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Inside:

Hashem is Approachable!

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

The Antidote to Adversity

Rabbi Eli Mansour

How We See Things

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt"l

and more...



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Shabbos Zmanim

2023 Early Friday Mincha, 18 Main
at מנחה גדולה and every 15 minutes from 12:30pm-3:00pm

4:13pm Candle lighting	4:23pm Mincha in tent א	4:23pm Chabad Mincha	4:31pm Shkiya
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SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:

6:39am Vasikin, followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur 20↑	8:00am Shachris 2 18 main	9:15am Shachris 3 Tent א	10:00am Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20↑	10:00am Shachris 5 18 main
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2:00pm Pirchei	4:10pm Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos	4:31pm Shkiya	5:11pm Maariv 1	5:16pm Maariv 2
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Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!
6:45 pm – 8:30 pm | 18 Main

Weekday Zmanim
Zmanim for the week of Dec 24-30

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz
Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)

	Neitz	Shma Magen Avraham	Shma Gra	Tefila Gra	Chatzos	Plag	Shkiya
Sunday	7:20am	8:53am	9:37am	10:23am	11:55am	3:34pm	4:32pm
Monday	7:20am	8:53am	9:38am	10:24am	11:56am	3:35pm	4:32pm
Tuesday	7:21am	8:54am	9:38am	10:24am	11:56am	3:35pm	4:33pm
Wednesday	7:21am	8:54am	9:38am	10:25am	11:57am	3:36pm	4:34pm
Thursday	7:21am	8:54am	9:39am	10:25am	11:57am	3:37pm	4:34pm
Friday	7:22am	8:55am	9:39am	10:25am	11:58am	3:37pm	4:35pm
Shabbos	7:22am	8:55am	6:40am	10:26am	11:58am	3:38pm	4:36pm

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Team Player

Yosef is the ultimate team player. The ultimate team player is one who denies himself glory or advancement of his own agenda for the benefit of the team. There is no letter “i” in the word “team.”

Yosef showed amazing strength of character in the way that he did not wish to avenge his brothers, but rather ingratiate them with support for as long as he was in power. He did not allow them to feel bad and he explained to them that this was the Divine plan so that he would be in a position to take care of the family. He expressed to them that they never harmed him, but just helped facilitate giving him the opportunity to reach his purpose.

What if the story of the selling of Yosef did not have such a rosy ending? Would Yosef have had such a positive outlook? If the brothers would have found him as a slave, beaten and abused, would this really be his response? Would he say thank you my dear brothers for this opportunity to live a life worse than death, my *tikkun* in life, and you my dear brothers helped facilitate that righteous goal? Was Yosef super-human, without feelings, or was this a level of *bitachon* in Hashem that we can’t imagine?

The next *pasuk* states that Yosef fell on the shoulder of Benjamin and cried and Benjamin fell on Yosef’s shoulder and cried. Rashi explained that Yosef cried because he saw in *ruach hakodesh* that the two *Basei Hamikdash* that will be in the portion of Benjamin, will ultimately be destroyed. Benjamin cried that the *Mishkan Shilo* that was to be in Yosef’s portion was to be destroyed. The question is that one does not receive *ruach hakodesh* without *simcha*, yet here they were crying in pain of the destruction so how were they able to see the future?

What we need to bear in mind is that Yosef had two dreams that to him was a form of prophecy with a very positive ending. All he had to do is see how Hashem was going to play out all the parts as the master conductor of the world symphony. Yosef had a clear vision that there was always a light at the end of the tunnel, so he kept holding on. Though he had times of severe torment due to his predicaments, what gave him strength was the knowledge that things would get better. When Yosef and Binyomin cried for the destruction of the *Mishkan* and both *Basei Hamikdash*, they also were able to see the third and final rebuilding of the *Bais Hamikdash*, which gave them joy. This joyous vision enabled them to receive their *ruach hakodesh*. In our times we have the opportunity to see the craziness happening everywhere in the world all from our phone, and the world has become a small place. As we are being bombarded with the cruelty, the chaos and disasters of the world, we need to remind ourselves that the world will change once more. We understand and believe that the coming of the *Mashiach* is going to change the world as we know it. Everyone will get to know that Hashem is the Ruler of heaven and earth, and we will rebuild the *Bais Hamikdash*. This is the constant light at the end of our tunnel, and if we focus on it, we will have strength to endure the challenges of this world.

Even after Chanukah has departed, let us hold on to the miraculous lights that infused our spirits, so we can persevere with joy until the day we will experience the great lights of the Geulah.



Review the Conversation

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

The first *aliyah* in this week’s *parsha* is perplexing. We know there is nothing ‘extra’ in the Torah, and yet it seems that the first *aliyah* is simply a nice review by Yehuda to Yosef, and to us the reader, of all that has happened in last week’s *parsha*. Why is this repeated here?

The Bais Halevi offers a unique explanation. He says that Yehuda was losing patience because he felt that the responses that Yosef was giving during the conversation he was having with the brothers were inconsistent, and didn’t seem to make any sense. He concluded that maybe the problem was with the translator. After all, in last week’s *parsha* it says that the *meilitz*, i.e. the translator, was between the brothers and Yosef, and he may have been making mistakes translating from the Hebrew language to the Egyptian one. So Yehuda approached Yosef and held him by the ear and said, “Let your servant speak to you directly in your ear, and don’t tell me you don’t understand the Hebrew language, because if you say this. then you’re implying that Pharaoh doesn’t know this language either, and to say that would be disrespectful to the king.”

I would like to share a different explanation that I once heard from my dear friend and rebbi, Rabbi Shmuel Stauber z”l.

R Shmuel was a noted marriage counselor, and he would use one of the methods called Imago Therapy to help couples communicate better.

The main principle that Imago teaches is actually an absolute Torah idea and a must for every type of relationship, whether it’s with a *chavrusa*, a parent, a child, or especially a husband and wife. The theory is that when a person hears a claim or a comment or whatever it is that the spouse is saying, and the other spouse responds without mirroring and validating the spouse’s statement, then things are bound to blow up and the therapy goes nowhere. Why? Because the person didn’t acknowledge that he/she really digested the words said to him/her, and also because it didn’t give the other person the opportunity to hear himself out. Maybe the accusation or comment actually didn’t make sense or is wrong. Or maybe because the person making the statement just wanted to be heard and acknowledged, and it doesn’t really matter what the reasons are for the spouse’s response.

I personally saw a new world in my marriage when I learned this method, and I have seen it work wonders in many relationships.

R Shmuel pointed out that our *parsha* is a great source for this idea. Yehuda was teaching us that sometimes when you are having a heated debate back and forth and things are just not getting anywhere, it is best to just stop and review what has been said. This respite benefits you as well as the other person involved, as it allows both parties to see the back and forth reactions from an outside view and it presents an opportunity to remove ourselves somewhat without our ego getting in the way. It also provides more opportunity to hear the person and be willing to say, “Oh, I see your view and it changes my view too.”

Wednesday Night 8pm – Smichas chaver Rabbi Coren Office
Shabbos Morning - Vasikin Minyan & 8:00am Minyan

An Identity Disclosed



Rabbi YY Jacobson

The Zohar, the basic Kabbalistic commentary on the Bible, presents a penetrating visualization of what transpired at the moment when Joseph exposed himself to his brothers.

When Joseph declared, "I am Joseph," says the Zohar, the brothers observed the divine light radiating from his countenance; they witnessed the majestic glow emanating from his heart. Joseph's words "I am Joseph" were not merely a revelation of who he was, but also of what he was. For the first time in their lives, Joseph allowed his brothers to see what he really was. "I am Joseph!" must also be understood in the sense of "Look at me, and you will discover who Joseph is."

When Joseph cried out "I am Joseph," says the Midrash, "his face became ablaze like a fiery furnace." The burning flame concealed for thirty-nine years emerged in its full dazzling splendor. For the first time in their entire lives, Joseph's brothers saw the raw and naked Joseph; they came in contact with the greatest holiness in the world, emerging from the face of an Egyptian vizier...

Loss

"His brothers were so horrified that they could not respond," relates the Torah. What perturbed the brothers was not so much a sense of fear or personal guilt. What horrified them more than anything else was the sense of loss they felt for themselves and the entire world as a result of his sale into Egypt.

"If after spending 22 years in a morally depraved society," they thought to themselves, "one year as a slave, twelve years as a prisoner, nine years as a politician – Joseph still retained such profound holiness and passion, how much holier might he have been if he spent these 22 years in the bosom of his saintly father Jacob?!"

"What a loss to history our actions brought about!" the brothers tormented themselves. "If Joseph could have spent all these years in the transcended oasis, in the sacred environment, in the spiritual island of the Patriarch Jacob – how the world might have been enriched with such an atomic glow of holiness in its midst!"

Contrasting Joseph's present condition to what might have been his potential, left the brothers with an irreplaceable

loss by what they sensed was a missed opportunity of historic proportions.

The brother's error

At this moment, "Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come close to me.'" Joseph wanted them to approach even closer and gaze deeper into the divine light coming forth from his countenance.

"When they approached him," relates the Torah, "He said, 'I am Joseph your brother – it is me whom you sold into Egypt.'" Joseph was not merely repeating what he had told them earlier ("I am Joseph"), nor was he informing them of a fact they were well aware of ("It is me whom you sold into Egypt"); rather, he was responding to their sense of irrevocable loss.

The words "I am Joseph your brother – it is me whom you sold into Egypt" in the original Hebrew can also be translated as "I am Joseph your brother – because you sold me into Egypt." What Joseph was stating was the powerfully moving message that he reached such tremendous spiritual heights only because he spent the last 22 years in Egypt, not in Jacob's sacred environment.

The great catalyst

The awesome glow that emanated from his presence, Joseph suggested, was not there despite his two decades in lowly Egyptian society, far removed from his father's celestial paradise; it came precisely as a result of his entanglement with a life alien to the innocent and straightforward path of his brothers. The incredible trials, tribulations, and adversity he faced in the spiritual jungle were precisely what unleashed the atomic glow the brothers were presently taking in.

That is why Joseph asked his brothers to come closer to him, so that they could behold from closer up his unique light and appreciate that this was a light that could only emerge from the depth of darkness, from the pit of Egyptian promiscuity.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)
Shabbos: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)
Morning 9:00 (20 Upstairs)
After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)



UFARATZTA



Chassidus Brings *Chayus* and *Simcha* into Learning Torah and Doing *Mitzvos*

After addressing someone's predicament with *eitzos*, the Rebbe adds the following:

... Since you are writing to me, my strong hope is that you also have set times [*kevias itim*]

to learn *Toiras Hachassidus* which brings vitality and joy [*chayus vesimcha*] in the learning of the revealed Torah [*niglah*] and in doing *mitzvos*.

==== *Igros Kodesh V18, P127.*

Smichas Geula L'tfillah – Attaching Geula to Shmoneh Esrei

by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



As we begin the *parshios* of going down to Mitzraim it would be nice to discuss the requirement of *smichas geula l'tfillah*.

The *Gemara* in *Brochos* (4b) tells us that one who connects *geula* to *tefillah* – even at *Maariv* – is deserving of a special place in the Next World. Rashi explains that this is based on the juxtaposition of the two chapters in *Tehilim* 19 and 20. Chapter 19 ends off with the words: “*Hashem tzuri v’goali* – Hashem is My Rock and Redeemer.” The next chapter begins with the words: “*yaanchah Hashem b’yom tzara* – Hashem will answer you on a day of distress.” This is to teach us that right after we recite the *brocha* “*go’al Yisroel*” and proclaim that Hashem is our redeemer, we immediately continue by praying the *shmoneh esrei*, and ask that He save us from all our troubles.

REASONS FOR SMICHAS GEULA L'TFILAH

Rashi continues by explaining the purpose of *smichas geula l'tfillah*. He quotes the Yerushalmi who compares this to a friend of the king, who wishes to have an audience with the king. He knocks on the king’s door and getting no response, he leaves. When the king comes to the door, he sees no one there so he also leaves. Similarly, one who davens declares the greatness of Hashem, how He performed for us miracles, taking us out of Egypt. This brings a person close to Hashem and is an auspicious time to make a request. If the person leaves, then Hashem will also “leave” and the opportunity has been lost.

Rabeinu Yonah adds another understanding to the purpose of *smichas geula l'tfillah*. He asks: Why should one receives such a great reward for this seemingly small accomplishment? He explains that in mentioning the miracles of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, one is proclaiming his realization that Hashem took us out to become His servants. By davening immediately – the ultimate service to Hashem – one shows that he is indeed Hashem’s true servant, and is ready and willing to follow all of His orders, and is therefore truly deserving of a prominent place in *Olam Haba*.

Rabeinu Yonah offers another reason for the great reward. The miracles of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* are meant to teach us Hashem is the One running the world. If one davens immediately afterward, he is proclaiming his realization that He is the only One who can help us with our troubles. One who has full belief and reliance on Hashem is truly deserving of a prominent place in *Olam Haba*.

GEULA ARICHTA – AN EXTENDED GEULA

After we have learned about the importance of not interrupting in between *geula* and *tefillah*, an obvious question comes to mind. Every night there are a number of things that are recited after the *brocha* of *Go’al Yisroel*, and before *shmoneh esrei*, such as the *brocha* of *hashkiveinu*. Why is this not a violation of this requirement to connect *geulah* to *tefillah*? The *Gemara* there actually addresses this question and explains that *hashkiveinu* is considered an extension of the redemption, and does not constitute an interruption.

Rabeinu Yonah explains that the *brocha* of *hashkiveinu* was first recited in *Mitzrayim* at the time of *Makas Bechoros*. Just as the Jews davened to Hashem to be saved from being killed together with the Egyptians, we also recite the *brocha* of *hashkiveinu* asking Hashem to be saved from any nighttime troubles. Since

this is somewhat of a continuation of the *tefillah* recited at the time of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* it is considered an extension of the redemption, and does not constitute an interruption.

In a similar vein, the *Gemara* explains that we start off the *shmoneh esrei* with the words “*Hashem sfasi tiftach*.” This is not considered an interruption, but is rather considered an extension of the *tefillah*. Just as *hashkiveinu* is considered an extension of the redemption, and does not constitute an interruption, “*Hashem sfasi tiftach*.” is considered an extension of the *tefillah* and is not considered an interruption.

IN SUMMARY

There are a number of reasons for the importance of *smichas geula l'tfillah*:

1. Immediately after one declares the greatness of Hashem and is close to Hashem is an auspicious time to daven.
2. By davening immediately one shows that he is indeed Hashem’s true servant.
3. If one davens immediately, he is proclaiming his full belief and reliance on Hashem.

Hashkiveinu is an extension of the *geula* and is not a *hefsek*. *Hashem sifasi* is an extension of the *tefillah* and is not a *hefsek*.

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

מוהל מומחה

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Rabbi Scheiner

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- 1:00 | 18 Main
- 1:15 | Tent א
- 1:30 | 18 Main
- 1:45 | Tent א
- 2:00 | 18 Main
- 2:15 | Tent א
- *2:30 | 18 Main
Sefardi Minyan with Birchas Cohanim
- 2:45 | Tent א
- 3:00 | 18 Main
- 3:15 | Tent א
- 3:30 | 18 Main
- 3:45 | Tent א
- 4:00 | 18 Main
- 4:13 | Tent א
- 4:23 | 18 Main

Keep Your Eye on the Ball

45:5 “ועתה אל תעצבו ואל יחר בעיניכם כי מכרתם אתי הנה, כי”
“למחיה שלחני אלקים לפניכם”

“And now, be not distressed, nor reproach yourselves for having sold me here, for it was to be a provider that Hashem sent me ahead of you.” Yosef just revealed himself to his brothers - the Yosef they had sold as a slave, was now a ruler in Mitzrayim. Perhaps the brothers feared that Yosef would exact revenge upon them for their evil act against him. Yosef tells them not to worry, nor should they reprimand themselves, for it was all for the good, all the master plan of the Ribbono Shel Olam. How could Yosef tell his brothers not to fear their previous actions for it all turned out for the good? We do not believe the end justifies the means. The fact that Yosef saw that it all worked out does not demonstrate that their previous actions were righteous or appropriate. The brothers seemed to have done something which was improper, and it worked out. One would think that they still needed to do *teshuva* for their actions.

Yosef told his brothers that he knew that they had complete regret for selling him. However, it is often the way of one who regrets something to have a *hakpadah* on others, by blaming the other person for his own actions. *Teshuva* must be with love and happiness, not sadness and *hakpadah*.

Therefore, Yosef uses a *lashon* of “ועתה” which is a *lashon* of *teshuva* (Bereishis Rabbah 21:6), saying to the brothers that if they want to do a proper *ieshuva* and achieve a *kaparah*, “אל תעצבו” – it should not be done through sadness, but rather through love and happiness. (דביר המוצנע)

45:5 “ועתה אל תעצבו” – Yosef was telling his brothers that “נוח” they should not worry, however in the future there will be something to worry about. The selling of Yosef was the cause of the *asarah harugei malchus* (ספר שער בת רבים).

The way of the *Yetzer Hara* is to get one to be sad for his past sins. When one cannot get past his previous sins, he cannot grow in *ruchniyos*. The brothers had done a proper *teshuva*. While the *teshuva* helped for their rebellion against the *ratzon Hashem*, they still caused a *kilkul*, damage, to come about, that which was irreparable – the *asarah harugei malchus*, and *Klal Yisroel* going into four exiles. Yosef was telling the brothers an important fundamental concept in Yiddishkeit. They did a proper *teshuva* and had to forge ahead in their *Avodas Hashem*. Keep your eye on the ball, and move forward from the past. Even when there are great repercussions for one’s previous actions, it is incumbent upon every Yid not to dwell on what cannot be repaired. Rather, one must focus on the proper path of *avodas Hashem*, and toil in what he can accomplish. May we be *zoche* to perform proper *teshuva* on our sins, and grow in *ruchniyos* with joy and love for the Ribbono Shel Olam.

Whom Are We Fooling?

When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, they were stunned beyond words. But why? Did they not at one time justify their behavior to themselves? Did they really imagine that they would never get caught? How were they able to live with their actions till now and why was that justification not enough of an excuse to use at that moment?

The Dubno Maggid explains by way of a parable:

Moshe was in debt to the king for years of back taxes. Given a strict deadline to comply with, he borrowed cash and cash equivalents from friends and relatives. Reviewing the cash and notes with his son before the audit, they found that some of the cash was counterfeit and the notes were either expired or not yet convertible. Unable to secure more aid at this point, Moshe tried reassuring his son, “Don’t worry, mixed among all the other financial papers, nothing will be detected.” His son was not convinced. But the father was a bit put off by his son’s reaction.

“Don’t I have enough problems? Please have confidence in me, this will pass...” he said with irritation.

The next day before the king, Moshe gasped as the king’s men picked out the expired documents and the counterfeit bills, one by one.

“Do you know the penalty for paying the king with a false note? they asked Moshe. It’s death by the king’s hangman..”

Thoughts stormed through Moshe’s mind. Why was I not

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



prepared? What happened to me? Just last night I was able to answer my son with confidence and determination?

The Maggid explains: We all go through life with a false sense of security. “Our actions? No problem. When the time comes, when we have to, we’ll explain everything. We’ve done so many *mitzvos*, so many good things. Don’t worry,” we assure ourselves, “everything will be okay.”

That’s not so, the Maggid explains. We must review our lives daily. There is no better time than the present for us to correct our actions. We must not overlook things, for we will fool no one but ourselves. We cannot hide behind flimsy excuses and denial, for they will surely lead us down a path of shame. No one is perfect. But we must accept our imperfections and improve now. Little steps are acceptable, in fact preferable.

Now is the time to change. Every time is a good time to change. *Lev yodaiya maras nafsho* – everyone knows instinctively what they have to improve. Our behavior at home, our half-hearted *mitzvos*, and more. Let’s put our right feet forward again and get to work. Fooling ourselves is not a plan that will succeed. Fueled by the fires of the Chanukah lights not too long ago, we must set out to fix while the light still burns... inside of us.

Written by R’ Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita

Two Approaches to Exile

Rabbi Shalom Rosner



There were two leaders of the Jewish people prior to the official establishment of the Jewish nation. The first was Yosef and the second Moshe.

Rabbi Benzion Firer (*Hegyon Shel Torah*) points out that we can learn a great deal from each of these individuals by comparing and contrasting their situations and approaches.

Yosef and Moshe – Compared

Both Yosef and Moshe were selected to lead and save the people in a tragic time. Yosef to provide food for his brothers during a famine and Moshe to save his brothers from slavery. Both were outsiders that ended up living in the palace. Both initially had their leadership questioned and rejected. Yosef's dreams were dismissed by his brothers, and the people blamed Moshe for Pharaoh's evil decrees (*Shemot* 5:21).

Yosef and Moshe Contrasted

Despite the similarities, Yosef and Moshe reacted differently to parallel circumstances. Yosef was born in Israel and was exiled to Egypt. Yet, once in Egypt he sought to forget his earlier days in Israel. He names his son Menashe": God has caused me to forget all my toil and all my father's house." (*Bereisheet* 43:5). In contrast, although Moshe was born in Egypt and raised in Pharaoh's palace he goes out of his way to seek his brothers - Moshe matured and went out to his brothers to witness their suffering (*Shemot* 2: 11).

During his leadership, Yosef did not fathom the dire future that was to befall his brethren. He did prepare for the seven years of famine but did not see any darkness beyond those tough years. Yosef believed that his brothers could build a strong Jewish community in Goshen and thrive during their years in exile. As a people we can lead and contribute to society. Moshe encountered a different atmosphere, one of slavery and hatred towards the Jewish people. Moshe understood that the Jewish people had to exit Egypt and

create their own homeland in Israel in order to survive.

Yaakov's Fear of Exile

Yaakov hesitated while descending down to Egypt. Yaakov who himself had previously gone into exile to find a wife and to encounter Lavan understood that once in exile things don't always end well. There may be temporary reprieve, but in the long term it will lead to assimilation, and we will be turned into scapegoats blamed for all of our hosting nation's problems. Hashem had to appear to Yaakov and ensure him that it was the correct move for Yaakov to go to Mitzrayim at this juncture.

"Do not be afraid of going down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up..." (*Bereisheet* 46:3-4).

Bnei Yosef

Throughout history there are "bnei Yosef", descendants of Yosef, who view being in exile as a place where Judaism can thrive. Where one can accumulate wealth while maintaining their religion. Yet, they fail to recognize how history repeats itself and that being in exile is not meant as the ideal destination. Yosef himself sought to keep his brothers isolated in Goshen, but the distance did not suffice. It did not take long until Jews lived among their Egyptian neighbors, so much so that God had to pass over those homes during the plague of the firstborn. We need to learn from Moshe's experience. To recognize that residing in a foreign land should never be viewed as our final destination. For thousands of years our nation has been tossed around several continents, and during our lifetime we have been blessed with the ability to once again return to our true homeland. May we merit being able to take part in the rebuilding of Eretz Yisrael and witness a *geula shlema bemherah b'yamenu*.

The Missing Piece

Rabbi Hershel Schacter



In *Parshas Vayigash*, the *sefer Avnei Shoham* has a very interesting comment. We know that Yosef *haTzaddik* was testing his brothers to see if they had done *teshuvah* for reacting so harshly and with such jealousy towards him because he was Yaakov's favorite son. The Torah describes the tragedy that resulted from Yaakov *Avinu* favoring Yosef in order to teach us not to show favoritism to one child over others. But Yosef *haTzaddik* knew that his father probably continued to have this approach in raising children and Binyomin would be the favorite son now that he (i.e. Yosef) was absent. Yosef wanted to test his brothers before he was going to be *mochel* them to see if they did *teshuva*. Through his tests, Yosef saw that they were in fact prepared to protect their father by protecting Binyomin, even though Binyomin was the favorite son. Later on Yosef did forgive them, and said that just as he had no grudge against Binyomin, similarly he had no grudge against

any of his brothers. He realized that everything was *min hashomayim*.

Although we understand why Yosef was acting the way he was towards the brothers, for them it was a puzzle; they couldn't understand the strange way the Egyptian ruler was treating them, until finally in *Parshas Vayigash* he says, "*ani Yosef ha'od avi chai* – I am Yosef! How did you sell me? Why weren't you afraid that our father is going to have a heart attack and die? It's good, however, that now you are afraid of the effect that losing Binyomin would have on our father." Yosef saw that his brothers were *chozer beteshuvah*.

Because Yosef's brothers were missing one piece of information, i.e. that this man is Yosef, everything was puzzling and they couldn't understand what was going on. The same thing occurs in the history of the Jewish people;

How We See Things / Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt"l



As a prisoner in Auschwitz, Austrian psychiatrist Viktor Frankl discovered that the Nazis took away almost everything that made people human: their possessions, their clothes, their hair, their very names.

There he made the fundamental discovery for which he later became famous:

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: *the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.*

The mental shift this involved came to be known, especially in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, as *reframing*. Just as a painting can look different when placed in a different frame, so can a life. The facts don't change, but the way we perceive them does.

Reframing tells us that though we cannot always change the circumstances in which we find ourselves, *we can change the way we see them, and this itself changes the way we feel.*

Yet this modern discovery is really a re-discovery, because the first great re-framer in history was Joseph, as described in this week's and the next weeks *parshiyot*. Recall the facts. He had been sold into slavery by his brothers. He had lost his freedom for thirteen years, and been separated from his family for twenty-two years. It would be understandable if he felt toward his brothers' resentment and a desire for revenge. Yet he rose above such feelings, and did so precisely by shifting his experiences into a different frame. Here is what he says to his brothers when he first discloses his identity to them:

"I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And

now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for *God sent me before you to preserve life... God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God.*" *Gen. 45:4-8.*

And this is what he says years later, after their father Jacob has died and the brothers fear that he may now take revenge:

"Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? *Though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as He is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.*" *Gen. 50:19-21.*

Joseph had reframed his entire past. He no longer saw himself as a man wronged by his brothers. He had come to see himself as a man charged with a life-saving mission by God. Everything that had happened to him was necessary so that he could achieve his purpose in life: to save an entire region from starvation during a famine, and to provide a safe haven for his family.

This single act of reframing allowed Joseph to live without a burning sense of anger and injustice. It enabled him to forgive his brothers and be reconciled with them. It transformed the negative energies of feelings about the past into focused attention to the future. Joseph, without knowing it, had become the precursor of one of the great movements in psychotherapy in the modern world. He showed the power of reframing. We cannot change the past. But by changing the way we *think about* the past, we can change the future.

Whatever situation we are in, by reframing it we can change our entire response, giving us the strength to survive, the courage to persist, and the resilience to emerge, on the far side of darkness, into the light of a new and better day.

there are so many strange things in Jewish history that we don't understand. The *haftorah* for *Parshas Vayigash* tells us that *le'asid lavo*, when we will experience the *geulah ha'asidah* and look back in retrospect, everything will be able to be understood in context. Right now we don't have the whole picture, and therefore we don't understand many things in our history.

In *Parshas Bereishis* the Torah says regarding almost every day of creation: "*Vayar Elokim ki tov*", but on the sixth day the Torah says, "*Vayar Elokim et kol asher assah vehnei tov meod.*" The Medrash says "'Tov' zeh ha'chayim, 'tov meod' zeh ha'maves", i.e. that even when someone dies, it's "*tov meod.*" This is difficult for us to understand; we experience death as a tragedy and we recite a *bracha*, "*Baruch Dayan Ha'emes!*"

When you look at everything in proper perspective, "*Vayar Elokim es kol asher assah*", if you look at everything all put together and you're not missing any point of information,

everything is in fact *tov meod*. We don't see all of history at once. How long does a person live, a hundred years? We may study history, but we don't really fully understand it from the beginning to the end. When all of history will be unfolded and we will look back in retrospect and understand all of the puzzling things that never made any sense. Why was there was "*tzaddik ve'ra lo, rasha ve'tov lo*"? Why did the Jewish people suffer so much? We'll look back in retrospect and understand that everything was really *le'tovah*.

That's the connection between *Parshas Vayigash* and its *haftorah*. In *Vayigash* the brothers were missing an important piece of information (that the man that they were talking to was Yosef) and that's why they couldn't understand what was happening. Once they were told who he was, it all made sense. Similarly, in the *haftorah* we are told that *leasid lavo*, after all of Jewish history will be unfolded before us, everything will be understood in context.



The Antidote to Adversity

Rabbi Eli Mansour

The Torah in *Parashat Vayigash* tells of Yaakov Avinu's move from Eretz Yisrael to Egypt with his entire family. We read that Yaakov went to Egypt together with "Kol zar'o" – "all his offspring" (46:6). The Torah then seems to unnecessarily repeat this point, that all of Yaakov's offspring joined him in Egypt: "His sons and his sons' sons [went] with him; his daughters and his sons' daughters and all his offspring, he brought with him to Egypt" (46:7).

What does this second verse add? Once we've been told that Yaakov went to Egypt with all his offspring, why does the Torah then need to specify his sons, his sons' sons, his daughters, and his sons' daughters?

The *Or Ha'haim* (Rav Haim Ben-Attar, 1696-1743) offers a fascinating explanation of this verse, suggesting that the Torah here is delineating two different groups of Yaakov's offspring. The first group "went with him," just as he did, with the same mindset and outlook. Yaakov knew that he and his family were going to Egypt to begin the fulfillment of the prophecy given to his grandfather, Abraham, that his descendants would be persecuted in a foreign land. He understood that this was not going to be easy or pleasant, that his offspring were going to suffer terribly at the hands of the Egyptians. Nevertheless, he went to Egypt wholeheartedly, fully accepting Hashem's decree. The verse here tells us that Yaakov's "sons and his sons' sons went with him" – meaning, they went to Egypt in the same manner as he did, without any ambivalence or hesitation, trusting in Hashem. There were others, however, about whom the verse says, "he brought with him to Egypt" – implying that they needed to be coerced into moving to Egypt. This group did not have the same level of faith, and were hesitant to begin the decree of exile and persecution.

After presenting this interpretation, the *Or Ha'haim* references the teaching of the Midrash (*Shemot Rabba*, 1) that the bondage did not begin until those who had moved from Canaan to Egypt had passed away. It was only after that generation in its entirety perished that G-d brought the pain and suffering of slavery upon Benei Yisrael. The *Or Ha'haim* explains, "Perhaps this was a reward for them for willingly accepting the King's decree...for the remedy for suffering is acceptance."

In this passage, the *Or Ha'haim* here reveals to us the answer to one of the most frequently asked questions asked by believing Jews: How should we respond to our problems and troubles to make them go away? The *Or Ha'haim* identifies for us the "antidote" to adversity, stating, "*Sama De'yisureh Kabuleh*" – "the remedy for suffering is acceptance." If we want to spare ourselves troubles and hardship, we need to accept everything that Hashem decrees should transpire. Yaakov's family members who went to Egypt wholeheartedly, undeterred by the decree

of hardship, were rewarded by being spared that decree. This is the remedy – to humbly and unquestioningly accept everything that Hashem does.

The *Or Ha'haim* concludes this passage by referencing a comment by the Zohar (*Vayakhel*, 198a) explaining the verse in *Tehillim* (146:5), "*Ashreh she'Kel Yaakov be'ezro, sibro al Hashem Elokav*" – "Fortunate is he who is helped by the G-d of Yaakov; who places his hope in Hashem his G-d." The Zohar states that the word "*Sibro*" ("his hope") should be read as "*Shibro*" – "his crisis." In times of crisis and hardship, we need to reinforce our *emuna*, our belief and conviction that everything Hashem does is for the best. If we do, then we transform "*Shibro*" into "*Sibro*" – we bring hope into an otherwise painful and overwhelming situation.

We all occasionally find ourselves dealing with adversity in one form or another. The *Or Ha'haim* here teaches us that the most effective remedy which we can make use of to help ourselves during periods of hardship is *emuna*, placing our faith in Hashem, and accepting everything He does without questioning Him.

-Rabbi Avigdor Miller ztl-

Should a woman marry a man who learns in the kollel and has no parnasa?



And the answer is, she has to find out two things; first of all, is he a learner? If he loafs in the kollel – which a lot do – if the kollel is just a *bais manos* to escape the responsibilities of life, then forget about it. He is just a drifter. To sit in a kollel and *chalom* all day is no good. But if he's a man who insists that he sincerely wants to learn; if he's pursuing Torah and he might become a gadol too, certainly. If she is an idealist and she is willing to work all her life, certainly!

However, if she doesn't want to work all her life – and many don't want to work all their lives; it is not an easy choice to make – so she can't marry a kollel man.

So two things I am answering. First of all if he is a genuine kollel man that's one thing; but if he is an imitation kollel man, let her forget about him.


And secondly, if he is a real kollel man then she has to make up her mind, how much is she willing to sacrifice? Is she willing to wait ten years and then he should go out and work? Or is she willing to work all her life? That's a big decision and it is up to her to decide before their marriage; she shouldn't deceive him.



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הרב חיים קנייבסקי ענייני אהבת התורה ושכר פסיעות



דבר מופלא ראו אצל רבינו זיע"א בציימאנו היוקד לדברי תורה, וממש קיים בגופו את משל חז"ל (ב"ר פצ"ו) מה דגים הללו גדלין במים כיון שירודת טיפה אחת מלמעלה מקבלין אותה בציימאון כמי שלא טעמו טעם מים מימיהון, כך הן ישראל גדלין במים בתורה כיון שהן שומעין דבר חדש מן התורה הן מקבלין אותו בציימאון כמי שלא שמעו דבר תורה מימיהון, ובהגיעו לשמחות אף שכל העת היה כל שיחו ושיגו בד"ת, מ"מ משהיה החתן או הדרשן פותח בד"ת היה פניו נדרכים בשקיקה עזה לשמוע את הדברים, וכל שמחה שרבינו היה אמור להשתתף בה, ידע חתן הבר מצוה כי עליו להתכונן כראוי כי יצטרך להרצות דברים לפני רבינו, וכמה חידושים חידש רבינו בענייני ביטול תורה, שהם עצמם מלהיבים להתמדת התורה ואציין קצת מהם בע"ה.

רבינו זצלה"ה חידש שדין שכר פסיעות לא נאמר לגבי אנשים לומדי תורה אלא רק לגבי נשים, שהרי איש מצווה על ת"ת וא"כ אינו יכול להרבות בפסיעות שהרי בזמן זה מתבטל מת"ת, ובשלמא קיום המצווה עצמה הרי דוחה ת"ת, וכל שישנו בעשייה ישנו בלמידה (יבמות קט ב'), אבל פעולות שאינם עוסקות בעצם קיום המצווה כמו הליכה לקיום המצווה אין דוחה ת"ת, והוכיח דבריו מהגמ' סוטה (כ"ב א') אמר רבי יוחנן למדנו וכו' דהיא אלמנה דהואי בי כנישתא בשיבבותה כל יומא הות אתיא ומצלה בי מדרשיה דר' יוחנן אמר לה בתי לא בית הכנסת בשיבבותך אמרה ליה רבי ולא שכר פסיעות יש לי קיבול שכר מאלמנה.

אמנם המ"א (סי' צ' סקכ"ב) הביא את הדין של שכר פסיעות מהגמ' בבא מציעא (ק"ז א') ששם מיירי לגבי איש שנחלקו שם בברכת ברוך אתה בעיר שרב פירש שיהא ביתך סמוך לבית הכנסת [ובס' שמחת מרדכי (עמ' שני'ו) שאל מרבינו הרי מאבד שכר פסיעות וא"כ מה הברכה בזה? תשובה: משום ביטול תורה]. ור' יוחנן פ"י שיהא בית הכיסא סמוך לשולחןך אבל בית הכנסת לא ורבי יוחנן לטעמיה דאמר שכר פסיעות יש. ונשאל רבינו שא"כ חזינן שיש גם באיש שכר פסיעות, והשיב (בסו"ס שיח התורה ח"א): רוב העולם אינם ת"ח. וא"כ לפי דברי רבינו יוצא שרב ור"י נחלקו אם ברכת ברוך אתה בבואך נאמרה על ת"ח או על ע"ה.

בס' דרך שיחה (ח"ב עמ' כ"ה) שאל מרבינו: כשהולכים לבקר חולה ויש מעלית בבית האם יש ענין שלא לעלות במעלית ולקבל שכר פסיעות? והשיב רבינו: אצלנו זה ביטול תורה וצריך לעלות במעלית אבל נשים אם רוצות שכר פסיעות ילכו ברגל. ובמנחת תודה (עמ' תל"ה) הביא שאמר רבינו דמש"כ המ"ב (סי' צ' סקל"ז) שאם יש שתי בתי כנסיות בעיר טוב לילך לרחוקה כי שכר פסיעות יש, מיירי באשה או בעם הארץ, ואחד שאל הרי אפשר ללמוד בדרך? השיבו רבינו האם אתה עושה כן? ובאמת כבר נמצא כדברי רבינו באחרונים בס' ספרי דבי רב לר"ד פארדו (פ' ראה פיסקא קט"ז) ובשו"ת מים עמוקים למהראנ"ח (ח"ב סי' ע') ובעוד אחרונים.

רבינו זצ"ל כבר בא כע"ז לפרש מה שלמדו שכל מעשיהן של צדיקים במהירות מרות המואביה ולא מאברהם אבינו או ממש רבינו, וז"ל (בטעמא דקרא שופטים פ"ג א'): ותמהר האשה וגו'. ובמדרש (במדב"ר פ"ז) מכאן שכל מעשיהן של צדיקים במהירות. קשה למה לא יליף ממש"ש וימהר אברהם וימהר משה. וי"ל דגבי איש פשיטא שצריך למהר מפני ביטול תורה אבל גבי אשה שאין אצלה ביטול תורה שפיר ילפי' שכל מעשיהן של צדיקים במהירות. עכ"ל.



God is Approachable!

Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

The first words in Parshas Vayigash are *Vayigash eilav Yehuda* telling us that Yehuda approached Yosef to beg that he allow Binyamin to return home to their father. Yehuda had personally guaranteed Yaakov that Binyamin would return home safely, and so now that Yosef wanted to keep Binyamin as his slave after discovering his goblet in Binyamin's bag, Yehuda set out to plead that Binyamin be permitted to go home, offering to remain as a slave in Binyamin's stead.

The Midrash offers an additional layer of interpretation to the words, explaining that *Vayigash* refers to *tefila*. As Yehuda approached Yosef to plead on Binyamin's behalf, he also silently offered a prayer to Hashem. Outwardly, he was speaking to Yosef, but in his mind, he placed his faith in Hashem, begging Him to come and help the family in this moment of grave crisis.

The Midrash here teaches us a vitally important lesson about *emuna* – that even as we perform our necessary *hishtadlus*, putting in the effort that we need to put in, we must recognize that the outcome always depends on Hashem, to whom we must always turn for help. Before any meeting, whether it's a job interview, a business deal, parent-teacher conferences, or any other important appointment, we must reflect on the fact that ultimately, the outcome depends solely on Hashem, and we are to pray that He orchestrates everything for the best.

Rav Nachman of Breslav added that this pasuk, as understood by the Midrash, teaches us about a crucial prerequisite for *tefila*.

The expression *Vayigash eilav Yehuda* which the Midrash understands as referring to Yehuda's approaching Hashem, alludes that we must always feel comfortable and confident enough to approach Hashem. One of the impediments to meaningful, heartfelt prayer is the sense of unworthiness that many people feel. They think about the inappropriate things they've done and said, all the mistakes they have made, and conclude that God is not interested in them, that He does not want to hear from them, that He wants to have nothing to do with them. Rav Nachman's most famous teaching is that a person must always be happy (*Likutei Moharan*, 1:282). He emphasized that even if a person has failed and sinned, he should remain joyful and in good spirits, remembering that he also has many virtues, and much goodness within him. It is the *yetzer ha'ra*, Rav Nachman explained, that tries to convince us to feel despondent and worthless after acting wrongly. Alongside our sincere regret for our wrongdoing, we must recognize our redeeming qualities, and all the good that we do. And we must confidently believe that despite our mistakes, Hashem is always approachable. His door is always open. He wants us to come to Him often to ask for what we need.

The first step toward meaningful *tefila* is *Vayigash eilav Yehuda* to recognize that regardless of what we've done, Hashem invites us to approach Him, at all times.

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The Straw Lion and the Tailor

Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov paced back and forth, puzzled and upset. He had not been excited about coming to **Mezritch** to visit the **Maggid** and now, after having met him, he wondered why any learned man would want to speak to him.

He had been told that the Maggid was a distinguished Talmudist, a scholar of repute. If so, why hadn't the Maggid spoken a single word of Torah to him? All he did was tell him childish stories.

He began by talking about a man who had a field: The man had taken a lion skin, stuffed it with straw and placed it in front of the field to scare animals away. At first the plan had worked and the animals had kept their distance. After a while, however, they realized that the lion was not alive and began to use it for sport, ripping it apart, piece by piece.

"Why did he waste my time with that tale," Moshe Leib thought.

Suddenly, it occurred to him that the Maggid might have been talking in allegories. Our Sages refer to the lion as "the king of the beasts," and to the Rabbis as "kings" because of their *halachic* (Jewish law) authority.

Perhaps the Maggid was intimating that, although Moshe Leib was a rabbi, he was merely a straw lion, lacking life and true power.

He started to review the Maggid's second story: A poor man discovered a treasure. He sought out the advice of friends, invested the money wisely and became very wealthy. As his wealth grew, he felt it proper to change his wardrobe. He hired a tailor to sew him a custom-made suit, as other wealthy men did.

Everything went well until the tailor called him to make a final fitting. He had never ordered such a suit before and did not understand what the tailor wanted from him. He would have taken the suit, put it on and walked home. Instead, the tailor told him to stand tall, to put his feet together, to turn around...He kept tugging at all the corners of the garment, sticking pins in here and there. The man could not understand what he was doing. The suit had looked fine to begin with.

Finally, he concluded that all the tailor's activity was intended to make fun of him, taking advantage of the fact that he never had bought a suit like that before. Enraged, he pulled the garment away from the tailor, threw him the fee he had promised, and stalked out of the shop.

Perhaps this also was an allegory, Moshe Leib thought. Garments are metaphors for our means of expression: thought, speech, and action. Was the Maggid telling him that he was being offered a chance to develop a new approach to self-expression and that he was too boorish to appreciate the opportunity? It did not take Moshe Leib much further reflection to decide to become the Maggid's disciple.

In our own ways, each one of us is a "straw lion." We have our facades behind which we hide to shield us from the full force of life's experience.

Although we would like to change, like our *nouveau riche* friend, we are so used to living the way we do that we may resist change and, even when we seek it out, we may be incapable of appreciating the opportunity granted us. Chasidic stories offer us a guiding vector of light which creates such opportunities and urges us to use them.

Big Bonus

Rabbi Tzvi Abramoff

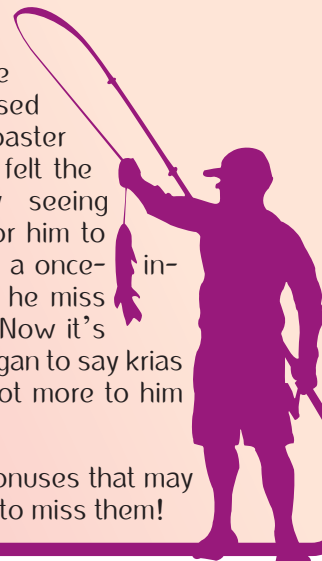
When Yosef met Yaakov Avinu after 22 years, the passuk says that Yosef fell on his father's neck and cried. Rashi says that Yaakov, though, didn't react at all, because he was in the middle of saying krias shema. Now, doesn't this sound a bit strange? After all, it doesn't seem to have been the zman for krias shema because then also Yosef would have said it. So why did Yaakov choose to say Shema at this exact point? Couldn't he wait a minute, until after he hugged his long-lost son? Let's tell a story to help explain this.

Hershel was a workaholic. When any opportunity to make a buck came up, he took it. The only other thing he liked to do was fish. He loved fishing. Whenever he couldn't work, he would go fishing. Well, when the big annual champion fish-off rolled around, everyone in the office took off. They were all excited to see who would catch the most gefilte fish! The only one who didn't come was Hershel. "What happened to you?" ask his colleague, Anshel, the next day, "you missed some real amazing fishing!" "Fishing is nice," answered Hershel,

"but because nobody wanted to work yesterday, the boss was offering a \$10,000 bonus to anyone who came to work! How could I miss it?"

Yaakov Avinu was "addicted" to ahavas Hashem. So, when he finally saw how Hashem's chessed was behind the entire roller-coaster of the last 22 years, and he also felt the overwhelming simcha of finally seeing Yosef, it was a golden moment for him to show his love for Hashem. It was a once-a-lifetime opportunity! How could he miss it – even in order to hug Yosef?! Now it's easy to understand why Yaakov began to say krias shema just then. It was worth a lot more to him than Hershel's \$10,000!

Let's keep an eye out for all the bonuses that may come our way! We wouldn't want to miss them!





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JOKES

One-liners

Sermons and biscuits are improved by shortening.

If your parachute doesn't open up for you, you've obviously jumped to a conclusion.

If we knew what we were doing, it wouldn't be called research.

Sign in a travel agency window: "Please go away."

Hummingbirds have forgotten the words.

People who are wrapped up in themselves are overdressed.

George Washington's brother was the uncle of our country.

Life is like a doughnut. You're either in the dough or in the hole.

Lemon Juice

My eight-year-old daughter was reading the back of a lemon juice bottle while we were eating our dinner. Noting that the bottle said that it was "not made from concentrate" she asked me what that meant.

I told her that it was made from distracted lemons.

While my wife was shaking her head in disbelief, my daughter, in a thoughtful tone, said, "That must be why they got caught."

Telling The Truth

A male driver is pulled over by a cop.

Man: What's the problem officer?

Cop: You were going at least 75 in a 55 zone.

Man: No sir, I was going 65.

Wife: Oh Harry. You were going 80.

(Man gives his wife a dirty look.)

Cop: I'm also going to give you a ticket for your broken tail light.

Man: Broken tail light? I didn't know about a broken tail light!

Wife: Oh Harry, you've known about that tail light for weeks.

(Man gives his wife a dirty look.)

Cop: I'm also giving you a citation for not wearing your seat belt.

Man: Oh, I just took it off when you were walking up to the car.

Wife: Oh Harry, you never wear your seat belt.

Man: Shut your mouth, woman!

Cop: Ma'am, does your husband always talk to you this way?

Wife: No, only when he's drunk.

How to tell

A woman walked into the kitchen and found her husband running around with a fly swatter

"What are you doing?" She asked him.

"I'm hunting flies," he replied.

"Did you kill any?" She asked.

"Yes. Two males and three females."

"How do you know?" she asked.

Well "Two were on the cans of beer, and three were on the phone!!!!"

What are people saying?

The chazzan came home the night of Rosh Hashana, looking some what guk.

"What happened?" his wife asked.

"Schwartz the gabbai said I wasn't very good."

"Schwartz? Forget about him. He

has no mind of her own! He just repeats what everyone else is saying."

Never Underestimate

This puny guys applies for a job as a lumberjack. "Sorry," says the head lumberjack, eyeing the man up and down, "You're just too small."

"Give me a chance to show you what I can do," the guy pleads.

"You won't regret it."

"Okay," says the boss. "See that giant oak over there? Let's see if you can chop it down."

Approaching the oak, the guy yells "Timber", gives the oak a tremendous blow with his axe, and the mighty oak teeters and then falls, amazing the boss.

"Where'd you learn to chop down trees like that?" he asks.

"The Sahara Forest."

"You mean the Sahara Desert?"

"Now it is."



HA HA

"I always wanted to be somebody, but now I realize I should have been more specific."

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