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### SHABBOS

<b>SHACHRIS</b>	20 Upstairs-Vasikin	18 Main-Ashkenaz	Tent א	20 Upstairs - Chabad	in 18 Main
	<b>6:41 AM</b>	<b>8:00 AM</b>	<b>9:15 AM</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>
<b>MINCHA/MAARIV</b>	Pirchei	18 Main Mincha	Shkiya	Tent א Maariv :40	18 Main Maariv :50
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**LATE MAARIV MOTZEI SHABBOS:** 6:00 PM & every 15 minutes until 9:00 PM | 18 Main

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**12 MIN.** before shkia

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## The Joy of Life

The *parsha* begins by telling us that Yaakov lived in this world for 147 years. Chazal point out that this number clearly indicates missing years, and this idea is expanded upon by the *Da'as Zekeinim* in last week's *parsha*. The missing 33 years are attributed to Yaakov's response to Pharaoh when he was asked, "How old are you?" Yaakov answered at length:

מעט ורעים היו ימי חיי... ולא השיגו  
 "Few and difficult have been the days of my life... and they did not reach the days of my fathers during their sojourning."

On a simple level, Yaakov Avinu was expressing that his years were few and bad.

However, the *Zohar* at the beginning of our *parsha*, on the words "ויחי יעקב," expounds on the term יחיו — that Yaakov truly lived, experiencing *ma'adanim*, real pleasure. This aligns with what the *Mesillat Yesharim* describes as the purpose of creation:

לא נברא האדם אלא להתענג על  
 "A person was created only to experience pleasure in Hashem."

What exactly is this *oneg*, this pleasure? It is likely something that will be fully felt only in the days of Mashiach and ultimately in *Olam Haba*. However, even in this world, that pleasure is synonymous with *simcha*, with joy.

As we mentioned last week from Rav Wolfson zt"l, Goshen, the place where the brothers settled in Mitzrayim, has the numerical value of *simcha* (353). Beyond everything a person experiences, the more one can connect to this inner world of *oneg* and *simcha*, the more one is preparing themselves for the World to Come.

Last week I was in Eretz Yisrael, and while speaking at a *kiddush*, I shared an experience and a life lesson that I learned in one of the

many yeshivos where I studied.

I was not married at the time, and I had just joined a new yeshiva. As is common for a newcomer in a large yeshiva, I felt lonely. I was craving a smile or a greeting, but it didn't come so quickly. It took a few days — maybe weeks, or at least it felt like weeks — until, Baruch Hashem, I was able to make friends and connections and feel somewhat established.

I remember making a resolution that when I would one day be a regular in a yeshiva and see someone new come in, I would make sure to greet him with a smile. Even then, I tried to greet people as I walked through the halls.

About a year later, it was Purim. The yeshiva was filled with wine and *simcha*. I was sitting in one of the back rooms learning when suddenly a young man approached me. He was clearly in a state of *ad d'lo yada* — which we'll leave for another time to discuss what that should look like — but what was beautiful was what came from his heart.

He said, "I want you to know that this is a big yeshiva, and I hope after tonight you won't remember who I am, because I'm embarrassed to say what I'm about to say. But you should know that I walk through the halls of the yeshiva with a deep loneliness, and when I see you pass by and give me a big smile, you are *mechayei meitim*."

He hoped I wouldn't remember who he was after Purim. I don't. But the lesson was unforgettable.

There is a line I once heard: A smile is a small curve that sets a lot of things straight. There is tremendous depth in that statement. A smile is not just an external act. Beyond the fact that medically it is said that smiling releases positive endorphins in the brain, it represents the *simcha* and joy that every human being, and especially every

Jew, is meant to live with as much as possible, and on the highest level possible.

When I say "level" and "time," I return to Yaakov Avinu. As Rav Chaim Shmulevitz brilliantly points out, the number 33 does not correspond only to the words of Yaakov's response to Pharaoh. It must also include Pharaoh's question itself: "כמה ימי שני חיירך?" — "How many are the days of your life?"

This teaches us that Yaakov Avinu, on his lofty level, was held accountable not only for saying that his days were *ra'im*, which may be better translated as broken or disconnected, similar to the broken sound of a *teruah*, but also for how he appeared. The fact that he was not smiling prompted Pharaoh to ask about his age.

According to our understanding, this was not merely because Yaakov failed to see that even the broken days are all part of Hashem's plan or that those days can lead to an even deeper connection. On his level, he was also held accountable for not radiating positivity — for the lack of positive impact that a smile can have on others.

There is much more to discuss regarding dark or difficult days and how a person's life should not be merely ימי מגוריה, days of sojourning, but rather חיירך, a life filled with *chiyus*, with vitality. See the Malbim, who expands on this idea.

Either way, this gives us added inspiration to make sure we smile at people — especially at a new face who shows up in shul, in class, or even in the office.

# RABBI YY JACOBSON



## The Presence of Joseph

“Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; they embalmed him, and he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.” In these very uninspiring words, one may sense profound solace.

The Jewish people are about to become enslaved and subjugated to a tyrannical government that will attempt to destroy them one by one, physically and mentally (as recorded at the beginning of Exodus). This new Egyptian genocide program will drown children, subject all Jewish men to slave labor, and crush a new nation.

What will give the people of Israel the resolve they will desperately need? What will preserve a broken and devastated people from falling into the abyss? The knowledge that one day they would be liberated? Certainly. The knowledge that evil will not reign forever? Absolutely. Indeed, this is what Joseph told the Jewish people before his passing, recorded in the second-to-the-last verse of Genesis: “Joseph told his brothers: ‘I am about to die, but G-d will indeed remember you and bring you up out of this land to the land that He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob... You will bring my bones up out of here.’”

But then, when Genesis seeks to choose its final words, it provides us with a message that perhaps served as the greatest source of strength for an orphaned and broken Jewish family. “Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; they embalmed him, and he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.”

Joseph’s sacred body is not taken back to the Holy Land to be interred among the spiritual giants of human history, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, his father Jacob, or his mother Rachel. Joseph’s spiritual and physical presence does not “escape” to the heavenly paradise of a land saturated with holiness.

Rather, Joseph remains in the grit and gravel of depraved Egypt. He remains etched deeply in the earthiness of Egypt, together with his beloved people.

It is true for each of us. When I can hold space for your pain and embrace you in your anguish, telling you that you are not alone, it may provide you with the deep strength to discover your own inner infinite dignity and power.

The burial place of a virtuous and saintly human being contains profound holiness and spiritual energy and constitutes a place conducive to

prayer to G-d. Since the soul and the body retain a relationship even after they depart from each other, the space where the physical body of a holy man is interred is a space conducive to spiritual growth, meditation, reflection, and inspiration.

“He was placed in a coffin in Egypt”—that is the culmination of Genesis. The Jew may be entrenched in Egypt and all that it represents, but Joseph is right there with him, in the midst of his condition, giving him strength, blessings, and fortitude.

The same is true throughout history. In each generation, G-d plants such “Josephs” in our midst, the *tzaddikim* and *rebbe*s, who are there with the Jewish people in their pain and agony. Sometimes, even after their passing, if we open our hearts, we can feel the touch of their souls, the richness of their spirits, the faith of their lives.

We may be stuck in the quagmire of “Egyptian” dung, yet “Joseph” is present with us. Thus, even in the midst of a dark and horrific exile, we can hold each other’s hands and thunder aloud: *Chazak! Chazak! Venischazeik!* Be strong! Be strong! Let us be strengthened!

SHIUR SCHEDULE

**MONDAY & THURSDAY** Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Womens Shiur 9:30 AM (84 Viola Rd)  
**SHABBOS** Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) • **Morning 8:40 AM** (20 Upstairs) | **After Davening 12:00 PM** (20 Upstairs)  
PLEASE NOTE: Rabbi Jacobson’s Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 AM, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 AM.

# RABBI GEDALIA LITKE

## Two Sets of Instructions

Based on a shiur by HaRav Yochanan Zweig, *shlita*

At the beginning of the *parsha* (47:29-31), Yosef alone is instructed briefly by Yaakov not to allow him to be buried in Egypt and to carry him out of Egypt for burial with his forefathers. Yaakov makes no mention to Yosef of Eretz Canaan, Efron, or Meoras Hamachpelah. Much later, after all the *brachos*, Yaakov instructs all of the brothers, including Yosef, in great detail that he is to be buried in Meoras Hamachpelah acquired from Efron in Eretz Canaan. (49:29-32)

It is clear that Yaakov is giving two sets of instructions concerning his burial. The first set is for Yosef only. Yosef, who has the power to do so, is tasked with making sure Yaakov is able to be brought out of Egypt. Once Yosef achieves this goal, he has the same instructions as all of the brothers, namely, to bring Yaakov from the Egyptian border to Eretz Canaan to Meoras Hamachpelah. This is why Yaakov emphasized to Yosef getting him out of Egypt while emphasizing Meoras Hamachpelah to the brothers separately.

This also neatly explains why the *psukim* account separately for Yosef and the brothers as having followed Yaakov’s directions. First, Yosef alone deals with getting him out of Egypt (50:4-8; see especially 50:7: “And Yosef went up to bury his father...”). Later, after the events of Goren Ha’atad, all the brothers carry him to Eretz Canaan and Meoras Hamachpelah (50:12-13; see especially 50:12: “And his sons did for him as he had commanded them to do.”).

# UFARATZTA RABBI SHALOM BERMUNITZ



## The Seforim that the Rebbe Kept on Hand, cont’d

A closer look will show the authors and *gedolei yisroel* whom the Rebbe held in high esteem...

Of no surprise is the shelf of works by the *gedolei hachassidus*, including *Kedushas Levi* by Harav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* by Harav Yaakov Yosef of Pollonye, *Maor Einayim* by Harav Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, *Tzidkas Hatzadik* from Harav Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin, and others.

Looking carefully at each shelf, one may notice a set of *Shiurim Metzuyonim Behalacha*, authored by Harav Shlomo Zalman Braun, grandfather of Harav Yosef Braun [Chaver Bes Din Tzedek in Crown Heights], and at least two volumes of *Leshem Shevo V’achlama*, works on *Kabbalah* by Harav Shlomo Elyashiv, grandfather of Harav [Hagaon] Yosef Shalom Elyashiv *ztl*. The Rebbe personally requested these works, and seemingly kept them in his room for decades.

[Tanya] a mimeographed copy of *Biur Tanya*, the commentary on *Tanya* by the famed *chossid* Reb Shmuel Groinern Esterman [first *meshpiah* in Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch, Russia], and many works of *chassidus* in manuscript form.

==== Anash.org *The Seforim that the Rebbe Kept on Hand* (in short)



## Using the Secular Date – Part II

We have seen that there is a mitzvah to count the months, starting from Nissan, to constantly remember Hashem's wondrous miracles, when He redeemed us from bondage. That being the case, why do we use names for the months, and where do the names of the months, Nissan, Iyar, Sivan, etc., come from? **THE CHANGE AFTER GALUS BAVEL**

The Ramban quotes the *Yerushalmi* in *Rosh Hashanah* (1:2) that the Jewish nation did not use names for the months and counted the months from Nissan in order to remember the redemption from Mitzrayim. However, after *Galus Bavel*, they instituted the usage of these names to commemorate our redemption from Bavel. That is why we only find the usage of these names in the days after they left Bavel, such as in *Megillas Esther* and in the other *Nevi'im* who lived at that time.

However, this must be understood. If the Torah writes that we must count from Nissan, how could they have made a change after *Galus Bavel*? How does commemorating the redemption from Bavel authorize our ignoring a Scriptural obligation spelled out clearly in the Torah that requires us to count the months starting from Nissan?

The Ramban himself addresses this question and quotes a *possuk* in *Yirmiyahu* (16:14-15), which tells us that once the Jewish nation was sent into exile and later redeemed from there, they should no longer recall their redemption from Mitzrayim, but rather, focus on their later redemption from Bavel. That is why we use the names of the months that were used in Bavel, to remember the later redemption.

This still needs further elucidation. If the Torah gave a mitzvah that we count from the month of Nissan, what allowed the prophet to discontinue the mitzvah, albeit with a noble motivation?

There are two basic ways to explain this:

The *Sefer Ha'ikrim* (Perek 16, *Maamar* 3) explains that, according to the Ramban, this mitzvah is not a permanent mitzvah, but a temporary requirement, as long as they did not go into a different exile. Once the Jewish nation was exiled to Bavel and subsequently redeemed, the mitzvah in its original form is no longer suitable and should rather be performed by commemorating the later redemption.

### REMEMBERING THE REDEMPTION FROM BAVEL

However, the *Maharlbach* takes strong issue with this notion and asserts that since a mitzvah can never be replaced, the Ramban never meant that its observance is terminated. He explains that the Ramban means that it will no longer suffice to simply count the months from Nissan. In order to remember our redemption from Bavel, one must add the name of the Babylonian month. The *Abarbenel* concurs with this understanding as well. According to their perspective, the *possuk* in *Yirmiyahu* means that we shall no longer remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* alone, but we must also remember the redemption from Bavel.

Interestingly, the *minhag* seems to be to follow the *Sefer Ha'ikrim*, and when it comes to *Rosh Chodesh bentching*, we only mention the name of the month, and we do not mention the number of the month. That seems to follow the opinion of the *Ikrim*, that we are no longer required to count the months from Nissan.

### IN CONCLUSION

We use the names of the Babylonian months to commemorate our redemption from Bavel, either instead of or in addition to, remembering *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

What about using the secular date or the like? Based on what we have seen, using the secular date constitutes a violation of the aforementioned *possuk*. In a future article, we will IY"H discuss if there is a *halachic* sanction for this practice.

### SHIUR SCHEDULE

#### KOLLEL BOKER 7:00-8:00AM

Chavrusa learning - Gemara  
Currently: מסכת יומא  
Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei  
Dyoma and relevant topics

#### NIGHT KOLLEL 8:15-9:45PM

Chavrusa learning - Halacha  
Currently : הלכות ניבוד אב ואם

#### SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45 PM  
Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00 PM  
Zera Shimshon Shiur | 8:15-9:00 PM

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# RABBI YAKOV YOSEF SCHECHTER

## Gan HaTorah THE TRUE BENEFIT OF SLEEP

"ויכל יעקב לצות את בניו ויאסף רגליו אל המטה"

"When Yaakov finished instructing his sons, he drew his feet onto the bed." Yaakov Avinu sensed that his end in *Olam Hazeih* was near, and he prepared his children for it. After Yaakov completed bequeathing his last will and testament to his children, he drew his feet onto the bed, and he passed away. **What is the reference of the "מטה," "bed," that the Torah keeps mentioning?**

Yaakov turned his head to the *Shechinah*. It is from here that the *Chachomim* derived that the *Shechinah* is above the headrest of a sick person. Another *p'shat* is that Yaakov's bed was perfect, and none of his offspring were wicked. (רש"י)

Each day, one has the ability to be *mesaken* a *nitzotz*, a spark, of his *tzelem Elokim*, image of Hashem. Why did the Ribbono Shel Olam create the concept of sleep? (**Brochos 57b**) **Sleeping is one sixtieth of death. When one goes to sleep, his *neshamah* goes back to *Shamayim*. Hashem, with infinite *chesed*, takes the *neshamah* and all the good that a person did, and the Ribbono Shel Olam leaves it in *Shamayim* for protection in case the person does something evil that would nullify his *zechuyos*.** Through *teshuvah*, a person is given a chance to rectify his sins. Yaakov, a great *tzaddik*, had utilized each and every day of his life to be *mesaken* another *nitzotz* of his *tzelem Elokim*. Yaakov knew that his *tzelem Elokim* was almost complete, so he knew that his days on this world were nearing their end. (אור החיים)

"הנה מטתו שלשלמה ששים גברים סביב לה, מגברי (Shir Hashirim 3:7) "Behold the resting place of Him to Whom peace belongs, with sixty myriads of Yisroel's mighty encircling it." "מטתו" refers to the Bais Hamikdash. Why is the Bais Hamikdash *nimshal* to a bed? Just as a bed is only to reproduce, so too, in the Bais Hamikdash, everything was continuously reproducing. (מדרש תנחומא)

"כל הקורא קריאת שמע על מטתו, מזיקין בדילין הימנו" (Brochos 8b) "All who recite *Krias Shema* on his *mitah*, bed, *mazikin* stay away from him." When one recites *Shema* on his bed before going to sleep, he is being *meyached* Hakadosh Boruch Hu. Thereby his *neshamah* is placed with Hashem, at the pinnacle of the world. There, one is protected from all. (מהרי"א)

"והמן נפל על המטה" (Megillas Esther 7:8) "And Haman fell on the bed." This was the end of Haman *Harasha*. He fell on the bed; he did not conquer his "bed." (48:2) "On the other hand, Yaakov Avinu did conquer his "bed," as the *possuk* says, "He strengthened himself and sat on the bed."

Each individual is in this world for a certain task. **The ultimate goal is for Klal Yisroel to be *zoche* to have a Bais Hamikdash, which is always reproducing. Each night, when a person goes to sleep on his "bed," he should recite *Shema*. He should be *meyached* Hashem. Each and every day, one must attempt to reproduce things of *kedushah*.**

Yaakov Avinu's physical life in this world was coming to an end. The "bed" of his entire life was complete. He conquered his "bed" each and every day of his life. He was *zoche* that all his children were *kodoshim* as well. Yaakov Avinu was complete, and he had completed his *tafkid*.

May we be *zoche*, on a daily basis, to achieve making our "bed" complete.



# הרב בן ציון סנה

## פרשת ויחי

ויחי יעקב. איך חי יעקב בכלוא שנים שהיה קשה, וכתוב שהוא חי איך הוא עשה זאת אלא קוראים ויתחזק ישראל וישב על המיטה. ובסוף הפרשה, צועקים "חזק חזק ונתחזק", ובהפטרות קוראים ויקרבו ימי ישראל למות ויקרא לבנו שלמה, ואמר "וחזקת והיית לאיש והלכת וגו'". אמר הרה"ק מרדכי זי"ע החיזוק הוא ללכת ולהתקדם, כמו ויתחזק ישראל מה עשה וישב על המיטה? עשה פעולה קטנה. וגם בסוף קריאת התורה כולם יושבים נעמדים לומר חזק, וגם דוד אמר לשלמה וחזקת והתחיל ללכת. כל פסיעה כל תזוזה, העיקר חיזוקים.

שאלו לגדול אחד שסבל כשמונה עשרה שנה ייסורים שהיה מרוחק ממקום שגדל, ולבסוף חזר וקיבלו אותו באהבה בחזרתו ושאלו אותו איך יכול להיות שחזק את עצמו ולא נפל ברוחו? אמר שבסוף הפרשה כתוב (ג, כו) וימת יוסף בן מאה ועשר שנים ויחנטו אתו וישם בארון במצרים. ואח"כ כשמיים קריאת התורה כל הציבור אומר "חזק חזק ונתחזק" ולמה? כי יוסף כבר נפטר כבר לא יכול לעשות כלום, ו"חנטו אותו" כבר חנטו אותו הוא לא יכול להגיב כלום, ואח"כ שמו אותו בארון בוודאי אין חזרה, ובכל זאת הציבור צועק "חזק" ולא פעם אחת אלא ג' פעמים, כלומר, תתחזק ואל תישבר.

היה אחד שהלך עם בנו הקטן לסופר. לקח עגלה והושיב את בנו, ובנו התחיל לעשות קולות וכל הזמן אמר משהלל תירגע, וכל החנות מי שעבר ריחם עליו והוא בעדינות אמר "משהלל כבר מגיעים הביתה ושם אני אסדר אותך". וכשיצא מהחנות ניגש אחד לילד ולאבא ואמר לילד "משהלה מה נשמע?" והילד לא מסתובב. ואז אמר האבא "לי קוראים משה" משהלה נגיע עוד מעט הביתה". אז ענה האבא, נכון אני אמרתי לעצמי כל הזמן "משהלל עוד מעט מגיעים הביתה". כדי שאני לא אאבד את הסבלנות דברתי אל עצמי שאני בעצמי אירגע.

בן אדם לא נהיה יותר גדול בזה שהוא משפיל את השני, אלא אם אתה עולה מדריגה, רק אתה נהיה יותר גדול. אל תענה לזולת דבר שלא היית רוצה לשמוע כשאומרים לך. והנה ידוע הסיפור של שני האחים, כל הזמן אח אחד התעצבן על השני. ופעם היה בור באיזה מקום, ואח השני הפיל את האח הראשון לבור, והאח שהופל בכה וסיפר לאביו מה שאחיו עשה לו. אמר האב לבנו "תדע לך, אם אתה רוצה להראות לאחיך שאתה גדול, אל תפיל אותו, כי אז אתה לא גודל אלא אתה מקטין את עצמך שרואים את מידותיך הגרועות. אלא קח כסא ותעלה עליו, ובזה התגדלת. כלומר תוותר – זוהי החכמה.

כיהיום אנו רואים את זה במציאות ובמוחש, "על דאטפת, אטפוך, וסוף מטיפיך יטפון".

וכמו שאחד שחל לו דם מאוזן אמר לו "בלוט זאל זיך גיטין אבער שטיל זאלסטו בלייבן". אפילו כשדמך נשפך, תישאר בשתיקה, והפירוש הוא שזוהי מטרתנו בעולם הזה. אומר השם "הכל בשבילי". כלומר, כל הניסיונות הכל מוקד ומזומן בהשגחה פרטית בשבילי לראות איך אני מגיב על כל הדברים האלו.

ועל כן, האדם חייב לראות שהכל טוב לו, ואפילו שמשוה נראה לו דבר מצער, באמת זה טוב, וזה תביעה על האדם למה הוא מתלונן, וכבר אמרנו כמה פעמים, שידוע אמירת העולם "תסתכל על חצי כוס המלא ולא על החצי הריק", והנה האימרא הזאת אינו אמת כי הקב"ה נתן לכל אחד כוס מלאה דכתיב "כוס יין מלא כברכת ד" הקב"ה נתן את כל הכוחות וכל הניסיונות הכל לאדם, והנה רק מה האדם אינו מרצה מתלונן לוקח את הכוס הקטן והוא מכניס את זה בכוס יותר גדול ואז הוא מתחיל להתחזק אל תסתכל על חצי כוס הריק. וכשתבין זאת תחיה עם שמחה אמיתית ושלימות.



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## RABBI YITZCHAK ADLERSTEIN

### Defeating Death

Based on *Be'er Mayim Chaim, Bereishis 47:29*

*The time approached for Yisrael to die, so he called for his son Yosef.*

How did Yaakov know that he was nearing the end of his days in this world? Furthermore, we usually associate the end of life with a diminution of power, of slowing down, of weakening. Considering what might be his frailty and mortality, we would have expected that the name "Yaakov" be used in this *passuk*, since that is the name associated with him in a more muted or powerless state. Instead, as he readies himself to take leave of this life, he assumes the role of "Yisrael," which is used to designate him in his powerful, triumphant, potentiated state.

Avrohom is described towards the end of his life as "old, having come into days." The last phrase begs for explanation; the Zohar provides one. Every day of his life, says the Zohar, brought new elevation to Avrohom. He did not miss a single one; he came

into all his days and emerged with something positive from each one. All of us, continues the Zohar, are put to the same challenge. Each day has its purpose. On the day of our final judgment, we will have to give an accounting for every day that we failed in our private missions, each person according to his level.

While each person is different, and each day in every individual's life is different, the growth is still cumulative. By the time a person's sojourn in this world is over, his soul should be sufficiently elevated to effortlessly join its Divine source. This means, optimally, having achieved excellence in every important measure.

In several places in *Shas, Tannaim* and *Amoraim* saw visions of great *tzaddikim* before their deaths. This follows from what we have been saying. Just prior to their passing from this world, these great people had finished their life's work of elevating their souls. Those souls were therefore attuned to great spiritual elevation. The great *tzaddikim* they saw in their visions symbolized the sterling

quality of the souls they themselves possessed as they were poised to enter eternity.

This, then, is what happened to Yaakov. As he approached the end of his days, he attained levels of perfection that he had not reached before. Any slight flaws he previously might have possessed were erased or had faded. Freed of any deficiencies, his soul now reigned with full power. He could not accurately be called Yaakov at this moment. Even though his body was about to give out, his core being rose to its greatest position of power. He could only be called Yisrael, not Yaakov, at such a time of spiritual ascendancy.

As all this transpired, Yaakov was aware of the significance of the changes he was undergoing. He realized that he was transitioning to a life in the world of the *neshamos*; his soul was being prepared for taking its eternal place. He knew, in other words, that the time had approached for him to die, and it was time to have the conversation with Yosef.



## RABBI JARED VIDARS

### Mission Possible

Ever get the feeling that you're in just a *tad* over your head? Several summers ago, on a sweltering July afternoon, our family and countless pieces of luggage were packed into an airport shuttle en route to JFK, where we were slated to fly to Israel in celebration of my 40th birthday. Lo and behold, as our driver careened around the entry ramp to the George Washington Bridge, the van came to a sudden halt. The van was dead.

While the driver radioed in for help, explaining that "we need a jump," pandemonium was slowly unfolding. The stalled van was stationed in a location begging for a collision. The now non-air-conditioned car was quickly becoming unbearable for the younger ones. The older ones, well, they looked somewhat panic-stricken, wondering if we really "needed to jump." [They weren't familiar with the notion of "jumping" a car and interpreted the driver's jargon as a call for us to jump off the bridge.] My wife gave me that look that says, "You've got a plan, right?" While I tried to exude confidence, I was internally in mayday mode, secretly hoping "my Mommy would somehow make this all better!"

With no other alternative in sight, we of-

fered a prayer to G-d, and I made my way from the ramp toward toll booth security. And that's when a 15-person, air-conditioned airport shuttle pulled over in front of our motley crew and asked, "Are you okay? Can you use a lift?" Sent via the Divine Dispatcher, Levi the Shuttle Driver *just happened* to be returning from the Catskills en route to Queens and was oh-so-happy to offer us a lift to JFK.

In a total state of disbelief, we climbed in with all the kids and our 52 pieces of luggage and were on our way. We arrived safely at our gate in plenty of time for boarding.

G-d possesses an endless number of exit strategies out of an endless number of predicaments. Had I explained to my wife, "Let's just be calm. Hang out for a bit. Probably someone with an empty van en route to Queens will stop off and offer us a ride to the airport. Can you pass me some popcorn?" I probably would have failed miserably in the pro-active, resourceful husband department. That solution was simply out of the question and way beyond the boundary of reasonable possibility.

Yaakov said to Yosef, 'I did not imagine seeing your face, and here G-d has shown me even your offspring!' [48:11] [*Rashi*: It did

not enter my mind (lit., my heart did not fill me) to consider the thought that I would see your face again.]

As we navigate the scenarios life sends our way, we envision an array of outcomes. Some end results are predictable, others anticipated. Some are remote, and others downright incredible.

As Jews, the privilege of 24/7 access to the Infinite essentially renders the "impossible" obsolete. Indeed, it should seemingly be erased from our dictionaries and our mindsets. There is no relationship that cannot be salvaged. There is no bill that cannot get paid. There is no applicant that cannot find employment. There is no soul that cannot find their *bashert*. G-d can find a way. He's that Good and that Resourceful.

As we close the book of Genesis, we share that sinking feeling that things will get worse for the Jewish Nation before they get better. Be it the national exile or a personal predicament, our job is to never lose hopefulness. When G-d is in the equation, there is simply no limit to the number of exit strategies. There is no mission impossible..

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## RABBI YISRAEL REISMAN



### White Teeth

The following is something that my Rebbi Rav Pam mentioned on this week's *parsha*.

Yehudah gets a long *brocha*, and part of the *brocha* is as is found in 49:12. "His teeth are going to be white from drinking milk." *Yasherkoach!* You will have white teeth from drinking milk. You won't need whitening strips. Beautiful!

The Gemara in *Kesubos* 111b (close to the bottom of the *Amud*) says that it is not just that Yehudah's teeth will be white; Yaakov Avinu told Yehudah that you will smile at people. You will be in a position of leadership; you are a *melech*. When you smile at a person, it brings that person happiness. When you meet a person who is sour all the time, you are not happy. When you meet a person who is joyful and smiling, the joy spreads and goes beyond. It is the ultimate *hachnosas orchim*.

Rav Pam would quote from the *Ahavas Chesed*. The Chofetz Chaim says that fulfilling the mitzvah of *hachanasas orchim* has to be *b'savior panim yafos*; it has to be with joy. The Medrash says that somebody who gives his friend a happy embrace, even if he does not give him anything else, it is as if he is giving him everything.

Rav Pam would cite the example of Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon (1882-1964), the Lomze Rosh Yeshiva, who was stuck in the United States when World War II broke out. He himself was thus rescued, but he was separated from his family. On the day that he was told that his family had perished in Europe, shortly afterward, somebody walked in, and the Lomze Rosh Yeshiva greeted that person with a big smile and spoke to him. When the person left, someone asked, "How did you do that? How can a person do what you just did?" The Lomze Rosh Yeshiva said, "That person is not responsible for my sadness. Why should I throw the sadness on him?"

We do it all the time. When we are sad, we throw the sadness on everybody, such as when we come home after a day at work or after a day in *yeshiva*, and we walk in with a sour face. You have to walk in with a happy face. How was your day? Great! Wonderful! If there is a problem to discuss, you discuss it. But how are things? Wonderful! That is the first answer. A person should learn to be *mekabeil es kol ha'adam b'savor panim yafos*. The world would be such a better place if people would take this lesson to heart.

You want to be a *melech*? לובן שיניים מחלב. The blessing is not that you will have white teeth. The blessing is that you show your smile to people, which is better than giving them milk. Let us smile and let us be grateful for what we do have, and B'ezras Hashem, we should be *zoche*. Joy brings *brocha*.

## RABBI ELI MANSOUR



### The Wheel of Fortune

Toward the end of *Parashat Vayehi*, we read of Yosef's brothers' fears that Yosef would avenge the pain that they inflicted upon him. They suspected that now that their father, Yaakov, had passed away, Yosef would kill them in revenge for their crimes against him. Yosef was the viceroy of Egypt, and he wielded great power and authority. Nobody would have stopped Yosef if he sought to kill his brothers, and nobody would have been bothered by such a measure. And so the brothers were afraid. They therefore sent a message to Yosef telling him that their father had issued a command before his death, instructing Yosef to forgive his brothers. Yaakov had never actually issued such a command, but, as our Sages explain, the brothers fabricated this story in the interest of maintaining peaceful relations with Yosef.

The Torah relates that Yosef wept upon hearing his brothers' plea, and he then responded, "Do not fear, for am I in G-d's place?"

Several interpretations have been offered for this verse "*Ha'tahat Elokim anochi*" ("Am I in G-d's place?").

One particularly powerful explanation was offered by the Hid"ra (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1807). The Hid"ra explains the words "*Ha'tahat Elokim anochi*" as a statement rather than a rhetorical question. He was telling the brothers, "I am under G-d," meaning he lived with a constant awareness of "*Elokim*," of divine authority. He understood that G-d controls all people's fate at all times, and, as such, any situation could be reversed in an instant. People can go to bed wealthy and wake up as paupers, just as an impoverished beggar can wake up to a sudden fortune. Nothing in life is guaranteed – neither the bad nor the good. Yosef thus reassured his brothers that he had no thoughts of using his authority to avenge the wrongs they had committed. He did not allow his position of power and prestige to give him the confidence to do whatever he wished. He knew full well that the authority he enjoyed then would not necessarily last, and thus he ensured not to abuse it.

There was once a king who wore a ring that bore an inscription with the letters "*gimmel*," "*zayin*," "*yud*." When asked about this ring, he explained that the letters stood for the words "*Gam Zeh Ya'avor*" – "This, too, shall pass." Whenever he went to battle and lost, and he began feeling anxious and despondent, he would look at the ring and remind himself that the defeat is not permanent and that the situation could change drastically the next time around. And, when he enjoyed moments of success and triumph, he would look at the ring to remind himself that he should not feel overly confident in his achievements, because this current situation could quickly pass.

Yosef was telling his brothers – and teaching us – that the proverbial "wheel of fortune" is constantly turning, a message that should serve as both a source of comfort and a stern warning. It comforts us by assuring us that our problems and hardships are not permanent; they could all vanish in a moment. No matter what kind of difficult problem we are currently facing, we must retain hope and optimism, realizing that no situation is ever permanent. On the other hand, this message warns us not to feel too comfortable and secure with our blessings in life and never to take anything for granted. Everything we have is a gift from Hashem, Who has the power to give and take as He sees fit. We must therefore constantly feel grateful for what we have and ensure to continuously be worthy of Hashem's ongoing blessings.

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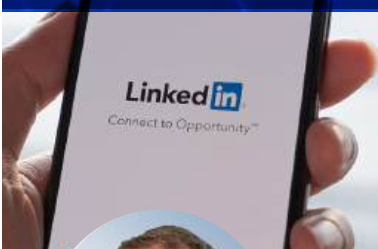
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## JOKES

During a performance for the drama class, a hole cracked in the stage floor. Subsequent acts managed to avoid the damaged area until Dovi, juggling bowling pins, accidentally stepped through the hole up to his knee.

He apologized to the audience for his clumsiness. But a heckler in the back of the theater shouted, "Don't worry, Dovi! It's just a stage you're going through!"

I showed my damaged luggage to a lawyer and said, "I want to sue the airline!"  
The lawyer said, "You don't have much of a case."

Benjy the dentist was also a golf fanatic and would often take time off from work for a round of golf. One day, he told his secretary to cancel all his appointments. She was also to leave the following voicemail message on his phone: Dr. Benjamin is fully occupied today as he needs to fill 18 cavities. Please call tomorrow for an appointment. Thank you.

Why did the scarecrow win an award?  
Because he was outstanding in his field.

The construction workers told me they already built the foundation of my new home. But when I went to the construction site, I found no concrete evidence of it.

In the morning, the executioner reads his newspaper and eats breakfast. Then he looks at his watch and says to his wife, "Alright, it's time to head off."

My wife complains that we're totally broke. I don't know what she's talking about. My bank says I have an outstanding balance!



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## ZERA SHIMSHON

### Parents as Partners

ברכת שדים ורחם (מט' כה)

*A blessing to the father and mother - Targum (49:25)*

The *Zera Shimshon* explains this *passuk* to be a blessing to a father and mother to rejoice with their children by seeing them going on the right path. He links this *passuk* with the *passuk* in *Mishlei* (23:25) that says, "Let your father and mother rejoice, etc.," which refers to a child who follows the way of the Torah.

The *Zera Shimshon* teaches that a couple merits happiness from their children when they work together as friends on raising their children.

The *Zera Shimshon* learns this from following Mishnayos in *Pirkei Avos*.

In the second *perek* (*Mishna* 9), the Mishna tells how Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai listed the praises of his five disciples. About R' Yehoshua, he said, "Praised is the one who gave birth to him." R' Ovadia Bartenura explains that R' Yehoshua's mother went to Torah scholars and requested that they pray for the child she was expecting to be a *chacham*. Once he was born, she placed his crib in the beis medrash so that he would only hear the words of Torah. This is why she merited being praised like this by Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai.

In a later Mishna (11), Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai asked his students what they thought was the most important thing a person should focus on in order to serve Hashem properly. R' Yehoshua's answer was to have a good friend.

The *Zera Shimshon* explains that the praises that Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai gave his students and his students' opinions as to what is the most important thing one should focus on are connected. He explains this as follows:

A husband and wife are referred to by the *passuk* in *Mala-chi* (2:14) as friends. They are, in fact, friends because for a child to succeed, both the mother and father have to contribute to his growth. This can only happen if they work together, as friends.

This is what Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai meant by his praise of R' Yehoshua's mother. It was in addition to the effort that his father put into him. Most of the time, either parent is satisfied with what the other parent did. Here, R' Yehoshua's mother added to his eventual greatness by adding to what his father did. Thus, the praise is not that only his mother contributed to his greatness, but rather, that both parents did. What Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai wanted to bring out was the (possibly overlooked) part that R' Yehoshua's mother added.

If husband and wife have to work as friends for their children to succeed, then R' Yehoshua's parents were the prime example of such a couple.

This influenced R' Yehoshua's opinion later in life as to what the most important thing a person should focus on to serve Hashem: a good friend. Although his words were intended to be understood at face value, they were also in reference to his parents and how they worked together as friends, which enabled him to succeed.

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SCHEDULE

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BY RABBI SIMCHA BUNIM BURGER

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