

לעילוי נשמת
מרת עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה וסרטל
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



על-הנשא

AL EI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

On Ascent and Descent

מהרו ועלו אל אבי.

Hurry and go up to my father (Bereishis 45:9).

After Yosef makes himself known to his brothers, he says to them: "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Yosef: G-d has made me master over all of Egypt. Come down to me; do not delay.'" Rashi, citing Chazal,

the hidden treasure alludes to the spiritual reservoir that is in every Jew.

explains: "Go up to my father"—Eretz Yisrael is higher than all other lands."

The *mefarshim* wonder at this explanation. Similar expressions of ascent and descent are used in earlier mentions of travel to and from Eretz Yisrael. In *Parshas Mikeitz* it states, "There is grain

in Egypt—go down there," "Yosef's brothers went down" (42:2-3), "You may go up in peace to your father" (44:17). Likewise, at the beginning of our parshah Yehudah says, "How can I go up to my father?" (44:34).

Why, then, does Rashi choose to cite this teaching of Chazal only here, and not earlier, to explain the constant references to ascent and descent?

When Chazal say that "Eretz Yisrael is higher than all other lands," they are not speaking in geographic terms. No place on the globe can meaningfully be called higher than another. What they mean is that the Land itself stands on a different level. Its importance and sanctity place it far above all other lands.

As long as the *Shevatim* intended to return to Yaakov Avinu in Eretz Yisrael, there was no need to stress the importance of Eretz Yisrael. But now, when Yosef sends his brothers to bring their father without delay—now, as *galus Mitzrayim* is about to begin—it is necessary to emphasize that "Eretz

Only a Dream

ויהי מקץ שנתים ימים ופרעה חלם והנה עמד על היאר.

At the end of two full years, Pharaoh dreamed, and, behold, he was standing by the river (Bereishis 41:1).

The Rebbe R' Bunim of Peshischa finds an allusion to *avodas Hashem* in this pasuk. מקץ שנתים—a Yid must put an end to the time he spends asleep; ופרעה—he must be open and honest before Hashem and do *teshuvah*; והנה עמד על היאר—he must stand with the light, "for a mitzvah is a candle and the Torah is light."

We have no tradition how R' Bunim explained the word *cholem*. Perhaps ופרעה חלם means: it must be clear that *Olam Haze* is illusory as a dream. How does one attain this level of clarity? Pharaoh tells Yosef, ואני שמעתי עליך, לאמר תשמע חלום לפתר אתו ויען יוסף את פרעה. לאמר בלעדי אלהים יענה את שלום פרעה, Yosef replies *It is not I; G-d will answer to Pharaoh's satisfaction*. In both Pharaoh's statement and Yosef's memorable reply, the word לאמר, saying, seems superfluous.

The *sefarim* explain that the word לאמר connotes *arayos*. (When the pasuk says, And

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Yisrael is higher than all other lands.”

They are about to settle in Mitzrayim, a wealthy country, steeped in the pleasures of this world. Moreover, Pharaoh promises (45:17), *I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land*. At this moment, remembering the special status of Eretz Yisrael is imperative. Always remember that your roots are somewhere far higher, in a place of sanctity. Only this knowledge could sustain them in the deep spiritual *galus* of Mitzrayim.

When the *Shevatim* arrived in Mitzrayim, Pharaoh said to Yosef, *If there are capable men among them, appoint them (וְשָׂמָתָם) as overseers of my livestock* (47:6). *Ba'al HaTurim* points out that the word וְשָׂמָתָם appears twice: here, *appoint them as overseers of my livestock*, and a second time regarding the *luchos*: *Put them in the aron* (Devarim 10:2).

The repetition is instructive. For all the fleeting material pleasures of this world (*“appoint them as overseers of*

my livestock”), there is a counterweight in the spiritual gifts of Torah, *kedushah*, and righteousness. While mundane pleasures are fleeting, the virtues of Torah and *yiras Shamayim* endure forever, forming a lasting foundation for a person's life.

In the previous parshah, when the *Shevatim* returned from Mitzrayim for the first time, the Torah relates: *And it was (וַיְהִי, as they emptied their sacks, behold, each man's silver coin was found in his sack* (42:35). Rashi, in *Parshas Lech Lecha* (15:17), explains וַיְהִי: “That is to say, ‘And it came to pass’—that is, ‘this event occurred.’” We would have expected the pasuk to say וַיְהִי, in the plural (*they were emptying their sacks*). Rashi therefore explains that וַיְהִי means *it came to pass*, referring to the occurrence—in this case, the discovery of the silver in their sacks.

A closer look at Rashi yields a deeper lesson. The discovery of the treasure represents the secret to persevering and maintaining Yiddishkeit in *galus*. Yosef said to his brothers,

“Your G-d and your father's G-d has given you hidden treasure in your packs” (43:23). My father, the Pnei Menachem, explains that the hidden treasure alludes to the spiritual reservoir that is in every Jew.

This is the meaning of “I have toiled and have found success” (*Megillah* 6b). Every Jew has untapped reserves of spiritual energy that will reveal themselves if he only searches for them. Even if he hasn't built his own unique spiritual qualities, he has a rich spiritual legacy handed down from his forbears. As Rashi explains, this treasure is granted through merit: “in your merit, if it is worthy; and the God of your fathers gave you the treasure in the merit of your fathers.”

יגש תשפ"א מאמר א

Only a Dream

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Hashem commanded Adam “saying,” Chazal explain it as a reference to *arayos*.) Pharaoh was not just relaying what he heard about Yosef, he was expressing his confusion at two contradictory reports: How could Yosef, someone who was guilty of *gilui arayos*, be capable of dream interpretation? Yosef's reply was that לאמר, i.e. *gilui*

arayos, בלעדֵי has nothing to do with me.

If, as we said earlier, the dream here is a metaphor for *Olam Hazei*, Yosef's reply contains a dual lesson: Appreciating the fleeting nature of *Olam Hazei* requires *reinkeit*, as well as the understanding that בלעדֵי—

we have nothing of our own and all comes from Hashem.

מקץ שבת חנוכה תשפ"ה מאמר ב

כי עבדך ערב את הנער מעם אבי.

For your servant guaranteed the boy to my father (Bereishis 44:32).

The Gemara in *Makkos* (11b) teaches that an excommunication (*nidui*) that is pronounced conditionally (*al tenai*) still requires *hafarah*, even if the condition is ultimately not fulfilled. This principle is derived from Yehudah's declaration that if he failed to return Binyamin, he would be deemed a sinner, in *cherem*

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for the rest of his life. Although Binyamin was in fact returned to his father unharmed, Chazal relate that Yehudah's bones nevertheless rattled in his coffin throughout the forty years that Bnei Yisrael wandered in the wilderness.

The *Acharonim* discuss whether Yehudah's *tenai* was halachically sound. The *Mizrachi* asserts that, although not explicit in the *pesukim*, the *tenai* was formulated correctly: the condition preceded the outcome (*tenai kodem lema'aseh*), and the positive

formulation preceded the negative (*hen kodem le-lav*).

By contrast, the *Maharash Algazi* argues that Yehudah's *tenai* was plainly halachically void, since the contingency was something beyond his control. Other *Acharonim*¹ maintain that so long as there exists a reasonable possibility that the *tenai* could be fulfilled, it retains halachic validity.

What is the halachah where one makes a *tenai* that is technically possible, yet highly unlikely, to be fulfilled? This would depend on the underlying basis for the halachah that states: when an act is made conditional upon something impossible to occur, the *tenai* is void and the original *ma'aseh* remains valid.

What is that underlying basis? There are two main approaches. One approach is to say that a *tenai* that is fantastical was obviously made insincerely and therefore is not taken seriously. This would appear to be the position of the Rambam, for according to the Rambam there are cases in which all the other *halachos* governing *tena'im* are suspended, yet still the *tenai* must be one that can actually be fulfilled.²

Another approach holds that since the concept of *tenai* is derived from the *tenai* of Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven, a *tenai* must be patterned after it. Any *tenai* that deviates

from that template is invalid by *gezeiras hakasuv*.

This would appear to be the position of the *Tosefos HaRosh*. The *Tosefos HaRosh* explains that a *tenai* that is unbreakable—i.e., one that is automatically going to be fulfilled—is void, because it is not similar to the *tenai* of Bnei Gad u'vnei Reuven; it is just as bad as an impossible *tenai* (*tenai she-i efshar lekaymo*).

Now, where one makes something conditional upon something that is certain to happen, there is no question of his sincerity. On the contrary: he clearly wants it to take effect, which is why he made a condition that is bound to be fulfilled! Clearly, according to the Rosh, the requirement that a *tenai* be capable of fulfillment (*efshar lekaymo*) is a *gezeiras hakasuv*, and not based on *sevara*.

Returning to our discussion: if a *tenai* is theoretically possible but highly unlikely to be fulfilled, then the reasoning behind a *tenai she-i efshar lekaymo* being void—because it is not taken seriously—may apply here as well. Conversely, if the requirement that a *tenai* adhere to the pattern of the *tenai* of Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven is a *gezeiras hakatuv*—then as long as there is any possibility that the condition could be met, the *tenai* should be considered valid.

ילקוט שייעורים סוגיות סי' כא

¹ *Shaar Hamelech Hilchos Ishus perek 6.*

² See *Avnei Miluim* 38:6.



Vayigash	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbos
Brooklyn	4:17	5:26
Lakewood	4:20	5:28
Baltimore	4:31	5:35
Chicago	4:05	5:13
North Miami	5:19	6:16
Los Angeles	4:32	5:33

Parshah Spark

יֵסַע יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ וַיָּבֹא בְּאֶרֶץ שֶׁבַע.

Yisrael traveled with all that was his, and he came to Be'er Sheva (Bereishis 46:1).

According to the Midrash, Beer Sheva was not along the route to Mitzrayim, yet Yaakov Avinu took a detour there in order to cut the cedar trees planted by Avraham Avinu, and transport them to Mitzrayim. These trees were later used in the construction of the Mishkan. Moreover, the Midrash relates that the exact location of the cedars planted by Avraham was always remembered and the local Jews abstained from harvesting them, as though they were *hekdesh*. The descendants of the locals asked the *Chachamim* if they were bound by this *issur*, and they were told: "Do not deviate from the custom of your forbears."

This story told in the Midrash represents a recurring pattern in Jewish history: The earlier generation recognizes the importance of preserving the heritage handed down to them by their parents. They may not fully understand the importance, but they still hold it sacred and inviolable as it deserves. The second generation begins to wonder if the customs are really untouchable. They need to be admonished by the sages and leaders of the generation: "Do not tamper with your heritage; do not deviate from your *mesorah*."

ס"ג ויגש תשפ"ד מאמר ג

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת קְלוֹ בִּבְכֵי וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ

מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁמַע בֵּית פָּרְעֹה.

He let forth his voice in weeping, and the Egyptians

heard and Pharaoh's house heard (Bereishis 45:2).

Later on, we are told that *the voice was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Yosef's brothers have come"; and it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants—* 'the voice' presumably referring to the sobs. What is it specifically about Yosef's sobs that drew so much attention?

Mitzrayim was a land known for its materialism and moral decay. Yosef crying at the thought of his family, of his father's house, was unusual to them as an expression of emotion at something more refined, more noble. It is for this reason that his sobs made such a deep impression on Mitzrayim; for the first time, they were exposed to spiritual yearning, a longing for *kedushah*.

From the Desk of the Rosh Yeshivah

Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim Each Day

A bachur inquired:

The *Sefas Emes* in *Parshas Mikeitz* 5636 writes that even though it seems logical that if a person would submit all of his desires to Hashem, he would be rid of his *yetzer*, in reality this does not happen, as Hashem's will is that one should regularly struggle to serve Him. And yet, in *Parshas Toldos* 5632 he writes that through the power of *Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim* each day, one has the ability to remain in submission to Hashem absolutely. He also writes in *Parshas Haazinu* 5637 that every person can choose to cede his free will. What is the optimal *avodah* for us at our level? And is it really possible to choose not to have free will?

The Rosh Yeshiva answered:

To my precious *bachur*,

The *Sefas Emes* in *Parashas Toldos* emphasizes "every day," that is, the *Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim* only helps for that day. That is why the Torah obligates us to engage in it every day, for as Chazal say, one's *yetzer* renews itself daily. Even if most of one's years pass without sin, this only helps him overcome his *yetzer hara* more easily, but he still cannot be confident in himself, as it says in *Tosafos Yeshanim* to Yoma 38b.

Be strong in overcoming the *yetzer*. 'Praiseworthy is the man' who overcomes his *yetzer* while still in his youth, and *b'ezras Hashem*, you will grow ever higher in your *avodas Hashem*.

Shaul