

עֵפֶרֶת הַשָּׁבוּעַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת ויגש
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חיה לאה
בת שאול הלוי ע"ה
יאהרצייט ה'טבת

COME ON DOWN!

Avi Lieberman, 12th Grade

ואלא שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה [מו:ח]

AND THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CHILDREN
OF YISRAEL WHO WERE COMING TO EGYPT

In this week's *parsha*, Yosef reveals himself to his brothers, thus ending the mysterious journey they were led on. Yaakov goes down to Mitzrayim along with the rest of his family, carrying the promise from Hashem that he will become a prosperous nation there, and will ultimately be brought up from Egypt to the land he was promised.

Rashi points out that Torah here speaks of the Jews '*coming*' to Mitzrayim in the present tense, because "על שם השעה" - it is speaking of the time they actually came to Egypt. If this is so - that the Torah here is speaking about what is happening at that very moment - why is this identical expression used in the beginning of *Sefer Shemos*? The first *pasuk* in *Shemos* states the exact same six words! Why is the present tense used there as well when it is describing a much later time - at a time when the slavery already began?

Reb Moshe Feinstein ז"ל suggests that the Torah is telling us that as long as the Jews stayed in Mitzrayim, they remained on the same *madreigah* (spiritual level) they had been on when they first entered the land. The whole time they were in Egypt, they were acting as if they were still '*coming*', and had not assimilated into Egyptian life. They were easily identifiable as Jews.

This can answer a seemingly superfluous fact stated in the Torah later on. The *parsha* ends by telling us, **וישב ישראל**, AND YISROEL SETTLED IN THE LAND OF EGYPT IN THE REGION OF GOSHEN.

Why does the Torah tell us here that the Jews settled there, when we are told in previous *pesukim* that Goshen was a province in Egypt? Reb Moshe answers that the Torah is teaching us that even though our destiny is to be exiled among the nations of the world, we must do everything possible not to mingle with our gentile neighbors. We must be careful not to

(Continued on page 2)

SAY WHAT?

Binyomin Agular, 10th Grade

The tale has reached it's climax. The brothers are just about ready to tear down the city, and even the Egyptian officials are on their knees begging Yosef to forgive Binyamin. Yosef, therefore, realizes that this is the opportune moment, and with the well-known statement "Ani Yosef, Haod Avi Chai?" He reveals his identity to his brothers. However, the *pasuk* that tells us of this dramatic revelation, the revealing of Yosef's true identity, describes what occurred in a very, very odd fashion.

The *pasuk* says, "ולא יכל יוסף להתאפק לכל הנצבים עליו [מה:א], AND YOSEF WAS NOT ABLE TO "התאפק" BEFORE ALL THOSE WHO STOOD BEFORE HIM. What does this unusual word 'התאפק' mean? Rashi in last weeks *parsha* [מג:לא], translates "התאפק" as "נתאמץ"- *strengthened himself*, and explains that this term is used in various *pasukim* relating to warrior's strength. Here in our *pasuk*, Rashi translates "התאפק" as "לסבול"- *to bear*. According to Rashi, Yosef couldn't bear/strengthen himself enough to reveal his identity before the Egyptians. The Ramban also explains that that "התאפק" is a *lashon* of strength.

However, both the Ramban and Rashi present a problem. What was Yosef not strong enough to do? Yosef was certainly not embarrassed that the Egyptians would see him cry and know that he could get emotional, as the entire country heard him cry, as described in the next *pasuk*! Rather, Rashi says that Yosef was afraid that the Mitzriyim would hear that his brothers are shamed when he would reveal himself and the Ramban basically says that the Mitzriyim had begged for Binyamin to be freed and therefore Yosef did not have the strength to deal with them and sent them out.

Rashi is a bit confusing. Would the Mitzriam "hear" the brothers getting embarrassed, or "see" just that? Rashi says *hear*. Why?

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emulate their ways, their styles, their standards and their morals. Even though we were secluded by ourselves with yeshivos and family, we were still in Egypt and had to keep ourselves aware that Goshen is not our home. Yet from the fact that our ancestors separated themselves in a different region – Goshen – we see how important this quality was for the redemption to come into fruition.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn tells over how someone once brought their *esrog* to Rav Shlomo Eisen zt"l of Yerushalayim for his opinion on its quality. Rav Eisen looked the *esrog* over and commented that even though it wasn't spotted or blistered in any way, "It seems that a small part from the *esrog* is *chaseir* (missing)."

The area in question was very tiny, and knowing the basic halachos of the *arba minim*, the young man protested, "Since this year the first day of Succos falls out on Shabbos and we don't take the *arba minim* till the following day, the whole *mitzvah* is only a *DeRabanan* [*chaseir* only invalidates when the obligation is *D'oraisa*]."

"If you were to purchase this *esrog* now," Rav Eisen said firmly, "it would be a question of *apikorses* (heresy)!"

The young man was startled. Heads turned throughout the room, as everyone suddenly became quiet to hear Rav Eisen's reasoning.

"We have a few weeks until Yom Tov," exclaimed Rav Eisen. "Within this time, it is possible that Moshaiach will come and we will all celebrate the upcoming Succos in the Beis HaMikdash. Wouldn't you want to use your *esrog* in the Beis HaMikdash? You are willing to purchase an *esrog* that would be invalid in the Beis HaMikdash – which displays your conviction that Moshiach will not come. Such an attitude has the scent of *apikorses*!"

Our first redemption from Egypt was set with our separation from the gentile neighbors, and a constant awareness that we must not truly settle in a foreign land. During our time, there are people who feel they can and *must* integrate into the gentile world in order to survive through the long exile. With this concept, there are even those like the Reform movement and such who have abandoned all ideas of a redemption altogether! It is no wonder that it is the people who follow such morals and ideals, who are the ones losing their children from Judaism altogether. We must keep strong, and even though we have been 'coming' for many years now, let us keep our ideals sturdy and never give in to temptation. Just as our strong foundation saved us during *galus Mitzrayim*, let us merit through our perseverance the coming of the final redemption, speedily in our day.

ומקצה אחיו לקח [מ:זב]

by Tzadok Picker

HE TOOK FEW OF HIS BROTHERS

When Yosef HaTzaddik goes to speak to Paroah about having his brothers live in Mitzrayim, the Torah tells us that, "*he took few of his brothers*". The Baal HaTurim explains that the *gematria* of the words 'ומקצה אחיו לקח', is equal to "זה החלשים", *these are the weak ones*. While Rashi explains the reason for this being that if Paroah saw the stronger of the brothers, he would take them into his army, the Sforno learns differently. He explains that Yosef wanted to present his case to Paroah without him feeling any pressure or discomfort. Rather, Yosef wanted the complete and honest truth. He therefore felt had he taken the strong brothers, Paroah may feel a bit threatened by them, and would thus feel more inclined to agree to whatever Yosef had to say.

Therefore, he chose those who were shepherds and not warriors.

The Ramban seems very confusing. What topic does Yosef have to deal with the Mitzriyim? Obviously, it had to relate to Binyamin, but what does Binyamin have to do with Yosef's willingness to have the Egyptians in the room?

I would like to suggest, that Rashi and the Ramban do not argue with each other, rather they agree and explain each other. The Mitzriyim wanted Yosef to free Binyamin, as they had heard the brothers pleas and were moved by them. If they heard Yosef ask them, "My father is still alive, right? How is he doing after what you did? Look what you have done. . ." The Mitzriyim wouldn't have hung around to listen to the rest of the story and found out what had happened twenty two years earlier. They would only have *heard* the part that sounded as if Yosef was just plain cruel, and it would have made them even more upset. The reason for this is that the Egyptians had, what people like to call, *selective hearing*. Since they were already upset, they would have heard only what they wanted to hear. This is why Rashi says

that Yosef was afraid that the Mitzriyim would hear the *shevatim* be shamed. They would have heard only the rebuke and "known" everything - and Yosef did not have the strength to deal with people who had selective hearing disease at this time. Yosef therefore sent them out.

Perhaps we can learn a lesson from here. We as humans, also tend - at times - to have selective hearing. However it is not such a good trait. The Egyptians missed out on an unbelievable opportunity; to witness such a famous and important episode in history, because of this bad character trait - and the fact that they certainly did not have the *middah* of *dan lechaf zechus*. Only Hashem knows what a person can do if he can hear an entire tale out properly - and what He can miss out on if he can't, for selective hearing is a *middah* that sometimes even the *chazakim* and *apakim* - the strongest warriors of emotion and control - cannot deal with. May we only judge *lechaf zechus* and merit to bring the *geulah sheleimah, bimheirah biyameinu amen!*

RABBI MORDECHAI GIFTER ZT'L
 7 Cheshvan, 5676 / October 15, 1915 – 24 Teves 5761 / January 18, 2001

Part 1

- Mordechai was born to Reb Yisroel and Rebbetzin Gifter on an Erev Shabbos in Cheshvan, in Richmond Virginia.
- Throughout his life, Reb Mordechai would refer to his father's *ahavas Torah* and outstanding *midos*, especially noting his integrity.
- Due to the difficulty of educating his children in Virginia, Reb Yisroel and his family moved to Baltimore, which at that time was one of the Torah centers of the United States.
- When HaRav Shimon Shkop zt'l visited Baltimore, Reb Yisroel took his son to receive a *bracha* from the "Kohen Gadol." Mordechai received a *bracha* that he would become a *godol beTorah*. It is this *bracha* which Rav Gifter holds his success is from.
- He was outstanding in his *hasmodoh* and diligence even as a youth, and known for his extensive knowledge and remarkable memory.
- When only fifteen years old, Mordechai's *chiddushim* were published in the *Toras Eretz Yisroel* journal printed in Petach Tikvah, alongside the Torah writings of HaRav Tzvi Pesach Frank and HaRav Reuven Katz.
- As a youngster, Mordechai learned in the Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Yeshiva of New York City under his rav, HaRav Moshe Halevi Soloveitchik, whom he regarded as his *rebbe muvhak*.
- Reb Mordechai held his rebbe to be his mentor in his own *derech halimud*, and when speaking would often quote the words of his rebbe. Only rarely, when presenting his words with, 'Now we will say some *Torah*,' did everyone know that he then intended to relate his own thoughts and *chiddushim*.
- Rav Gifter learned together with such luminaries as HaRav Nosson Wachtfogel, zt'l, former *mashgiach* of Lakewood, and HaRav Avigdor Miller zt'l.



- During intersession from yeshiva when he returned to his parents home in Baltimore, he would continue to learn with tremendous *hasmodoh* and diligence. During the hot summer months, he would sit on his porch and memorize *masechtos* of gemara. Rav Gifter would later demand of his own talmidim that they learn *masechtos* and internalize them during their own *bein hazmanim*. He would often quote the author of the *sefer Beer Sheva* who instructed his talmidim to do the same.

- On that note, Rav Gifter would relate how upon his stopover in the

Slabodke Yeshiva on his way to the Telz Yeshiva in Lithuania, the Rosh Yeshiva HaRav Eizik Sher praised him when young Mordechai revealed that he had mastered a certain difficult *sugya* by heart during his *bein hazmanim*.

- When 17 years old, Mordechai's uncle directed him to the Telz Yeshiva in Lithuania in the winter of 5692 (1932).
- When he arrived at Telz, the Rosh Yeshiva HaRav Avrohom Yitzchok Bloch zt'l immediately realized that young Mordechai was destined for greatness. HaRav Bloch thus placed him in a *chaburah* with the best talmidim in the yeshiva.
- From his time in Telz, young Mordechai formed a strong bond with Rav Bloch zt'l who he considered to be his *rav muvhak*. In his shiurim and writings, he often quoted his rebbe as '*mori verabi*', or '*admor hakodesh*'.
- Rav Gifter often spoke of the amazing simcha and fervor that permeated the Telz Yeshiva as the bachurim learned. When he first arrived, young Mordechai noticed one bachur in particular out of the hundreds whose simcha appeared to be especially prominent. When he asked who this student was, he was told that he was the poorest *bochur* in the yeshiva.

Part II next week!

GO FIGURE!

Ariel Charnowitz, 9th Grade

ותמאר אל עבדיך הורדהו אלי ואשימה עיני עליו [מד:כא]

AND YOU SAID TO YOUR SERVANT, 'BRING HIM DOWN TO ME, AND LET ME LAY EYES UPON HIM'

Why did Yosef insist that his brothers bring Binyomin down to Egypt? Was there something else at work here?

Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik zt'l explains that it was part of Yosef's plan to be able to see his father again. Yosef himself was not able to talk to his father and tell him about what happened, because his brothers told people not to divulge what happened to him. Yosef therefore wanted Binyomin to come down because he figured that his father would follow him, and would then see what happened to Yosef without him having to say anything.

Yet Yosef's plans did not work out that way. Yehudah started to argue with Yosef and said if Yaakov will see Binyomin gone, he will surely die! It was then that Yosef realized his plan wouldn't work, and thus revealed himself to his brothers.

אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

ויאמר ישראל רב עוד יוסף בני חי אלכה ואראנו בטרם אמות (מה:כח)

AND YISROEL SAID, 'HOW GREAT, MY SON YOSEF IS STILL ALIVE.
I SHALL GO AND SEE HIM BEFORE I DIE'

The *Midrash Rabbah* on this *pasuk* is bothered by the meaning of the word "רב." Literally translated, it means "how numerous," or "how great." How does it fit into the context of this *pasuk* - it appears somewhat awkward? The *Midrash* writes that Yaakov was excited about Yosef's tremendous spiritual strength. He was elated that Yosef had remained strong in his *tzidkus*, despite all his troubles. He proclaimed that Yosef's *emunah* was even greater than his own, as Yaakov, when confronted with his trials, had begun to doubt whether or not Hashem was still with him. Yosef, on the other hand, remained strong in his *emunah*.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l asks a penetrating question on this *Midrash*. Where did Yosef learn this tremendous level of *emunah* from?

Clearly such a high *madreigah* cannot be reached naturally?

Rav Yaakov answers based on a *Midrash* found in *Parshas Vayetzei*. The *Midrash* relates that on his way to the house of Lavan, Yaakov stopped at the yeshiva of Shem and Aver, and learned there for fourteen years. Rav Yaakov explains that at the yeshiva of Shem and Aver, Yaakov learned Torah that he could never have learned from his father Yitzchak. Shem and Aver had lived in generations of wicked people, and as such they knew the Torah of how to live in *galus*. Yitzchak on the other hand had never lived outside of Eretz Yisroel, and he therefore was unable to impart this portion of the Torah to Yaakov. Yaakov went to Shem and Aver to learn how to live in exile amongst *reshaim*.



Reb Yaakov zt"l with
Rav Yaakov Yitzchak Ruderman zt"l

This was the Torah that Yaakov imparted to Yosef; the Torah of how to survive in *galus*. Yosef used this Torah to withstand all of his trials.

This can also explain to us why Yaakov was unable to reach Yosef's perfection in *Toras Hagalus*. When Yaakov went to the yeshiva of Shem and Aver and started to learn *Toras hagalus*, he was already sixty-three years old. On the other hand, for Yosef this was *girsas dyanuksa*, Torah that he had learned from his youth, which stayed with him forever; for the Torah that one learns at a young age is not comparable to the Torah that one learns when he is older. As such, Yosef was able to harness the *Toras hagalus* to a greater degree than his father Yaakov was.

A talmid once remarked to Rav Mordechai Gifter zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Telz, that it's nothing special for him to remember every *Tosfos* in *gemara* since he is such a genius.

Rav Gifter quickly responded, "You are making a mistake. When I learn a *gemara* or a *Tosfos*, I look at it as the last time that I am going to see this *Tosfos* before the grand *bechina* (test) in the Beis Din Shel Maaleh and that is why I remember it. If you would learn that way, you could do the same."

Someone once consulted with the Chazon Ish about his wish to leave his position as a rebbe in a yeshiva in order to take up another occupation. The *gadol* asked him, "What do you want to do?"

The man answered, "I would like to learn to be a diamond polisher."

The Chazon Ish exclaimed, "But you already are!"

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