



# Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFa & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

*In memory of R' Shmuel Shmelka ben HaRav Moshe Kizelnik z"l*



From the desk of  
the Rosh Kollel...

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*Mazal tov to Rabbi & Mrs. Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig on the birth of a baby boy and to Rabbi & Mrs. Simi Lerner on the birth of a daughter. May they both grow up to be a source of yiddische nachas to their parents, to k'lal Yisroel, and most importantly, to the Ribono shel Olam. May the kollel continue to experience many simchas.*

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*If you were wondering why the personality discussed in the yahrtzeit-biography section of the weekly Yesodos is sometimes referred to by the name of his sefer instead of his name, this was done for two reasons: First of all, most people are more familiar with the "Pri Chadash" than "R' Chizkiya da Silva" or "Chasam Sofer" over "R' Moshe Sofer" and so, the title often reflects the more familiar. Additionally, since the sefer by which he is known is his legacy to the Jewish people, it is more than just a title of a published work, and is a window into his neshama as well.*

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## מ ק ץ

תשפ"ו

## ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING !

In discussing options for a certain project, someone told me "you can have anything but not everything". In its context it was a true statement, and is equally true for life in general, but that is only when we speak of human capabilities and human accomplishments. For the Ribono shel Olam, both anything, and everything, is possible. Our ability to understand and appreciate this often stems from the fact that we see the present situation confined by existing circumstances, but if we learn to realize that Hashem operates above those circumstances, we can strengthen our emunah in Him and come to fully rely on His ability to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

Our parsha is replete with examples of this, but we will focus on a few examples which can serve us well in developing and strengthening our emunah and bitachon.

After the sar ha'mashkim was released from jail, Yosef remained imprisoned for another two years. Chazal tell us that this was a punishment because Yosef put his faith in human flesh instead of trusting that Hashem would save him. This is difficult to understand because we know that a person has to make a certain amount of minimal hishtadlus - efforts to achieve his goal. Many offer that Yosef was on such a high madreigah that he didn't need to make even the minimal amount of hishtadlus. While we cannot possibly fathom the level of Yosef's spiritual standing, it would seem that the very fact that the sar ha'mashkim told his dream to Yosef was a Heaven sent invitation to Yosef to please say something. Some take the opposite approach and explain that asking Pharaoh's butler wasn't really hishtadlus either and was like hanging on to a piece of straw in a stormy ocean to keep afloat.

Either explanation is plausible, but I once heard the following approach which can serve as a lesson for each and every one of us: Upon careful examination of the pesukim, one comes to realize that upon hearing the details of the butler's dream, Yosef told him that in three more days he would be restored to his former position and pour Pharaoh's drinks once again. Then, Yosef continued and put in his request that the sar ha'mashkim put in a good word for him. The problem was that Yosef should have waited until the third day to ask the butler to remember him. Hashem is capable of anything and a lot could happen in the next two days. This is why he was punished by remaining in prison an extra two years and not three - one year for each day - because on the third day, Yosef was supposed to have said something had he not yet been released from jail. Lest you say that perhaps Yosef didn't know if he would see the butler two days later, the Torah is very careful to stress that both the butler and the baker were placed in jail together with Yosef, under his care and watchful eye. Therefore, the sar ha'mashkin wasn't going anywhere and Yosef should have waited until the third day, because anything could happen over the next two days.

This is not to suggest that we should wait until the last minute to make any hishtadlus. This isn't realistic for most of us, and only Yosef and similar tzadikim could possibly be on the madreigah to do so, but here is the lesson: Anything could happen, and while most of us should go about our business making normal efforts of hishtadlus, when things appear dismal, there is no reason to become worried or anxious, because Hashem is in charge, and He could do

anything to turn around a situation at the last minute.

Ultimately, Yosef was released from jail two years later after Pharaoh had two dreams. He was so disturbed by them that he sought the advice of all of the wise men and magicians of the entire country. Even after he heard many explanations, his mind wasn't settled and couldn't go on until Yosef was brought before him and provided him with an explanation which sat well with him. What was it about these dreams that disturbed Pharaoh so much and why did Yosef's interpretation resonate with him and find favor in his eyes?

HaRav Shimon Schwab zt"l explains that at the time, Mitzrayim was the most powerful country in the world. Pharaoh, as leader, realized that this was due to the physical strength of its people both qualitatively and in quantity. This made sense to him and from Pharaoh's perspective, it could only be this way. However, one night, he went to sleep and dreamt of seven skinny cows swallowing seven fat cows which seemed to indicate that the weak can conquer the strong. Pharaoh found this very disturbing. When he then had another, very similar dream in which he saw sickly stalks of wheat swallow large developed ones, he felt the security of his nation threatened. How could it be, he wondered, that the weak can overtake the powerful?

Despite the fact that many wise people offered many interpretations of these dreams, no one addressed this issue until Yosef. Perhaps the solution that Yosef offered was the explanation that those who are strong and great do not automatically succeed. Assumed circumstances do not automatically produce certain results. For Pharaoh, this meant it is only through wise planning and administration that they can maintain their power. For us, as believing Jews, this is not accomplished through hishtadlus alone, and only when it is coupled with placing our faith in Hakadosh Boruch Hu, because He can turn around any situation, in either direction.

Otherwise, it can very well be "rabim b'yad me'atim u'giborim b'yad chalashim" - that the many and great will fall into the hands of the weak and few, because success is not guaranteed despite the circumstances and expended efforts. HaRav Schwab points out that this perhaps one of the reasons why we read this parsha during Chanuka, when the mighty Yevanim fell into the hands of a few kohanim who were great in Torah, but not physically so.

In the 'al ha'nisim' which we add to shemoneh esrei and bentching during Chanuka, we thank Hashem for delivering the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the tamei into the hands of the pure and the wicked into the hands of the tzadikim. If we think about it, the words appear incongruent: While the first two defy logic and nature, the latter two seem to be giving the reason why. HaRav Chaim Friedlander zt"l explains that really, they all follow the same pattern. Their weakness and small number was actually the reason why they were successful. Knowing that they didn't have it within themselves to naturally triumph, they placed their entire faith in Hakadosh Boruch Hu and were therefore successful, and so it was actually their lack of strength and numbers which led to their salvation just as much as their level of purity and righteousness. For us, the lesson of Chanuka is that the more we realize our success is completely beyond our control, we learn to put our trust in Hashem, and this will be the reason we can succeed.

When the brothers appeared before Yosef, he imprisoned Shimon and demanded that the next time they come, they aren't welcome unless they bring Binyomin along with them, but when the need arose to go buy more food, Yaakov Avinu refused to send him. Reuven offered the lives of his two children as a 'guarantee' that he would return with Binyomin safe and sound. Yaakov ridiculed Reuven's offer since these were also his grandchildren, so what kind of a guarantee was this? Yet, when they ran out of food and became much more desperate, Yehuda took full responsibility for Binyomin's safe return, offering to forfeit his olam ha'ba if he would fail in his mission. Yaakov acquiesced and sent Binyomin along with his other children, confident that they would all return unharmed. It seems that it wasn't just because more time had elapsed and that the situation was more desperate, that caused Yaakov to believe in Yehuda. Why?

Citing an explanation he heard in the name of the Sefas Emes, HaRav Boruch Sorotzkin zt"l suggests the following: Reuven, actually had four sons, not just two. The fact that he offered the lives of two of them demonstrated that he wasn't completely confident in his ability to succeed. It isn't that he didn't care about his children, chas v'sholom, or was alright with harm coming to any of them, but the fact that he only 'offered' some of his children, showed that at least subconsciously, Reuven was unsure. Yehuda, on the other hand, was completely confident that he would succeed, not just because he was committed to produce results, but because, he had full bitachon that Hashem would help him because he was doing the right thing.

Most of us go about our daily lives trusting Hashem that things will work the way they have and are expected to. Yet, when we need to accomplish something out of the ordinary, we start to realize that it is completely within the Ribono shel Olam's realm, and we just need to trust Him a little bit more. The next step of course is to realize that everything is in Hashem's control and the efforts we make to accomplish anything is just in order to do our part, but ultimately, results are neither the product of circumstances, nor are they limited by them.

### רַבִּי וְשִׁמְחִי בֶּת-צִיּוֹן כִּי הִנֵּי-בָא וְשִׁכְנֵתִי בְּתוֹכָךְ נָא ה' (עמוס ב:ו)

*The haftarah speaks of the Satan's attack of Yehoshua Kohein Gadol and Hashem's defense of him. Like much of the Jewish people in golus, his sons had married non-Jewish women which reflected poorly on him, especially since he served as kohein gadol. In this nevuah, Hakadosh Boruch Hu comes to Yehoshua's defense, that he was clean from sin and stands alone, perhaps another connection to Chanuka in that there were actually very few Jews who stood up for the honor of Hashem and His Torah.*

*According to some, this was an actual prophecy delivered by Zecharia to Yehoshua Kohein Gadol. However some commentators maintain that this nevuah was after Yehoshua's passing and was a vision of what went on in the Heavenly tribunal.*

*Zecharia is then shown a vision of a menorah fueled by oil flowing from olive trees which alludes to rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash and the prosperity which will ensure upon the coming of Moshiach!*

*The Torah has much to say about dreams. On one hand, we see very prophetic dreams in the parshiyos of Vayishlach and Mikeitz. Yosef dreamt. Pharoah's servants, the butler and baker dreamt, and Pharoah himself dreamt, and all of these dreams came to fruition. On the other hand, when Yosef repeated his dreams to his father, Yaakov asked him "why are you dreaming such things?", which is a peculiar question to ask someone about something that they did in their sleep. The Ramban explains that since most dreams are a result of a person's thoughts throughout the day and Yaakov understood that Yosef must be thinking about becoming king, and so he was reprimanding him for consciously pursuing such thoughts. Indeed, Chazal are very clear that if a person dreams about the same things that he thought about or happened to him during the preceding day, he need not be concerned nor encouraged by what he dreams at night.*

*There is a story related about a resident of Volozhin who dreamt that he was crossing the frozen-over lake and the ice cracked and he and his horse and wagon fell in and they drowned. When he repeated this to R' Chaim Volozhin, he told him not to worry about his dreams. The dream repeated itself three times and R' Chaim assured him that he should not cancel his trip and could safely cross over the frozen ice. The man listened and the ice cracked and he and his horse drawn wagon fell in and drowned. When the townspeople reported this to R' Chaim, he was adamant that he wouldn't retract his p'sak, because dreams are just dreams. This needs to be understood.*

*The Chazon Ish took a similar approach explaining that one who is extremely disturbed by a bad dream should not fast on Shabbos, because nowadays, dreams are just a result of a person's thoughts during the day.*

*Yet, Chazal do acknowledge a certain validity of dreams, and often encourage one to pursue various avenues in ensuring that the dreams have a positive outcome. Primarily, this is based on the fact that the way dreams are interpreted have a major impact on the way they are actualized. This is clear from Chazal in the ninth perek of Berachos, and perhaps this is what the posuk means when it relates that the baker saw that Yosef's interpretation of the butler's dream was good, as he hoped that Yosef would find a positive way to interpret his dreams as well.*

*Chazal recommend that one who has a bad dream and is distressed by it, should fast that very day, and this is true even on Shabbos or yom tov. Most understand that the fasting will atone for his aveiros and he will no longer be deserving of the bad things he dreamt about. Still, if he fasts on Shabbos, he must fast an additional day during the week to atone for depriving himself of the pleasurable meals on Shabbos. As we have mentioned, the Chazon Ish cautioned against fasting on Shabbos because, nowadays, most dreams are really a result of a person's thoughts, be they overt, or semi-subconscious. Others advise against fasting on a weekday as well because most people don't do well with fasting and it inhibits their ability to focus on Torah study and other areas of avodas Hashem. Surely, adding extra merits such as more focused and uninterrupted tefilah and limud ha'Torah is a beneficial course of action, if not a complete substitute.*

*The gemara (Berachos 55b) says that one who has a cryptic or somewhat disturbing dream should recite a certain tefilah during birkas kohanim. In this tefilah, one asks that the dream should result in a positive interpretation and strengthened as such, and that it should be remedied in any way needed. In chutz la'aretz, this tefilah ("Ribono shel Olam, ani shelach v'chalomosai shlach...") is recited when the kohanim chant a nigun before the concluding words of each posuk. (Although many siddurim instruct one to say a different tefilah before 'sholom', many authorities advise to say the 'Ribono shel Olam' a third time first.) Although this tefilah should only be said after a cryptic or confusing*



dream, since in chutz la'aretz, the Ashkenazi custom does not include a daily birkas kohanim, one can assume that he had a dream some time since the previous yom tov, which he had forgot about. Therefore, everyone says it. Accordingly, one should not recite it on yom tov sheini unless he had a dream the second night of yom tov (or otherwise missed the opportunity to say it on the first day).

In most places in Eretz Yisroel, the kohanim recite birkas kohanim every day, and therefore, the kohanim don't chant before the last word of each of the three pesukim, on a daily basis. Even on yom tov, the prevalent custom is not to chant, except before "sholom" so that the tzibur can say the "yehi ratzon" tefilah. While it is true that one could then recite the tefilah for dreams, the reality is that in Eretz Yisroel, one who has a bad or cryptic dream in the middle of the year, need not wait until yom tov to daven that it should be for the best, but the question arises as to when exactly a person should daven; when the kohanim recite their beracha, one should stop and listen and receive the beracha. According to most, this is true even if one is in the middle of shemoneh esrei, so it would seem that one should not say another tefilah while listening to the kohanim's beracha. This author once heard a suggestion in the name of Rav Avrohom Pam, to say an abridged version, although it is unclear to me exactly what to omit. Another possibility might be to recite half of the tefilah as the kohanim are saying the beracha, and the rest after the concluding Amein, while the shaliach tzibur recites "sim sholom". See however, the Beis Yosef who quotes a shu"t Maharil who maintains that one may in fact recite the Ribono shel Olam while the kohanim are reciting the pesukim as the tefilah is very much connected to birkas kohanim and its recital is akin to an acceptance of the beracha. The Darkei Moshe however rejects this and says that in chutz la'aretz, one can recite the tefilah while the shaliach tzibur says 'sim sholom'. It would follow then, that this would also be the recommended course of action in Eretz Yisroel as well, as saying it during sim sholom is less problematic than during birkas kohanim, perhaps very much like the recital of modim d'rabbanan while the chazan recites the regular modim.

The other course of action available for one who has had a disturbing dream is something known as 'hatavas chalom': The gemara (Berachos 55b) says that one who has a disturbing dream should have three friends tell him that his dream should be interpreted for the good. The standard nusach for this procedure is printed in most contemporary siddurim. Some understand that this is in fact the proper procedure to follow for a bad dream, and the Ribono shel Olam tefilah recited during birkas kohanim is only said when a dream is cryptic and difficult to understand.



## THE PRI CHADASH

28 Kislev 5408

R' Chizkiya da Silva had a short but very productive life. He was born in Livorno (Italy) in 1659, and at the age of twenty, traveled to Eretz Yisroel to study under R' Moshe Galante. Ten years later, R' Chizkiya took over as rosh yeshiva after Rav Galante's passing.

Two years later, he traveled throughout Europe to raise funds, either for the yeshiva, or to publish his commentary on Shulchan Aruch, Sefer Pri Chadash. During his stay in Amsterdam, the community offered him the job of chief rabbi. Although they agreed to his terms, R' Chizkiya realized that the community would likely have difficulty in accepting his approach to p'sak halacha and he turned down their offer. Instead, he returned to Yerushalayim to open a new yeshiva, funded by a Dutch philanthropist by the name of Yisroel Yaakov Pereira, and the yeshiva was named 'Bet Yaakov' in his honor.

While still a student of R' Moshe Galante, R' Chizkiya married Chana, whose sister was married to R' Moshe Chagiz, and the couple had one son, named Dovid.

Although today, the Sefer Pri Chadash is a widely accepted mainstream halachic authority on Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah, the original version was met with much controversy. On his way back from Amsterdam to Yerushalayim, R' Chizkiya took a detour through Egypt where the rabbinic leaders there took issue with his approach to halacha. Primarily, they didn't like his lenient approach to halacha, and also took issue with that which he often sided with the Rambam or others, over the rulings of Shulchan Aruch which had been accepted as sovereign. They essentially banned the Pri Chadash, burying all copies to be found. It seems that the version we have today is really a censored version of the original work.

He then returned to Eretz Yisroel and established his new yeshiva which he headed until his death at the age of 39 and was buried on Har Ha'zeisim.