

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

VAYIGASH

Haftarah: Yehezkel 37:15-28

DECEMBER 22-23, 2017 5 TEBET 5778

In memory of our grandmother Esther Bibi whose Yahrzeit is Friday 11 Tebet and in memory of Molly Jamal

Fast Day - Asara BeTebet - Thursday, December 28th

The fast of Asara BeTebet commemorates the siege of Jerusalem by Nebukhadnessar of Babylonia in 3336, which ultimately led to the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash.

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EDITORS NOTES FROM THE ARCHIVES 2010

I hope you all had a great Chanukah. This really was an enlightening week. We have been speaking of a special spiritual light that comes with Chanukah and I was thinking about something Rabbi Abittan once told me about tuning in. He explained that technology helps us to understand how things work. Floating through the airwaves at any given moment are thousands if not millions of sounds. We use our radios or our computers or even our phones to tune into the words we wish to hear. In the same fashion, we can spiritually tune in to WGod on our dial. Some weeks the signal is so much stronger and its so much easier to lock into the right station. This week it seemed so much easier to connect with others and wherever I went and whoever came to see me seemed to be flowing with Torah. I wondered was it really different than other times or was I simply putting more effort into connecting?

The Rabbi would say that when we connect with Torah, we connect with the blue print of creation and through the Torah connect with the entire world, both the physical one and the spiritual one.

Connections are crucial. When Yaakov sent Yehudah down before the rest of the family to establish a Yeshiva, he was teaching us that when we put the Torah first, every other door is open to us.

Although much of what we learned this week, based on the Zohar, the writings of the Ari and the Ramchal

are beyond the scope of this newsletter, I did hear an innovative idea from Rabbi Joey Haber which I discussed with my cousin Marilyn and my friend Aaron in the office today.

Rabbi Haber suggested that Pharaoh was aware of the prophecy given to Abraham at Brit Ben HaBetarim where Hashem states: "You shall surely know that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will enslave them and oppress them, for four hundred years. And also the nation that they will serve will I judge, and afterwards they will go forth with great possessions."

When Yaakov comes down to Egypt, Pharaoh wonders if in fact his is the nation and if so when the actual servitude will begin. We learn this from the strange discourse that takes place. A single question and a single answer followed by a blessing. "Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many are the days of the years of your life?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojournings are one hundred thirty years. The days of the years of my life have been few and miserable, and they have not reached the days of the years of the lives of my forefathers in the days of their sojournings." So Jacob blessed Pharaoh and left Pharaoh's presence.

Jacob is stating that he is already old and will soon die. The slavery can soon begin if Pharaoh wants to accept the responsibility and the consequences. After the blessing of having the Israelites, will come almost complete annihilation. Pharaoh accepts. Pharaoh is willing to suffer the consequences. The deal is struck and Yaakov leaves.

Contemporary literature might refer to this as a Faustian bargain, or a deal with the Devil! Might and power today at the price of destruction tomorrow. Would any of us take it? We usually think not, but too many of us live above our means, live an unhealthy lifestyle, and decide to ignore the consequences.

One message in this weeks portion is to reject Pharaoh's lifestyle. The sages teach - "Aizehu

chacham - haroeh et hanolad - Who is a wise person - he who sees into the future. When we pay attention to the future, when we consider the consequences, we'll be bettered prepared to resist.

Every kid loves candy, until he hears the dentist's drill!

Shabbat Shalom,

David Bibi

The Tailor's Investment

Rabbi Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam of Shinova was standing in the train station when suddenly he heard the sound of someone crying. "Who is crying?" he asked Berel, the tailor, who was also waiting for the train.

"It's a little girl," answered Berel. "Why is she crying?" the tzadik wondered. "I don't know," said Berel. "I'll go ask her."

After a few minutes he came back and said, "The little girl's purse is lost. She has no money to buy a ticket to get home."

The tzadik looked at him strangely. "Perhaps you can help her out, Berel," he suggested. "One day it might stand you in good stead."

Berel paid for a train ticket for the girl with his money and gave it to her. She thanked him profusely as she wiped away her tears. Soon after that the train arrived and they both had to board. When they reached the station of his tailor shop, Berel got off.

A short time later a general came into the shop and ordered new uniforms for all the soldiers under his command. Berel was very happy because the large job would ensure him a good income.

As soon as the general left, Berel set to work. He brought the material, measured it, and cut it. Then he sewed the pieces together to make uniforms. He made them shorter than the usual uniforms to save money and increase his profit. He hoped the general would not notice.

But the general did notice. When he received the uniforms and saw that they were short, he became very angry and sent a squad of soldiers to arrest the Jewish tailor.

Berel saw the soldiers coming. Frightened, he sneaked out through the back door, running as fast as his legs could carry him. "The Shinover rav will surely help me," he thought desperately. "I'll go to him."

He ran and ran. Finally, he reached the home of the rebbe. "I am in terrible trouble," Berel cried out. "Rebbe, please help me!"

"What is it, my son?" the Shinover asked, concerned.

Berel told the rebbe his whole story. The tzadik promptly advised him to go to Vienna and speak to the officer who was in charge of his case.

Berel took the train to Vienna. It turned out to be difficult to find out who was the officer he needed to see and how and where to locate him. Finally he met someone who said he knew which official it was and where he lived, and would write down the information for him. But then, when the friendly man handed Berel the slip of paper with the name and address, he warned him, "This officer is mean. And he does not like Jewish people."

Berel was scared, but he knew he must follow the rebbe's instructions. He went to the officer's house and knocked on the door. The door opened. A little girl stood there – the same little girl who had cried at the train station. She ran inside excitedly calling, "Father! Father! Come quickly! It is the man who was nice to me when I lost my purse!"

Berel was amazed. "This is a miracle from G-d," he thought.

The girl's father appeared. "So you are the man who saved my precious daughter," the officer exclaimed, taking Berel's hand in his. "I have wanted to thank you all this time, but I did not know your name or where you lived. How can I ever thank you and show you my gratitude?"

"I am in danger of being arrested and you are the officer in charge of my case," Berel said. "You can help me by pardoning me for making the uniforms short."

"Of course I will pardon you," the officer promised. "I always thought the old uniforms were too long, anyway. The soldiers used to trip on them when they ran. And I will make sure you are paid in full for the work, as well."

Berel left Vienna with a light heart and pockets full of money. Sitting on the train on the way home, Berel thought about how he had been saved because he had been kind to a little girl in need.

Suddenly he remembered the odd look that the Shinover Rav had given him at the train station when he told him to help the little girl. "The rebbe must have known from the beginning what was going to happen," thought Berel in wonder. "And then later, when I was running away, he knew just where I should go. Praised be G-d. What a great rebbe I have!"

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Source: Adapted from "Why the Baal Shem Tov Laughed" by Sterna Citron (Jason Aronson Inc.)

## Summary of the Perasha Nathan Dweck

At end of last week's parasha the brothers are chased down and accused of taking Yosef's cup. The brothers at that point voluntarily say that whoever took the cup will die and the rest of them will be Yosef's slaves. Why would they volunteer this? And interestingly Yosef's people respond that only the person who took the cup will be held responsible and everyone else will go free. Then after they find the cup in Binyamin's sack Yehuda again volunteers to Yosef that they will all be his slaves. Why? And Yosef responds that he only wants Binyamin. And only after it becomes clear that Yosef is going to take Binyamin does Yehuda aggressively approach Yosef ready to fight. How do we understand this back and forth? Why at first was Yehuda ready for all the brothers to be slaves and now when it comes out that only Binyamin will be a slave he is ready to fight with Yosef?

And I heard a beautiful explanation from Rabbi David Sutton in the name of the Emek Davar. Hazal teach us that when we go through difficulties, "nachpesa derachenu ve'nachkora", search your ways and fix them. Yehuda and the brothers concluded that the difficulties they had been going through were a result of them selling Yosef (as we see when they were in jail they said to each other that this was happening because of what they did with Yosef). And the Emek Davar explains that is why they were ready that they should all be Yosef's servants. They understood that if in fact the cup was found in their possession it was a punishment from Hashem and they were ready to accept it. But when it comes out that it is only Binyamin that is going to be held back and all the other brothers go free that is when they conclude that this cannot be a punishment for selling Yosef, because Binyamin in fact is the only one that was not involved in the sale of Yosef. And that is why Yehuda is now ready to fight with Yosef at the start of this week's parasha. I thought this was a nice explanation that gave some depth to the events that lead up to Yehuda's confrontation with Yosef.

### **Va'yigash- Yosef reveals his identity. Yaacov and his family come to live in Mitsrayim.**

- 1- Yehuda pleads with Yosef to let Binyamin return home to his father.
- 2- Yosef reveals his true identity
- 3- Yosef tells the brothers to bring Yaacov and move to Mitsrayim as the hunger will last another 5 years
- 4- The brothers return home and tell Yaacov that Yosef is alive

5- Yaacov heads to Mitsrayim. The parsha lists the 70 people from Yaacov's family that ended up in Mitsrayim.

6- Yosef and Yaacov re-unite. Yaacov and the brothers settle in Goshen. Yaacov meets Paroah.

7- Details regarding the past 2yrs of hunger and how Yosef sold food to the people and acquired all the wealth of Mitsrayim for Paroah.

### **FROM THE RABBIS OF THE JERSEY SHORE**

#### **"Then Yehudah approached him." (Beresheet 44:18)**

Yehudah confronts Yosef in defense of his brother Binyamin. He tells Yosef, "For you are like Pharaoh." Rashi explains, "Just as Pharaoh decrees but does not fulfill, so too do you. Is this what you call watching over him (Binyamin)? The Sifte Hachamim explains that Pharaoh had a law that a slave cannot rule. Nevertheless, he made Yosef the ruler even though he was a slave. Therefore, Yehudah meant to say to Yosef, on whom do you rely? On Pharaoh? He himself is unreliable since he didn't uphold his own decrees!

In short, Yehudah was saying you cannot rely on Pharaoh because he didn't adhere to his own laws. However, asks Rabbi Henech Lebowitz zt"l, it seems that Yehudah's logic is flawed, because the reason Pharaoh lied and went around his own law was for the benefit of Yosef. How does this show that he will lie to hurt Yosef?

The answer is that Yehudah is proving Pharaoh a liar from the fact that he didn't even bother to change the law nor did he show any regret that he lies. This shows that Pharaoh is a liar by nature and therefore it's possible that at any time he will lie and hurt even the ones he loves.

The lesson is awesome. We learn from here that it's possible for a man to do someone a favor and that favor itself is a cause and a sign that afterwards he will hurt him. For this is what was feared regarding Pharaoh. From the fact that he helped Yosef in violation of his laws showed he lacked the trait of honesty. If he lacked honesty he cannot be trusted.

Honesty is the foundation of all of our relationships with our fellow man. Rabbi Reuven Semah

**In this week's parashah, we see one of the most dramatic scenes in the entire Torah.** Yosef finally reveals his identity to his brothers and says to them, "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" The pasuk says that the brothers were consumed with fear and were unable to respond to Yosef.

The midrash comments on this pasuk: Woe to us from the day of judgment, woe to us from the day of rebuke! If the brothers were not able to say anything

in their own defense, what will be with us on the final day of judgment? However if we study the pasuk, we don't really see such a stinging rebuke. What did Yosef say to them that caused such a reaction?

Hazal explain that Yosef was showing them their inconsistencies. He was saying to them, you are begging me to allow Binyamin to go home because you're so concerned for your father's welfare? Where was your so-called concern for your father when you sold me to be taken as a slave to Egypt? This is why the brothers had nothing to respond, because he showed them that they were contradicting themselves.

This is what every person will face at the end of his days. He will be asked, you claimed you didn't have money to give sedakah but what about the times you wasted money? Did you make as much of an effort to find a beautiful etrog as you did to pick out your new car with all the latest gadgets? You said you didn't have time to go to Torah classes, but you always seemed to find time to go to every social event. There are countless situations similar to this. Therefore, we should all do a self-analysis to determine if we are really being true to ourselves. In this way, we will serve Hashem in the best way and thereby merit to receive blessings and success in everything we do. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

### Out of the Picture

Insults! They really get to you, don't they? Most of us get quite emotional when we are on the receiving end of one. But rather than reacting in a negative manner when affronted, try working on yourself to see things objectively. Leave your ego out of it.

It is easy to be objective about others and to understand why they should not get excited about a barb. ("So what if someone said that about you?" you may coolly ask.) Next time you are the victim, treat the insult as if it were directed at someone else. I know it's difficult, but it is achievable.

It might be easier to avoid reacting emotionally if you could focus on what is really happening and put the whole scene in perspective. Look at the person saying those nasty things about you. If that individual is a fool, you can comfortably ignore the hurtful comments. And if the person is wise, or someone whose opinion you generally respect, just say thanks for pointing out an opportunity to improve yourself. Focus on the real situation, and don't react emotionally.

Try it. It is a trick that can add years to your new, calm life. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR The Master of Self-Control

The Torah in Parashat Vayigash tells the dramatic story of Yosef's revelation of his identity to his brothers. The revelation came on the heels of Yehuda's impassioned plea to Yosef to allow Binyamin, the youngest brother, to return home to Eretz Yisrael. Yehuda's petition pulled all the right strings, as it were, of Yosef's heart, and the Torah says that Yosef was unable to contain himself. Overcome by emotion, Yosef felt he could no longer continue concealing his identity from his brothers, and he announced, "I am Yosef."

It is noteworthy, however, that even in these moments of overpowering emotion, Yosef still remained fully in control. The Torah writes that before revealing his identity, Yosef announced that everyone else, all the Egyptian servants who were present in the room, should leave. He did not want to subject his brothers to unnecessary embarrassment by having other people hear of how they mistreated Yosef. This was a private family affair, and it would have been wholly inappropriate to expose the story to people on the outside. Yosef therefore took a moment before revealing his identity to ensure absolute privacy. Even at this moment when, as the Torah tells us, Yosef could no longer hold himself back from telling his brothers who he was, he actually was able to hold himself back long enough to ensure that this would be done in a proper, dignified fashion.

Yosef was a master of self-control. Like other great Sadikim, he always retained his composure and never lost himself. At times of overwhelming emotion, such as anger or frustration, we so often lose self-control and act in ways in which we would never normally act, only to feel sincere regret afterward. The Sadikim, however, are always in control of themselves, they always have their emotions in check. Remarkably, even when the Torah describes Yosef as "losing control," he clearly did not really lose it entirely. He still had the presence of mind, patience and discipline to act with propriety and discretion, and not with raw impulse.

While we may not be able to reach the exalted level of Yosef Ha'sadik, we must learn the lesson that emerges from his conduct in this episode. Emotions are part of the human condition, but they must always be kept under our control. We must never allow an offensive remark or a stressful period of life to overtake us to the point where we speak and act without thinking. We can and must exert control over ourselves and ensure to speak and act in a manner that we will not regret later.

**VICTOR BIBI  
SOD HAPARASHA**

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**Rabbi Wein**

One of the largest funerals in the history of the state of Israel took place last week, with thousands in attendance at the passing of the great scholar and leader Rabbi Aryeh Leib Shteinman. Though he was 104 years old at his passing, his absence was felt by so many simply because of his extraordinary piety, generous personality and visionary leadership.

His works of commentary to the Talmud gained him early fame and notoriety even though they were published anonymously. Modesty and humility adorned him all of his life and yet he rose to be the leader of one of the great yeshiva movements in Israel... and perhaps of all time. His leadership was levelheaded, realistic, moderate and noble. He was never given to bombastic statements or extreme positions on political and religious matters.

In an age when religious extremism seems to dominate the debate he was unfazed by the criticism that came his way or by the opposition that he faced to certain of his practical and correct decisions. He lived modestly, almost close to poverty, never sought honor or recognition for himself, but he had a firm view of modern-day Israeli society and of the yeshiva world that he led.

He did not have fanciful illusions about what could be achieved in practical terms to strengthen the Torah religious face of modern-day Israel. But he stood his ground on major issues and achieved notable success in creating a more traditional Jewish society here in Israel. Undoubtedly someone else will eventually succeed him in his role in the religious world, but as is usually the case with great people, he is really irreplaceable.

Last week also saw the passing of my closest friend and in many respects my rabbinic mentor, Rabbi Ayeh Rottman. Rabbi Rottman was the founding rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Miami Beach Florida in the 1950s. It was because of his personal intervention in my life that I left my profession as a lawyer and agreed to succeed him as the rabbi of that wonderful synagogue that I was privileged to serve for almost 9 years in the 1960s and early 1970s.

He was one of the founders of the Miami Mesivta, the first of just a few high schools that existed in that community. His kindness and compassion for all human beings was legendary and I must admit that he was a very hard act to follow. His mouth did not speak evil language about any human being nor were his ears willing to hear derogatory words about others.

He later moved to Long Beach, New York where again he served as a pulpit rabbi and was the founder of the yeshiva that still exists there. In the 1960s he moved to Israel and established the great yeshiva of Mercaz Hatorah, located here in Talpiyot, Jerusalem. He spent all of his life teaching Torah, helping human beings, and raising and inspiring students. He was a role model for old and young alike and one was always amazed by the warmth of his personality and the firmness of his leadership and vision. To me personally he is certainly irreplaceable.

Every generation has special people that affect the lives of many of their contemporaries as well as the lives of later generations. The Talmud teaches us that the Lord, so to speak, saw that these people were rare in human society and therefore He sparingly distributed them over the generations. In this way every generation would have some of these superior scholars, leaders and role models.

As the previous generation, now inexorably passing from the scene, we can mourn the loss of such great people. However, the Jewish people are never bereft of scholarship, humanity, piety and visionary leadership. Time will tell who the exact replacements in the next generation will be for those who have just passed on.

We may be assured though that there will definitely be proper replacements to guide the Jewish people spiritually in the difficult times that we apparently face and will face for the foreseeable future. King Solomon remarked in the great book of Kohelet, that generations depart and new generations arrive in the world and will do so eternally.

It is not only the world that exists eternally but its challenges and problems, troubles and disparities, holiness and tradition also remain and are revealed in every generation, through different people and to changing circumstances. This should be a source of comfort to us when we assess what we have lost in the events of the last weeks

### Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks The First Psychotherapist

The phrase “Jewish thinker” may mean two very different things. It may mean a thinker who just happens to be Jewish by birth or descent – a Jewish physicist, for example – or it may refer to someone who has contributed specifically to Jewish thought: like Judah Halevi or Maimonides.

The interesting question is: is there a third kind of Jewish thinker, one who contributes to the universe of knowledge, but does so in a recognisably Jewish way? The answer to this is never straightforward, yet we instinctively feel that there is such a thing. To give an analogy: there is often something recognisably Jewish about a certain kind of humour. Ruth Wisse has interesting things to say about it in her book, *No Joke*.<sup>[1]</sup> So does Peter Berger in his *Redeeming Laughter*.<sup>[2]</sup> Humour is universal, but it speaks in different accents in different cultures.

I believe that something similar applies to psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. So many of the early practitioners of psychoanalysis, with the marked exception of Jung, were Jewish that it became known in Nazi Germany as the “Jewish science.” I have argued – though my views on this have been challenged – to the contrary, that by taking the Greek myth of Oedipus as one of his key models, Freud developed a tragic view of the human condition that is more Hellenistic than Jewish.<sup>[3]</sup>

By contrast, three of the most significant post-war psychotherapists were not merely Jewish by birth but profoundly Jewish in their approach to the human soul. Viktor Frankl, a survivor of Auschwitz, developed on the basis of his experiences there an approach he called Logotherapy, based on “man’s search for meaning.”<sup>[4]</sup> Though the Nazis took away almost every vestige of humanity from those they consigned to the death factories, Frankl argued that there was one thing they could never take away from their prisoners: the freedom to decide how to respond.

Aaron T. Beck was one of the founders of what is widely regarded as the most effective forms of psychotherapy: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.<sup>[5]</sup> Among patients suffering from depression, he found that their feelings were often linked to highly negative thoughts about themselves, the world and the future. By getting them to think more realistically, he found that their mood tended to improve.

Martin Seligman is the founder of Positive Psychology, which aims not just to treat depression but actively to promote what he calls “authentic happiness” and “learned optimism.”<sup>[6]</sup> Depression, Seligman argued, is often linked to pessimism, which comes from interpreting events in a particular kind of way that he calls “learned helplessness”. Pessimists

tend to see misfortune as permanent (“It’s always like this”), personal (“It’s my fault”) and pervasive (“I always get things wrong”). This leaves them feeling that the bad they suffer is inevitable and beyond their control. Optimists look at things differently. For them, negative events are temporary, the result of outside factors, and exceptions rather than the rule. So, within limits,<sup>[7]</sup> you can unlearn pessimism, and the result is greater happiness, health and success. What links all three thinkers is their belief that (1) there is always more than one possible interpretation of what happens to us, (2) we can choose between different interpretations and (3) the way we think shapes the way we feel. This gives all three a marked resemblance to a particular kind of Jewish thought, namely Chabad Chassidut, as developed by the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady (1745-1812). The word Chabad stands for the initial letters of the three intellectual virtues, *chokhmah*, *binah* and *da’at*, “wisdom, understanding and knowledge,” which influence the more emotional attributes of *chesed*, *gevurah* and *tiferet*, “kindness, self-restraint and beauty or emotional balance.” Unlike the other Chassidic movements, which emphasised the emotional life, Chabad Chassidism focused on the power of the intellect to shape emotion. It was, in its way, an anticipation of cognitive behavioural therapy.

Its origins, however, lie far earlier. Last week I argued that Joseph was the first economist. This week I want to suggest that he was the first cognitive therapist. He was the first to understand the concept of reframing, that is, seeing the negative events of his life in a new way, thereby liberating himself from depression and learned helplessness.

The moment at which he does so comes when, moved by Judah’s passionate plea to let Benjamin return home to their father Jacob, he finally reveals himself to his brothers:

“I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God.”

Note what Joseph is doing here. He is reframing events so that the brothers will not have to live under an unbearable burden of guilt for having sold Joseph as a slave and deceived their father, causing him years of undiminished grief. But he is only able to do so for them because he has already done so for himself. When it happened, we cannot be sure. Was Joseph aware, all along, that the many blows of

misfortune he suffered were all part of a divine plan, or did he only realise this when he was taken from prison to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, and then made Viceroy of Egypt?

The text is silent on this point, but it is suggestive. More than any other character in the Torah, Joseph attributes all his achievements to God. This allows him to do what, in secular terms, Frankl, Beck and Seligman would all have advised him to do if he had been one of their patients: think of a mission he was being called on to fulfill (Frankl), reinterpret misfortune as possibility (Beck) and see the positive elements of his situation (Seligman). Not only was Joseph freed from a physical prison; he freed himself from an emotional prison, namely resentment toward his brothers. He now saw his life not in terms of a family drama of sibling rivalry, but as part of a larger movement of history as shaped by Divine providence. That is what makes me think that the work of Frankl, Beck and Seligman is Jewish in a way that Freudian psychoanalysis is not. At the heart of Judaism is the idea of human freedom. We are not prisoners of events but active shapers of them. To be sure, we may be influenced by unconscious drives, as Freud thought, but we can rise above them by "habits of the heart" that hone and refine our personality. Joseph's life shows that we can defeat tragedy by our ability to see our life not just as a sequence of unfair events inflicted on us by others, but also as a series of divinely intended moves, each of which brings us closer to a situation in which we can do what God wants us to do.

We can't all be Joseph, but thanks to R. Shneur Zalman of Liady in spiritual terms, and to Frankl, Beck and Seligman in secular ones, we can learn what it is to change the way we feel by changing the way we think, and the best way of doing so is to ask, "What does this bad experience enable me to do that I could not have done otherwise?" That can be life-transforming.

[1] Ruth Wisse, *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor*, Princeton University Press, 2013.

[2] Peter Berger, *Redeeming Laughter: the comic dimension of human experience*, Boston, de Gruyter, 2014.

[3] There were undeniably Jewish elements in Freud's work, most notably the fact that though he himself called psychoanalysis the "speaking cure," it is in fact the "listening cure," and listening is a key feature of Jewish spirituality.

[4] Frankl wrote many books, but the most famous is *Man's Search for Meaning*, one of the most influential works of the 20th century.

[5] See Aaron T. Beck, *Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders*, Penguin, 1989. See also his important *Prisoners of Hate: the cognitive basis of anger, hostility and violence*, HarperCollins, 1999.

[6] Martin Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, Free Press, 2002; *Learned Optimism*, Basic Books, 2008.

[7] Seligman admits that there are things about us that we can't change, but there is much about us that we can. See Martin Seligman, *What you can change and what you can't*, London, Nicolas Brealey, 2007.

## Rav Kook on the Perasha The First Exile

The very first exile of the Jewish people, the exile to Egypt, began as Jacob and his family left the Land of Israel. They intended to spend a short stay in Egypt until the famine passed.

The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Hosea 528) makes a startling observation:

"Jacob should have gone down to Egypt in chains. Yet God said, 'Jacob, My first-born, how could I banish him in disgrace? Rather, I will send his son to go down before him.'"

What did Jacob do to deserve being exiled in iron chains?

Two Purposes to Exile: We need to analyze the purpose of exile. The Jewish people have spent more years in exile than in their own land. Why was it necessary to undergo these difficult trials? Could they not be punished by other means?

In fact, the Midrash states that the Jewish people are particularly suited for exile. They are called "the daughter of exiles," since the Avot (forefathers) were sojourners and refugees, subjected to the whims and jealousies of local tyrants (Midrash Eicha Petichta 1 on Isaiah 10:30).

Exile accomplishes two goals: The people of Israel were created to serve God. The nation needs a pure love of God, undiluted by materialistic goals. Clearly, people are more prone to become absorbed in worldly matters when affluence and prosperity are readily attainable. In order that the Jewish people should realize their true spiritual potential, God made sure that the nation would lack material success for long periods of time.

Exile serves to spread the belief in one God throughout the world. As the Sages wrote in Pesachim 87b, "The Holy One exiled Israel so that converts will join them." Similarly, we find that God explained the purpose of exile and redemption in Egypt, "so that Egypt will know that I am God" (Ex. 7:5).

The major difference between these two objectives lies in the conditions of the exile. If the purpose of exile is to avoid significant material success over a long period of time — to prepare the Jewish people for complete dedication to God and His Torah — then such an expulsion by definition must be devoid of prestige and prosperity.

If, on the other hand, the goal is to influence and uplift the nations of the world, then being honored and respected in their land of exile will not contradict the intended purpose. On the contrary, such a state of honor would promote this aim.

Jacob's Exile: Jacob had spiritually perfected himself to the extent that nothing in this world could dampen his burning love for God. His dedication was so great that he could interrupt the emotional reunion with his beloved son Joseph, after an absence of 22 years, and proclaim God's unity with the Shema prayer (Rashi on Gen. 46:29). Certainly, for Jacob himself, only the second goal of exile was applicable.

Jacob's descendants, however, would require the degrading aspects of exile in order to purify them and wean them from the negative influences of a materialistic lifestyle. As their father, it was fitting that Jacob be led to Egypt in iron chains. But since Jacob personally would not be adversely affected by worldly homage and wealth, he was permitted to be exiled in honor, led by his son, viceroy of Egypt.

### **Rabbi Meyer Laniado Learning Leadership From Yehuda**

Why is Yehuda the leader of Benei Yisrael? Why is it specifically from his descendants that a king must be chosen[1]? What are the traits of leadership that Yehuda specifically developed and expressed, and how can we learn to implement them in our own lives? To fully answer these questions, we should compare Yehuda to his older brothers Reuben, Shimon, and Levi, who may have been in line for the leadership position before him, as well as Yosef, who was his father's choice for leadership. We will focus on contrasting Reuben and Yehuda in two particular scenarios.

The first scenario takes place in Dotan when Yosef approaches his brothers. Reuben and Yehuda both intend to save Yosef from being murdered by his brothers, but Yehuda's approach is drastically different. Reuben immediately suggests that rather than murdering "a person," they should create a scenario which would indirectly cause him to die, in this case, the pit. Yehuda, on the other hand, does not react right away. He presents his suggestion after the brothers have sat down to eat when the perfect opportunity arises. He knows that the brothers will be more agreeable and relaxed once they have been physically satiated and their anger has slightly subsided. In his speech he says: "What do we gain by killing our brother and covering up his blood[2]?" Yehuda accomplishes two crucial things. Firstly he

emphasizes that Yosef "...after all, [he] is our brother, our own flesh[3]," and secondly that there is financial gain in selling Yosef as opposed to killing him. By taking this approach, the brothers would not only achieve their goal of ridding themselves of 'the dreamer,' but would also increase their wealth.

The second scenario occurs when the brothers return to Canaan, their father's house, from their initial trip to Egypt. They tell their father that they have been accused of being spies, and therefore their brother Shimon is in jail, and they must bring Binyamin to Egypt to free him. Then, they relate the fact that in their bags, they have discovered the money they thought they had paid to Yosef[4]. Ya'aqob is afraid about the money and, more importantly, fears losing another two sons. Reuben, the firstborn and the leader, steps forward to address the situation. Reuben tries convincing his father to let him bring Binyamin to Egypt, assuring that he will return Binyamin and Shimon home safely. To persuade Ya'aqob, Reuben says his own two sons should die if he does not bring back Binyamin and Shimon. As one could imagine, this not only fails to persuade Ya'aqob but is the last thing he would want, being that he has already lost Yosef and fears losing more children. Ya'aqob is unconvinced and refuses to send Binyamin down to Egypt.

Over the course of time the famine increases and their food supply is exhausted, prompting Ya'aqob to send the brothers to Egypt to buy more food. At this point, Yehuda, again, takes the leadership position and steps forward. His persuasive argument is very different from Reuben's. Yehuda in his response to his father makes it clear that he will take responsibility for the lives of not only Binyamin and Shimon, but for all of the brothers and their children. He tells his father that he will personally guarantee their lives and if he fails in his mission, he will have failed his father all of his life[5].

Yehuda and Reuben in the situations above act with the same goals, but with vastly different approaches. Reuben, as we know, reacts immediately and hastily, *pahaz kamayim*[6]. Yehuda, in contrast, is calculated and waits for the appropriate time to respond. As a leader, one needs to know when to speak. This requires the ability to control one's passion, patiently awaiting an opportunity when one's message will be best received.

In addition to timing one's message, there is one more essential trait that Yehuda possesses and applies in these scenarios, which suits him and his progeny for leadership. Yehuda understands the needs, desires, and goals of the other party, and presents a solution which fulfills them. He recognizes



that the brothers' primary need is not to kill Yosef per se, rather to get him out of their way. He also understands that if he emphasizes and reiterates that Yosef is their brother, their own blood, they would soften their approach and that a financial gain would clinch the deal. In the second scenario, Yehuda grasps his father's true concern and desire. Yehuda does the same with Yosef. Whether or not Yehuda consciously realizes it, he directly addresses Yosef's needs to the point that Yosef can no longer control himself. Yosef reveals his identity because Yehuda responds to the timing, the pressing hour, and addresses his core needs.

Let us work on sharing our message, not the moment it comes to our mind, but at the right time, and in a manner which shows a deep understanding of the people with whom we interact. In that way, we will have internalized the leadership qualities of Yehuda. In that way, we, Yehudim, descendants of Yehuda, will live up to our name and allow for a leader to emerge and bring our redemption.

[1]Beresheit 49:10 הוהימי טבש רוסי אל

[2]Beresheit 37:26-27

[3]Beresheit 37:27

[4]Beresheit 42:33-35

[5]Beresheit 43:8-9

[6]Beresheit 49:4

## **AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL "And he raised his voice in weeping" (45:2)**

Why did Yosef weep? His brothers did not weep. In the Midrash Raba it states: Just as Yosef wept, so also will we weep when we return to Hashem after the Galut. He wept not out of remorse/Teshuba but because of lost opportunity. All the years he lost by not being in his father's house and learning from Yaacob Abinu.

When we lose an opportunity to learn Torah or perform Mitzvot, it can never be made up. Whereas, should a person commit a sin (which is terrible) there are prescribed remedies such as Teshuba and Yom Kippur or imposed ones such as affliction and Gehinom.

The worst type of sin is a 'Chet'. The word 'Chet' means 'to miss'. As it states: "Each one could sling a stone and not miss- "velo yachate" (Shoftim 20:16). The sin of not accomplishing in this lifetime is the most terrible since one cannot make up for Mitzvot which they did not perform when they had the opportunity. The reward for doing a Mitzvah is forever while the punishment for most sins is limited and they will be removed.

Therefore, our great purpose in life is to thank Hashem for the opportunities He gives us by bestowing on us the gift of life each day. To take full advantage by picking up the many diamonds/Mitzvot which are available only at this time. Each one is our ticket to unlimited and eternal reward and pleasure which Hashem has guaranteed.

Yosef Hatzadeek, our great hero and model, had learned this fundamental principle from Yaacob while he was still in his home. For the past 22 years Yosef could not learn from his Great father. Therefore he 'missed out' eternally and hence he wept.