטים על התנהגותם כלפיו, וכך נעשה שלום ביניהם.

כל שכן וכל שכן אם הבן מזלזל ממש באביו, כמה גדול העונש שיקבל על כך! ומי יודע אם חלק גדול מהתלאות העוברות על האדם במשך שנות חייו אינו משום שזילזל בכבוד אביו, שהרי רואים כאן שאף שבוודאי מחל לו יצחק אביו ובוודאי הבינו, מכל מקום הוצרך יעקב לשלם על כך ביוקר - ללבוש שק על בשרו ולהתאבל על בנו ימים רבים כימים אשר לא כיבד את אביו.

לכן, כמה יתבונן האדם בחומר מצות כיבוד אביו ואמו, ויראה לכבדם ביותר, וידע שזוהי אחת מהמצוות החמורות שבתורה, אף שדרך העולם לזלזל מאוד בה. בנוסף, זוהי אחת מהמצוות היחידות שנאמר בהן גס שכרן בעולם הזה: "למען יאריכו ימך" (שמות כ, יב).

מאת הרב שלום פערל שליט"א
 נז"נ בישיבת הגר"צ קושלנסקי

מאוצרותיו של המגיד

ויהי ה' את יוסף ויהי איש מצליח ויהי בבית אדוניו המצרי וגו' (לט-כ)

וימכרו אותו לפוטיפר במצרים, ויתקיים עליו "זרצון הבורא". ומעתה מתבאר הפסוק, "ויהי ה' את יוסף", היינו שהיתה ניכרת ההשגחה הפרטית עליו, בזה ש"ויהי איש מצליח" רק כש"ויהי בבית אדוניו המצרי", ולא קודם לכן בהיותו אצל ה"ישמעאלים".

ומבאר גם באופן אחר, בהקדם דברי הגמרא (שבת ל:) ש"אין השכינה שורה אלא מתוך שמחה", והביאור בזה הוא, "כי מי שהשיג דרגת האמונה והבטחון כראוי, ויודע שהכל מאת ה' ולטובה, לא יכאב לבו, ולא תתבלבל מחשבתו, אם יקרה לו איזה שהוא צרה, אלא יאמין שהיא מאת ה' ולטובה, ויבטח בו, ויהיה בשמחה, ואם הוא דואג וכואב ונאנח ומצטער, זה מורה עליו שלא השיג האמונה ובטחון כראוי.

והיינו "ויהי ה' את יוסף", שתמיד יהיה מחשבתו של יוסף דבוקה בה', ולכן זכה שיהיה ה' שרוי עמו, ולפיכך, "ויהי איש מצליח", שהסתכל על מצבו כהצלחה, על אף שבאמת היה מצבו רע כשהיה "בבית אדוניו המצרי", אך המאמין והבטח שרוי תמיד בשמחה, מכוח בטחונו בה'.

שנודע לו על מיתת יוסף, יעקב אבינו התאבל עליו "ימים רבים". ופרש"י וז"ל עשרים ושנים שנה משפירש ממנו עד שירד יעקב למצרים, שנא' יוסף בן שבע עשרה שנה וגו' ובן שלשים שנה היה בעמדו לפני פרעה, ושבע שני השובע ושנתים הרעב כשבא יעקב למצרים הרי"כ ב' שנה, כנגד כ"ב שנה שלא קיים יעקב כיבוד אבואם. אף שאין אנו יכולים לומר פירוש במעשי יעקב אבינו, כי אין אנו מתחילים להבין כלל בקדושתם של האבות הקדושים, מ"מ באנו רק ללמוד ממנו את הנצרך לנו לעבודתו. כאן רואים אנו כמה גדול הוא עונשו של הנכשל באי כיבוד האב והאם, שאף שיעקב לא היה כלל אשם בכל זה, כי הלך בציווי אביו ואמו לקחת אשה בחרון, ולא זילזל חלילה יעקב כלל במצות כיבוד אב ואם, אלא פשוט לא יכל לקיימה בשנים אלו שלא היה מצוי לידם, מכל מקום נענש במידה כנגד מידה שבנו יוסף לא כיבדו כמספר השנים הללו. והיינו משום שחמור הוא מאוד חוב כיבוד אב ואם.

וידוע פתגם העולם, שמברכים את האדם שזכה לחיות הרבה שנים, ויראה שאותו דבר שעשה הוא לאביו נעשה גם לו ע"י בנו, וכמו שרגיל

לקחי חיים ודברי התעוררות
 נסדרו עפ"י פרשיות השבוע

ש"אלה ה' כתב סופר", "וצרך ביאור, מדוע הפסוק היה צריך לכתוב "ויהי בבית אדוניו המצרי", הלא זה מובן מאליו, שהיה במקום שמכרו אותו שם? וכך יש להבין, מדוע כתוב כאן שלוש פעמים "ויהי"?

ומייד, "נראה לי, כי מצוינו שתמיד היה יוסף איש מצליח", בבית אדוניו המצרי ובבית הסוהר וכו', וא"כ מדוע לא מצוינו שהיה לו הצלחה אצל ה"ישמעאלים" שקנו אותו מאחיו? אלא משום שאם היה מצליח אצלם לא היו מוכרים אותו לאחרים, והיו משאירים אותו לעצמם, וכיון שמאת ה' היתה שיבוא למצרים וייעשה "משנה למלך", כדי שעליו יגיעו ישראל למצרים, ויתקיים בהם הפסוק "ידוע תדע וגו'" (ט"ו י"ג), וכן שיעמוד בנסיון, ויגדור עצמו מן העררה, ובה יסלול הדרך לישראל, שגם ב'מצרים הטמאה' יוכלו להישאר בקדושתם, ומכאן יגאלו, וכמבואר במדרש שה"ש ד' כ"ח: "יוסף ירד למצרים, וגדר עצמו מן העררה ... כדאי היתה ג'דירת עררה' עצמה, שבזכותה נגאלו ישראל ממצרים", לכן הסיר ה' הצלחתו מאתו בעת שהיה ביד ה"ישמעאלים, כדי שלא יתנו עיניהם בו,

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

כי אם זכרתי אתך כאשר ייטב לך ועשית נא עמדי חסד וחזרתני אל פרעה והוצאתני מן הבית הזה וגו' (מ-יד)

For hundreds of years, Jews had been economically and politically stifled and physically confined to the ghettos of Europe. Following in the wake of the Napoleon Wars (1804-1815), in which General Napoleon Bonaparte conquered much of Europe, and proclaimed himself Emperor of France, came the emancipation of the Jews of Western Europe. The ghetto walls came down and the Jews of Western Europe were free to enter European society for the first time. Historians have grappled with the question as to what prompted Napoleon to treat the Jews in the way that he did, but the following story, which **R' Chaim Soloveitchik (Brisker) ZT"l** related to his son **R' Yitzchok Zev ZT"l (Brisker Rov)**, who later recounted it to **R' Zalman Sorotzkin ZT"l**, may give us an insight into his mindset.

It is told that during one of Napoleon's Eastern European campaigns, a grand banquet was thrown in his honor in the Lithuanian city of Kovno. Key religious and prominent leaders of various denominations were urged to attend and many of them were scheduled to make flattering speeches about the conquering monarch. When Napoleon noticed that there was no Jewish representative, he was dismayed and ordered that a rabbi be summoned to his feast.

Soldiers spread out in search of a rabbi and finally the elderly rabbi of a nearby town was brought to the scene. The rabbi fearfully admitted that he had never attended such a banquet and he surely had never spoken about politics in his life, only about *Torah* ethics. Napoleon was intrigued, and in a fit of good humor, he said, "Very well! I've heard enough flattery for the time being. Tell me what your *Torah* has to say about my conquests and military genius!" He laughed heartily and all those in attendance felt obliged to laugh uproariously at his witticism.

The elderly rabbi collected his wits and decided to go for broke. "Your Majesty surely recalls the famous Bible story about Joseph, who was thrown into prison for a crime he did not commit. While he was there, the Royal Butler and Baker of Pharaoh were likewise imprisoned. One night, they each dreamt unusual dreams and in the morning, Joseph was asked to interpret their dreams. The baker, predicted Joseph, would be executed in three days time, while the butler would be restored to his position in three days. His words were right on the mark." Napoleon nodded, recalling the story.

"At that point," continued the rabbi, "Joseph mentioned to the Royal Butler, his wish to be freed from prison. In doing so, he phrased his request with the words - כי אם זכרתי - a very awkward Hebrew expression which literally translates as: *'Because if you will remember me.'* Now, I ask: how can one begin a request with the word 'because'?" Again, Napoleon nodded, following intently, enjoying this impromptu Bible lesson.

"The answer is that when Joseph informed the chief butler that not only would he be freed in three days but that he would immediately regain his former glory, he noted the prisoner's look of amazement and disbelief. Generally, once a minister is imprisoned, he is almost never freed. It's one thing to be released from prison; but to return to his exalted position in the palace was almost too good to be true! In response to the butler's unspoken question, Joseph hastily explained why G-d had arranged this miraculous event: *'Because* you are supposed to remember me and get me released!'"

The old rabbi concluded: "You, too, great and mighty Emperor, must realize that G-d is talking to you. How can anyone explain your military successes, the almost supernatural victories? Even here in this backward region of Europe? Clearly, the Almighty has a reason for making all this happen: *Because* you are to see firsthand the terrible oppression of Joseph's descendants, the Jewish People, and be moved to grant them equality and justice. That is why you are so victorious!" Napoleon stood up and grasped the rabbi's hand firmly, thanking him for his warm and truthful words.

משל' למה הדבר דומה

וישראל אהב את יוסף מכל בניו כי בן זקונים הוא לו וכו' (לז-ג)

משל: After the death of the holy **Tzemach Tzedek, R' Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch ZT"l**, a dispute broke out as to which of his sons should succeed him as *Rebbe*. Although **R' Yehudah Leib ZT"l** was the older brother and a great *tzaddik* in his own right, **R' Shmuel ZT"l**, the youngest of seven brothers, was renowned for his genius and incredible grasp of all facets of the *Torah*.

Eventually, the matter was brought to a *Din Torah*. R' Shmuel dazzled all those present with his articulate displays of logic and brilliance, carefully crafting his

arguments and deftly staking his claim.

Everyone was amazed at this young man's sheer brilliance, none more so than his own brother, R' Yehudah Leib. "When did you become such a genius?" asked the older brother. "You are still so young, yet you maintain such a vast storehouse of knowledge, both of the revealed and the hidden aspects of the *Torah*."

R' Shmuel, later to be known as the Rebbe Maharash, replied, "My brother, you are old with your years. But I am older since I have taken the *Tatteh's* years as well!"

יוסף בן שבע עשרה שנה היה ... ויבא יוסף את דבתם רעה אל אביהם וגו' (לז-ב)

Although Yosef acted sincerely, hoping that Yaakov's subsequent rebuke would cause the brothers to mend their ways, the *Torah* refers to his reports as an expression which denotes *lashon hara*, slander. To some extent, albeit minute, Yosef's reports were also composed of *lashon hara*. Now, in the case of Miriam, the sister of Moshe and Aharon, the *Torah* tells us that she was punished with leprosy and made to sit in solitary confinement for seven days on account of her words against her brother which were deemed inappropriate and a form of *lashon hara*. Yosef, on the other hand, was sold into slavery and forced to be separated from his family for twenty two years. How does his punishment fit his apparent misdeed?

R' Mordechai Gifter ZT"l answers by delving into the root of the abominable sin of *lashon hara* which is a failure to recognize a fellow human being as having been created *B'tzelem Elokim*, in the Divine image. One could not possibly speak evil of another if one considered that person the embodiment of *Hashem's* image. Therefore, in order to repent for speaking *lashon hara* against another person, one must learn to recognize that the other person is a true *tzelem Elokim*, a Divinely-inspired creation with G-d-given talents and abilities.

Yosef had spoken words which the *Torah* classified as "דבתם רעה" - *"malicious sayings"* which underscored his need to redefine the way he perceived others. He achieved this by being sold into slavery since a slave loses, to a certain extent, the unique quality of a human being, created in the image of the Almighty, for only animals are sold by one master to another, unlike refined creations of a Divine nature. In being sold, Yosef was imbued with a greater recognition that man is indeed a *tzelem Elokim*.

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

נשיקות

The famous *Medrash* states: "Yaakov Avinu wished to live in tranquility in this world; the anger (*hardships*) of Yosef was thrust upon him." Yaakov was not meant to experience tranquility in this world. Why not? Why shouldn't *Hashem* "Fargin" Yaakov some peace and quiet? What would have been so terrible had he enjoyed tranquility and serenity?

R' Yeruchem Levovitz ZT"l explains that the purpose of life is to grow from every situation. For one to reach his personal *shleimus*, he must pass the tests, *nisyonos*, that *Hashem* throws at him. If he fails these tests, *Hashem* will send him the same tests in different forms, so avoiding the issue will not accomplish anything. Rather than seeking tranquility in his life, Yaakov should have asked *Hashem* - as *Dovid Hamelech* did - to give him the strength, wisdom and wherewithal to overcome the difficult tribulations that inevitably crop up, in order to be able to serve *Hashem* properly.

Our job is not to focus on how we feel about a situation, but rather to view each and every issue in life as a tool for growth. This way, we can actualize our potential and accomplish our goals - which is why we are here in the first place! So the next time you find yourself in a frustrating, upsetting or angering situation, STOP, CALM DOWN, and FOCUS on the source of your angst. Then, visualize it as an opportunity, a GIFT that *Hashem* is sending you, to work on yourself and overcome this *nisayon*. Remember, the purpose of life is not to relax, but to grow. So set your sights high to achieve your lofty goals, because in the long run, a person's ALTITUDE in life, is determined by his ATTITUDE in life!

TORAH GEMS

ויראו אתו מרחק ובטרם יקרב עליהם ויתנכלו אתו להמיתו וגו' (לז-ח)

Many questions abound regarding the relationship between the brothers - the holy שבטי קה - and Yosef. The *posuk* testifies that he was a child - a "נער" - and as such, it is conceivable that he was prone to impulses and behavior that his older brothers would find distasteful. Yet, for this they should hate him? To the point where they wanted to see him dead - or at the very least, taken away as a slave to a foreign land? After all, who are we talking about here; none other than the righteous sons of Yaakov!

Moreover, Yaakov was aware of the animosity among his sons - "ויאביו שמר את הדבר" - yet do we find that he attempted to repair, or even forbid, his sons from treating each other with hostility? How then, could Yaakov have sent Yosef, alone and vulnerable, to "check up" on his brothers, the same brothers who despised him and wished to do him harm? What was Yaakov thinking?

The answer to all these questions, based on the **Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh, R' Chaim Ben Attar ZT"l**, is alluded to in three short words: "ויראו אתו מרחוק" - *"And they (the brothers) saw him from a distance."* This was the real tragedy! His brothers saw him from afar - remotely, from a distance - not as a brother but as a stranger. They had their grievances against Yosef but rather than confront him on the issues, they remained apart, they maintained their distance and allowed their resentment to fester within until it became a full blown enmity! Yaakov recognized the problem and took it upon himself to correct it. Thus, he sent Yosef to his brothers in the hope that he may "reconnect" with them, rekindle their brotherly affection and stabilize their relationship. But alas, it was not meant to be!

There are two sides to every quarrel. It is the "distance" and unwillingness to compromise that turns it into a fight!

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOMO

וישב יעקב בארץ מגורי אביו בארץ כנען וגו' (לז-א)