

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Vayigash



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Table of Contents

Torah Wellsprings - Vayigash

Everything is for the Good.....	4
Benefits of Yesurim.....	6
Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis.....	9
<i>Ben Adam l'Chaveiro</i>	10
Living for a Purpose	13
Caution from Anger.....	14

Torah Wellsprings - Vayigash

Everything is for the Good

When Yaakov Avinu and Yosef HaTzaddik met for the first time, after being separated for twenty-two years, the Torah tells us (46:29) וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו וַיִּפֹּל עַל צַוְעָרָיו וַיִּבְכֶּה עַל צַוְעָרָיו עוֹד, "[Yosef] appeared before him, fell on his neck, and he wept on his neck excessively."

Rashi writes, "[Yosef] cried... but Yaakov didn't fall on Yosef's neck, and he didn't kiss

him. Chazal tell us that he was saying the Shema."

The question is that if it was time to say Shema, why wasn't Yosef saying Shema, as well? And if it wasn't time to say Shema, why was Yaakov saying Shema?

There are several answers written in the sefarim.¹ It is important to note that whenever we talk about the lives and the challenges of

1. The Steipler zt'l (Birchas Peretz, Vayigash) answers that Yosef was performing *kibud av ve'em*, the mitzvah of honoring his father, and when one is occupied with a mitzvah, he is exempt from performing other mitzvos. Therefore, Yosef was exempt from reciting Shema.

The Targum Yonason (ibid.) writes about when Yaakov encountered Yosef: וקדם דאשתמודעה אבוי סגד ליה, "Before Yaakov recognized [that it was Yosef], he bowed down to him. ואתחייב למהוי שנוי קטיען, and Yosef lost years of his due of that." Probably, Yosef didn't have the opportunity to notify his father, to tell him that he was Yosef, and not the king of Mitzrayim, like Yaakov thought.

Nevertheless, this was considered a *pgam*, an imperfection, in Yosef's *kibud av ve'em*. And therefore, Yosef lost ten years of his life. He would have lived until 120, but he was niftar at 110, due to this episode.

According to the Targum Yonason, we can explain that Yosef was crying over his loss of life.

Rabbeinu b'Chaya says that we see that those who excel in *kibud av ve'em* enjoy success in life: either long life, tranquility, wealth, or some other form of success. Honoring parents brings success to a person's pursuits in this world.

A young child asked the Chazon Ish, "How does one become a Chazon Ish?"

The Chazon Ish replied, "If you honor your parents as I did, you too will become a Chazon Ish." Because *kibud av ve'em* grants success to each person in different ways. If your goal is Torah, honoring parents will grant you success in Torah. If your goal is wealth, it can grant you success there. Some people merit good shidduchim because of *kibud av ve'em*.

In 1948/תש"ח, a *bachur* came to Eretz Yisrael. Two years after him, his parents arrived in Eretz Yisrael. As newcomers, his parents needed help finding an apartment and a suitable *parnassah*. Their son knew the language, understood how things worked in Eretz Yisrael, and he was able to help his parents. The *bachur* asked his rebbe, Reb Eizik Sher zt'l, whether he should leave yeshiva for some time to help his parents settle in, or whether he should continue learning in yeshiva, and his parents would somehow manage in another way.

Reb Eizik Sher replied that he couldn't answer the question because the Shulchan Aruch HaRav rules that when someone has the potential to succeed immensely in Torah, he shouldn't stop studying, not even to perform mitzvos that no one else can do. And this *bachur* had the potential to become a *gadol* in Torah.

Reb Eizik advised the *bachur* to ask the Chazon Ish zt'l.

The Chazon Ish ruled, "It is natural that a child should do this for his parents" (מעשה איש p.184).

Reb Yaakov Halprin zt'l once encountered a great *talmid chacham* in Eretz Yisrael in low spirits and asked him what was bothering him. The *talmid chacham* replied that his parents had just arrived from Lodz, and

the *avos hakedoshim*, we know that their madreigos were very exalted and beyond our perception. Nevertheless, we are permitted, and even obligated, to study their lives, how they appear to us, to learn lessons that can be applied to us.

Rebbe Shlomo of Bobov zt'l (Noam Shlomo, p.248) answers that Yaakov wasn't performing the mitzvah of Shema at this time. He said the first pasuk of *Shema*, to teach himself and his family a lesson about life. For twenty-two years, Yaakov was crying and mourning over his dear son, Yosef. And now that he sees his son, alive and well, he recognized that he was wrong for crying and mourning the past twenty-two years. He now knows that everything that occurred was for his favor, so that Yosef could feed the family during the famine. As it states (45:7) וַיִּשְׁלַחנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפָנֶיךָ לְשׁוּם לָכֶם שְׂאֵרֵי בְּאֶרֶץ וְלִהְיוֹת לָכֶם, "Hashem has sent me ahead of you to ensure your survival in the land and to sustain you..."

Therefore, Yaakov Avinu said שמע ישראל ה' אלוקינו ה' אחד. His intention was שמע ישראל, "Bnei Yisrael, pay attention to what I tell you. ה' represents the times that Hashem appears to

be our compassionate father. אלוקינו is when Hashem appears to be acting strictly with us, with harsh judgment. But we should know that ה' אלוקינו ה' אחד, that Hashem is one. Even when Hashem acts with us harshly, it is the same, compassionate Hashem.

Yosef also endured many tzaros in his life, and he discovered that everything was for the good. He was sold as a slave, he suffered a difficult test in Potiphar's home, and then he was in prison for twelve years. About him, we can say the pasuk (Tehillim 42:8) כָּל מְשֻׁבְּרֵי וְגִלְיָה עָלַי עָבְרוּ, "All your breaks and waves have swept over me," since he suffered so much in his lifetime. But in the end, it became clear that it was for his good, and for the good of his family. Yaakov Avinu would have been brought down to Mitzrayim in iron ropes, but since Yosef lived in Mitzrayim, and he was second to the king, Yaakov came to Mitzrayim with immense honor, befitting kings.

It states (Tehillim 126:1) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב ה' אֶת צִיּוֹן הָיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים, "... When Hashem will return the captivity of Zion, we will be like dreamers." The Beis Avraham zt'l explains the pasuk to mean that when Moshiach will

he must support them. "Until now, I barely earned enough money to support my own family. How will I manage to support my parents, too?"

The wealthy Reb Yaakov Halprin replied, "I will support your parents, on condition that I get the reward of the mitzvah."

The *talmid chacham* didn't know how to respond. He didn't want to lose the reward for the mitzvah. "I need to think it over," he replied.

He presented his dilemma to the Chazon Ish zt'l. The Chazon Ish responded, "What's the question? Of course, you should accept Reb Yaakov's offer! And if you lose the reward for the mitzvah, so be it. Know that one must be prepared to jump into Gehinnom to honor his parents."

Then the Chazon Ish added, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu has enough reward for both you and Reb Yaakov..." (p.181 מעשי אש).

Once, a bachur in Brisk received a letter from his father requesting that he come home. The student asked Reb Chaim Brisker what to do because his father didn't send money for the trip. Reb Chaim replied, "You aren't obligated to pay for the trip home (because, often, one isn't obligated to spend his own money to perform kibud av ve'em), but walking doesn't cost money. You can walk home."

Reb Shlomo Kluger zt'l wrote in a letter to his son, Reb Avraham Shmuel Binyamin z'l, "My dear son, why isn't *yiras shamayim* upon you? When you write me a letter (with *chidushei Torah*), send greetings to your mother, and thereby perform the mitzvah of *kibud em*. From now on, send a greeting to your mother..."

come and Hashem will return us to Yerushalayim, הָיִינוּ כְּחֵלְמִים, we will be like Yosef HaTzaddik, the בעל החלומות, the person who had dreams. Yosef discovered that everything was for his good, and that is how it will be for us when Hashem takes us out of galus. Then we will discover that everything was for the good. As the next pasuk states (Tehillim 126:2) אֲזַיְמְלֵא שְׂחֹק פִּינוּ וְלִשְׁנוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה, "Then our mouths will be filled with laughter, and our tongue with glad song."

It is likened to when someone dreams a frightening dream. He laughs when he wakes up because he realizes that it wasn't real. Similarly, when the redemption comes, we will look back at the tzaros of galus and laugh, recognizing that it was all for the good.²

Benefits of Yesurim

When Yaakov met with Yosef, Yaakov said (46:30) אָמוּתָה הַפֶּעַם אַחֲרֵי רְאוּתִי אֶת פְּנֶיךָ כִּי עוֹדְךָ חַי, "Now I will die, after my having seen your face, because you are still alive."

We wonder why he mentions death at this very joyous time.

Rebbe Shlomo Kluger zt'l (Chochmas HaTorah, Vayeichi, 5583) explains that Yaakov was destined to die at this time. His lifespan was supposed to be until age 130, which was how old he was at this time. This is the reason he said אָמוּתָה הַפֶּעַם, "Now I will die", because it was indeed destined for him to die then. However, days and years were added to Yaakov Avinu's life, and he was able to live another 17 years, until 147 years old. This is because in Mitzrayim, Yaakov suffered humiliation, since it was humiliating for him to be supported by his son, Yosef. When he lived in Eretz Canaan, he had a lot of honor. Even when there was hunger, there was food in his home (see Rashi 42:1 on לֶמָּחָה תִּתְּרוּ). In fact, the idea that Yaakov had to leave Eretz Canaan and go down to Mitzrayim was humiliating for him. Nevertheless, Yaakov accepted Hashem's decree with love and without complaints. In this merit, he was granted another seventeen years of life.³

Therefore, it states at the beginning of parashas Vayeichi (47:28) וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם שְׁבַע וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם שְׁבַע, "And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seven years."

2. I received a letter from a chashuve Yid from chutz l'aretz who fell into trouble with the IRS, due to taxes, and he was imprisoned, r'l. The family hired the best lawyer they could find, and they made many other hishtadlus, to get him out of jail. Major *askanim* were also involved, but all their attempts failed. His bank account was frozen, and his family had to borrow money just for the basics, to feed the children bread and water, etc.

One day, this man recognized that his hishtadlus wasn't helping him. He understood that his only hope was to rely on Hashem. He said, "Father in heaven, no one can help me but You. אֵין עוֹד מִלְבְּדוֹ. Save me, and get me out of prison, and out of my difficult predicament."

Wondrously, a day or two afterwards, he was freed. The entire case against him was dropped. No claim was held against him. It was revealed that indeed, אֵין עוֹד מִלְבְּדוֹ אִפְסָה וְזוֹלָתוֹ, Hashem leads the world alone, and He does as He desires.

At the beginning of the parashah (44:18), it states בִּי אֵין דָּוָי, "In me there is no fear."

Reb Yeshayah First zt'l (Chazon Yeshayah, rav of the Shiff-Shul in Vienna) explains these words with the words of the Chovas HaLevavos (Shaar HaBitachon): "When one trusts in Hashem, there is no room in his heart to fear anything else, other than fear of Hashem." Yehudah told Yosef בִּי אֵין אֲדוֹן, master, and that master is בִּי, within me, because Hakadosh Baruch Hu resides in a Yid, as it states (Shemos 25:8) וּשְׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם, which means that Hashem dwells within every Yid. "Therefore, I do not fear you at all."

3. Rabbeinu Yehudah HaChasid (Sefer Chasidim 501) writes that a son or a daughter can redeem their father. This is because at times, children are niftar when they are young. Everyone is sad, and no one knows that it was decreed that the father or the mother should die, and the parents' sadness saves them from death.

עֲשָׂרָה שָׁנָה, "This means that since he was now living in Mitzrayim, he could live another seventeen years!

Let us learn two lessons from the above:
(1) Know the benefit that comes from yesurim. One can never know how much good he receives, due to the tzaros he endures. The tzaros might be giving him life itself. (2) Also, let us recognize the immense reward that comes to those who accept Hashem's hashgachah, without complaints.

Reb Shlomo Kluger added that this is what Chazal (Chagigah 5a) mean when they say that a talmid chacham, דַּמְעָבִיר בְּמִילִיָּה, who forgives others, is granted a longer life. This doesn't only refer to the times he forgives the people who harm him. It is also when he accepts Hashem's decree, and he doesn't complain. (In a way, he is forgiving Hashem.) He, too, will be granted more years to his life.

The Chofetz Chaim (Shem Olam, ch.3, footnote) quotes the Vilna Gaon zt'l: "If it weren't for the yesurim, we would have no place in Olam HaBa."⁴ The Chofetz Chaim explains that after one's passing, when a person stands before the beis din in heaven, and the scale of his deeds tilts to the side of guilt, a bas kol will announce, "Where are the yesurim that he had in this world?" Immediately, all the yesurim of his lifetime will rush to the right side of the scale. The scale becomes heavier on that side, and he will be sent to Gan Eden. This is because yesurim atone for many of his aveiros, and now he is a tzaddik. The person then praises Hashem for all the yesurim he went through.

As Chazal (Sifri HaAzinu) state, "Whenever I bring yesurim to them in this world, let them remember how much kindness I am giving them in the next world."⁵

4. In the Vilna Gaon's words, שְׂאֵלֵמָלָא הִיסוּרִין לֹא מִצְאָנוּ יְדֵינוּ וְרַגְלֵינוּ בְּזֵה הָעוֹלָם, "If it weren't for yesurim, we wouldn't find our hands and feet in this world [of Olam HaBa]." But with yesurim, our aveiros are erased, and we can merit Olam HaBa.

In Radin, a simple person was niftar, and people didn't think that it was important to notify the Chofetz Chaim. When the Chofetz Chaim heard about this person's petirah, he complained, "Why didn't you tell me? I would have wanted to go to his levayah." People asked him, "What is so special about this person that you would want to be at his levayah?"

The Chofetz Chaim replied, "Behold it states (Mishlei 17:3) וּבִחֵן לְבָבוֹת ה', 'Hashem tests hearts.' We cannot measure who is a tzaddik and who isn't. Only Hashem knows. However, Chazal (Brachos 5a) say, יוֹסִיף מוֹמָרְקִין עוֹנֵתָיו שֶׁל אָדָם, that yesurim cleanse a person from his aveiros. The niftar was a baal yesurim, so he was certainly cleansed from his aveiros. He went to the next world clean from aveiros. It would be a zechus for me to partake in the levayah of such a tzaddik."

5. The Apter Rav zt'l (this week's parashah, ד"ה ע"ל בפסוק הנ"ל) writes that before Yaakov went down to Mitzrayim, he said מוֹכֵן וּמוֹזֵמֵן לִקְבֹּל עַל עַצְמִי עוֹל הַגָּלוּת וְעַל מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם בְּאִימָה וּבִירָאָה, "I am prepared to accept upon myself the yoke of galus, and the yoke of heaven, with fear of heaven." When he said this, Hashem said to him (46:3) אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ אֶל תִּירָא מִרְדֵּה מִצְרָיִם כִּי לִגְוִי גָדוֹל אֲשִׁמְךָ שָׁם, "I am Hashem, the G-d of your father. Have no fear of descending to Mitzrayim, for I shall establish you as a great nation there." When he accepted the galus willingly, with love, the yesurim of the galus granted him protection and blessings.

Reb Yitzchak Shlomo Ungar, rav of Chug Chasam Sofer, Bnei Brak, would often repeat a story of two people who were friends since their youth, and they made a pact that whoever is niftar first would come to his friend in a dream to tell him what happened in his court case in heaven, and they shook hands on this agreement.

Years passed, and one of them was niftar. He came to his friend in a dream and said, "I don't have permission to tell you about my judgment, but one thing I can tell you. Do you remember the time we were walking in the city, carrying flour that we had ground for matzah? The sky suddenly became overcast. We were afraid that it might rain, and the flour would become chametz, and all our hard work would be

The Magid Meisharim (beginning of Vayeshev) writes that the Magid said to the Beis Yosef zy'a that his third wife will bear a child, a boy. It explains there that naturally, the Beis Yosef's third wife couldn't bear children (because in a previous lifetime, this woman was a man, a talmid chacham). But since she endured yesurim, her mazal changed, and she was able to bear a child. The Beis Yosef was away from home for some time to study Torah, and when he returned home, he was ill, and his wife had to take care of him. Both factors were yesurim for this woman, and therefore, she was able to bear a child.

The Magid explained to the Beis Yosef, "When a person accepts the yesurim with a willing face (סבר פנים יפות), it is as if he performed a mitzvah. The reason is that the yesurim weakens the strength of the tumah, and purifies the soul from its tumah, and thereby, the person remains pure and clean. This is the reason she will bear a son."

How does one accept yesurim with love? The Chofetz Chaim zt'l (Shemiras HaLashon, Shaar HaTevunah ch.8) answers, "A person attains this level from the kedushah of his soul, and his pure emunah in Hashem, believing that Hashem watches over him with hashgachah pratis, as it states (Iyov 34:21) בִּי עֵינָיו עַל דְּרָכַי אֵישׁ, 'For His eyes are upon man's ways,' and He does everything for his good."⁶

Menoras HaMaor writes, "Yesurim cleanses a person from his sins, and if he will accept them with joy and he will say that Hashem is correct in His judgment, Heaven will have compassion on him and free him, and his entire generation, from

their tzaros. As Chazal (Taanis 8a) state, 'Whoever is happy with his yesurim, he brings salvation to the world.'"

At the beginning of the parashah, Yehudah speaks to Yosef, and the purpose of the conversation was to convince Yosef to allow their brother, Binyamin, to go free. However, when we read the pesukim, we don't see that Yehudah added anything that Yosef didn't already know! He said (44:19) וְיֹסֵף אָמַר אֵלָיו אֵת עֲבֹדְךָ לְאִמֹּר הֲיֵשׁ לָכֶם אָב אוֹ אִמָּה, etc. things that Yosef knew. How would these words convince Yosef to free Binyamin?

Sfas Emes answers that Yehudah wasn't trying to tell Yosef something he didn't know. Rather, he was reviewing to himself the events that unfolded, to remind himself that it was all planned and arranged by Hashem. He did this to accept Hashem's decree with joy. If this was Hashem's will, it was good, and the best that it could be. When he accepted Hashem's decree, all the *dinim* went away, and the salvation began. He writes, "This is a counsel for every time there is *hester panim*; to accept Hashem's decree, and to know with clarity that within the concealment is Hashem's will." When one has this awareness, the troubles end.

Sfas Emes (Berzhan, Noach) writes, "We have a kabbalah that Eliyahu HaNavi is in the marketplace (see Taanis 22a)... When people are busy earning their parnassah, it is hard for them to have *yishuv hadaas* and to think correctly, and to believe that everything is always with Hashem's hashgachah, Who gives existence and leads nature according

for nothing. It took just a minute and a half, and the clouds moved on. The sun shone again, and we were relieved. Now, you shall know that the minute-and-a-half of fear was placed on the scale, because every moment of yesurim is very precious in heaven."

6. Reb Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky zt'l quoted from the tzaddik, Rebbe Moshele Baal Teshuvah zt'l, that when one believes in Hashem, he never loses hope. Even when going through difficult times, he knows that it is from Hashem, and good will come from it. But when one doesn't believe in Hashem, he loses hope. This is hinted at in the pasuk in this week's parashah (44:28) וַיֵּצֵא הָאֱלֹהִים מִיָּדִי וְאֶתִּי וְאֶתִּי וְאֶתִּי טֶרֶף טֶרֶף. This means that when one forgets about the אֱלֹהִים, the one Hashem, he thinks אֶתִּי טֶרֶף טֶרֶף, that he is going through a tragedy, and he is without hope.

to His will. Therefore, Eliyahu goes to the marketplace, to arouse people to know this."

Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis

It states (45:27) וַיֵּרָא אֶת הָעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף לְשֵׂאתָּהּ, "He saw the עֲגָלוֹת, wagons, that Yosef had sent to carry him, and the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived." Rashi notes that it should really state הָעֲגָלוֹת, the wagons that Pharaoh sent, because Pharaoh sent the wagons, and not Yosef (see 45:19).

Rather, the pasuk states הָעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף, that Yosef sent the עֲגָלוֹת, which alludes to the עגלה ערופה (the calf that is killed in the field, to atone for a murder that occurred, when the identity of the murderer isn't known). This was the final sugyah that Yosef had studied with his father before they departed. He sent this information with his brothers as a sign that he was indeed Yosef. So, the עגלות doesn't mean wagons, rather the calf, the last subject Yosef and Yaakov studied together.

The Beis Yisrael noted that it states about the עגלה ערופה (Devarim 21:1) כִּי יִמָּצָא חָלָל בְּאֶדְמָה... נִפְלַח, "If a slain person be found in the land which Hashem, your G-d is giving you to possess, lying in the field, the identity of the slayer not being known..." Yosef was hinting to his father that he couldn't know who sold him, and who hurt him. It is not known who harmed him. Therefore, Yaakov shouldn't be angry with any of his children. Although it appears that the brothers sold him, it will never be known, because everything is from Hashem.

It states (45:4) וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל אֶחָיו... אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחִיכֶם, "Yosef said to his brothers, 'Please come closer to me, and they drew closer. And he said, 'I am your brother Yosef, whom you sold into Egypt.'"

Rashi writes, הראה להם שהוא מהול, he showed his brothers that he had a bris milah.

The Rishonim ask how a bris milah was proof that he was Yosef, their brother. Some

goyim had milah, as we find reference to ערבי מהול... גבעוני מהול, Arabs or Givonim who have milah.

The Yismach Yisrael (אות ב') answers that the Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 53:14) states, אמר ר' בנימין הכל בחזקת סומים עד שהקב"ה מאיר את עיניהם, "Everyone is like the blind, before Hashem enlightens their eyes. As it states (Bereishis 21:19) וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת עֵינֶיהָ, "Hashem opened her eyes."

The Yismach Yisrael explains that sometimes a person looks for something he lost, and then he finds it right next to him! The same is with every yeshuah that a person needs. He looks all over for the salvation, which might be right before him, but Hashem closed his eyes, and he didn't see it initially.

(I heard of an older bachur from Bnei Brak who tried very hard to get married. He even once traveled to Montreal to find his shidduch. He ended up becoming engaged to a girl who lived in the same building where his parents lived.) There is an amount of time set for one to suffer yesurim. Until that time period passes, he can't know about the salvation that is prepared for him. Sometimes, the salvation he needs is right before his eyes. When the term of his suffering ends, Hashem will open his eyes, and he will immediately find the salvation that he seeks.

Yosef said to his brothers, "From the day you sold me, you regretted what you did, and you were prepared to pay all the money in the world to free me and to bring me back to our father. You also made hishtadlus to find me. When you came to Mitzrayim, each of you entered from another gate, because you were hoping to find me. But then you were in Mitzrayim, standing before me. Yet, the idea never crossed your mind that perhaps the person who stands before you is none other than Yosef, your brother! Everyone in Mitzrayim knows that I was once a slave, who became the second to the king, but you didn't suspect that I am Yosef. When the moment came, Hashem opened your eyes, and you knew that I am Yosef, your brother." Yosef told them (45:12) וְהִנֵּה עֵינֵיכֶם, now your eyes see, but before you

didn't see because Hashem concealed my identity from you.

This was the reason why when Yosef showed them his bris milah, there was no question anymore. They didn't wonder that perhaps he was an ערבי מהול... גבעוני מהול. When the time arrived, there were no more doubts. They discovered that what they were looking for was right in front of them!

The Rebbe of Tchechinov zt'l (Divrei Simchah) says a similar vort. When the brothers stood before Yosef, they felt that they were in a very dangerous situation. They were afraid for their lives, for their future. But only three words were between them and their salvation. Those three words were (45:4) אָנִי יוֹסֵף אֶחֱיָיִם, "I am your brother, Yosef."

This is a lesson we can take when experiencing tzaros. We think that there is no solution, or that salvation is far away, but sometimes it is right there. With just three words, or fewer, everything can turn around.

Sifsei Gavriel (from Reb Gavriel Gestetner zt'l, rav of Sambathali, p.180) explains the words we say in the tefillah מצמיח ישועה, that Hashem sprouts forth salvation. When one plants a seed, it decomposes, and then it begins to grow. The same is with a *yeshuah*. When it seems there is no more hope, that is when Hakadosh Baruch Hu brings forth the salvation.

Yosef told his brothers (45:7) וַיִּשְׁלַחֵנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפָנֶיךָ לְשׁוּם לְךָ שְׂאִרִית בְּאֶרֶץ וְלִהְיוֹת לְךָ לְפָלִיטָה גְדֹלָה, "Hashem sent me before you to make for you a remnant in the land, and to preserve it for you for a great salvation."

The Maor v'Shamesh asks why the words לְשׁוּם לְךָ שְׂאִרִית בְּאֶרֶץ, "To make you a remnant in the land," are necessary?

It is because it states (Michah 7:18) מִי אֵל כְּמוֹךָ, נִשְׂאָה עוֹן וְעֵבֵר עַל פֶּשַׁע לְשָׂאִרִית נִחַלְתּוֹ, "Who is like Hashem, Who forgives iniquity and passes over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?"

Chazal (Rosh Hashanah 17b) say that the pasuk is saying that Hashem forgives aveiros of

those who are שְׂאִרִית נִחַלְתּוֹ, who feel like remnants, which means they are humble.

Yosef explained to his brothers וַיִּשְׁלַחֵנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפָנֶיךָ, Hashem wanted me to be king, and that you should humble yourselves before me, לְשׁוּם לְךָ שְׂאִרִית בְּאֶרֶץ, so you will attain the trait of שְׂאִרִית, humility to atone for your aveiros. And then in the next world and in this world, וְלִהְיוֹת לְךָ לְפָלִיטָה גְדֹלָה, it will be good for you, for a great salvation.

Ben Adam l'Chaveiro

On the pasuk (45:15) וַיִּנָּשֶׁק לְכָל אֶחָיו וַיִּבְכֶּה עֲלֵהֶם, "[Yosef] kissed all his brothers and wept over them"... The Shlah Hakadosh writes, "See how much a person should forgive others. They sinned against Yosef, and yet, Yosef cried and kissed them." They should be asking forgiveness from Yosef, but Yosef turned the situation around, and he appeased them.

The Midrash (Tanchuma 5) states, "Yosef placed himself in great danger. If they were to kill him, no one would save him. Why did Yosef say (45:1) הוֹצִיאֵנִי מֵאֵשׁ מַעַלְי, "Take everyone away from me"?

Yosef thought to himself, "Better I be killed than to embarrass my brothers before the Egyptians." The Midrash elaborates on the great danger Yosef was in at this time. Even once they knew that he was Yosef, they wanted to kill him, until a malach came and dispersed the brothers to the four corners of the room. But Yosef was prepared for this. He preferred to die rather than to cause embarrassment to his brothers.

The Midrash (Psikta) writes that Yosef was cautious never to be alone with his father, so his father wouldn't ask him where he was all these years, and he would end up telling him that his brothers sold him. (See also the Ramban, 45:27, that יוסף במוסרו הטוב לא רצה להגיד לו, Yosef, with his good middos and ways, didn't want to tell his father.) Shem MiShmuel (5679) writes, "This is a great lesson for every person, to be cautious not to speak badly of others. It would certainly be a great thing if Yaakov and Yosef could be together.

Certainly, great secrets of the Torah and *tikunim*, rectification of the worlds, would come from it. Nevertheless, Yosef didn't consider this great loss. It wasn't worth it for him, if that would mean he had to speak badly about his brothers."

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 11a) states that once, when Rabbeinu HaKadosh was giving a shiur, he smelled the scent of garlic and he said, "Whoever ate garlic should leave." Reb Chiya left, and then everyone left. The next morning, Reb Shimon, the son of Rebbe, said to Reb Chiya, "You caused my father distress." Rashi explains that he said this because he thought Reb Chiya had eaten the garlic. Reb Chiya replied, *חס ושלום, לא תהא כזאת בישראל*. Rashi explains that he said that he didn't eat garlic; instead, he knew that the person who ate garlic would be embarrassed. So, Reb Chiya left, knowing that everyone would do the same, and this saved someone from shame.

The Maharsha explains the Gemara differently. He says that Reb Shimon, the son of Rebbe, understood that Reb Chiya didn't eat the garlic, but he felt that he should have stayed in the beis medresh and not left. Reb Shimon understood the reason Reb Chiya left the beis medresh, to save this person from shame. But he felt that it was still wrong. It caused so much bitul Torah! Wouldn't it be better that the culprit leave,

even be ashamed, but for Torah study to continue?

Reb Chiya replied, "Chas v'shalom. This can't happen in Yisrael. Bitul Torah was worthwhile, if through it, a Yid was protected from shame."

It states (44:28) *וַיֵּצֵא הָאֱלֹהִים מֵאֶתִּי וְאָמַר אֶךְ טָרֵף טָרֵף*. The Chasam Sofer explains that *טָרֵף* means *parnasah* (see Tehillim 111:5, *טָרֵף נָתַן*). It is known that one machlokes pushes away one hundred *parnasahs* (Shlah on Yoma, Derech Chaim, letter 44). The pasuk is hinting, *וַיֵּצֵא הָאֱלֹהִים מֵאֶתִּי*, if there will be machlokes, and there won't be unity, *וְאָמַר אֶךְ טָרֵף טָרֵף*, the *parnasah* will be ripped up and lost.

Special caution must be taken not to fight over which path in *avodas Hashem* is better. Rebbe Yechezkel of Kozmir zt'l said that this is hinted in Yosef's words (45:24) *אֵל תִּרְגְּזוּ בְּדֶרֶךְ*, they shouldn't argue about *בְּדֶרֶךְ*, the correct *derech*, path, in *avodas Hashem*. (written in Divrei Yisrael)

Beis Yaakov (Alexander, a student of Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa zt'l, p.203) writes, "I heard from my Rebbe that if a person has *צער גידול בנים*, hardships raising his children, r'l, the *segulah* is to be cautious from machlokes. He should run after peace, and be with the people who are humiliated and don't answer back. This will be his cure."⁷

7. The Yevanim breached the walls of the Beis HaMikdash in thirteen places. The Meor Einayim says that this means they tried to destroy the thirteen middos of compassion (*"ג מדות של רחמים*); the pride of the Jewish nation. No nation compares to the compassion and kindness of the Jewish nation. Our kindness is an expression of our holiness and uniqueness.

A renowned mechanach in Eretz Yisrael related that as a child, he and his father davened in the same beis medresh as the gaon, Reb Avraham Genichovsky zt'l (Rosh Yeshivas Tchebin). Sometimes his father would ask Reb Avraham to test his son.

The young lad noticed that Reb Avraham Genechovsky always asked him a question that had a machlokes. That way, no matter what he answered, *הי"ב* or *פטור*, permitted or forbidden, *tamei* or *tahor*, he would be correct, at least according to one view.

Reb Avraham would say, "You answered correctly. That's Reb Meir's opinion. And what does Reb Yehudah say?"

And the child knew to say that Reb Yehudah held the opposite.

In this ingenious manner, he was careful to preserve young students' honor and give them encouragement to learn more and excel in their studies.

The mechanach says that when he tests students, he follows this style that he saw by Reb Avraham Genichovsky. He asks a question on where there is a machlokes. That way, he never has to tell a student that he was wrong. Whatever the child says, he will be correct (at least fifty percent).

Reb Meir Shapiro *zt'l* was in America together with an assistant, collecting money during the month of Tishrei, 1916/תרי"ו. Unfortunately, his assistant became ill and couldn't go to shul on Simchas Torah.

When Reb Meir Shapiro completed the hakafof and returned to his apartment, he felt sorry for his helper, who was lying in bed. He knew he was certainly disappointed that he couldn't participate in the hakafof.

Reb Meir Shapiro decided that he would conduct hakafof for his friend. He pretended to be the chazan in a shul and recited the *אתה הראת*. When he completed the pesukim in the Simchas Torah nigun, he sang and danced hakafof in the room, so his shamesh could feel the joy of Simchas Torah, even in his state.

People said that Reb Meir Shapiro didn't need to hold a sefer Torah during these "hakafof" because (a) Reb Meir Shapiro, himself, was a "live sefer Torah." (b) The chesed he performed there is the essence of Torah.

When one does chesed, Hashem does chesed with him.

Reb Mendel from Beit Shemesh works for a caterer. One morning, in a *shteibel* in Beit Shemesh, Reb Mendel noticed an elderly Yid collecting money. Reb Mendel approached him, "I see you are limping. Are you feeling okay?"

The elderly person responded that he has an infection on his foot (א *דבר*), making it difficult for him to walk.

"You should be in bed, not standing on your feet, going around collecting money!" Reb Mendel told him.

"I know, but lying in bed won't pay off my debts. My creditors won't wait until I heal..."

Reb Mendel told him, "I will collect money for you. You can go to bed."

Reb Mendel called his boss and told him that he would be taking the day off.

His boss replied, "I have a large order for *arbes* (cooked chickpeas). All I ask is that you prepare the *arbes*, and then you can go do your mitzvah."

Reb Mendel filled a sixty-liter pressure cooker with *arbes*, closed the lid firmly, and placed it on the flame.

Reb Mendel calculated that he had a few minutes until the *arbes* is ready. So, he returned to the *shteibel* and collected some money.

When he returned to the kitchen, he saw that the pot had exploded. The pot was old and worn and didn't close properly, and it couldn't contain the pressure.

Arbes were everywhere. The cover hit the ceiling and broke a light fixture. The pot was far away from the stove. Apparently, it flew off under the pressure.

If Reb Mendel were there, he wouldn't have noticed the problem before it was too late. But because he was occupied with chesed, he was spared from severe injury or even death.

Reb Yaakov, a wealthy Yid in Eretz Yisrael, collects antique and rare clocks and watches. Approximately five years ago, Reb Yaakov ordered a clock at a cost of \$50,000. Upon placing the order, he set aside \$50,000 and put the money in his safe. The money would be sent to the antique dealer when the clock shipped.

Three months later, Reb Yaakov was in China when the antique dealer called, "The clock has just arrived in Israel, and is ready to be delivered."

Reb Yaakov replied, "I'm in China now. I'll be returning to Eretz Yisrael in a few days, and then I will receive the clock."

Only a few moments after he put down the phone with the antique dealer, he received another phone call.

Living for a Purpose

It states (45:27) וַיֵּרָא אֶת הָעֲגֻלּוֹת אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף לְשֵׂאתוֹ, אֹתוֹ וְתַחֲי רִיחַ יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם, "[Yaakov] saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to carry him, and the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived."

The sefer *Me'eneh LeShon* (Matersdorf) quotes his grandfather, the Chasam Sofer zy'a: It states (Tehillim 12:9) סָבִיב רַשָּׁעִים יְתִהְלֶכֶן, "Wicked men walk on all sides", and the Chasam Sofer explains that the thought processes of resha'im go in a circle, not leading anywhere. Their goal is to enjoy Olam HaZeh, so they eat to work, and work to eat, and it keeps

going around in circles. In contrast, an *ehrlicher Yid* eats so he can study Torah. He works so he can do chesed and tzedakah and raise his children to Torah. So, his goal is always for a lofty purpose. Yosef hinted to this when he sent the עגלות, which alludes to the עגלה ערופה, and עגולה means circle. He showed his father that the resha'im live a life of circles, ערופה, a dead life, without a purpose. He was hinting to his father that he isn't that way; instead, he lives for a purpose. This lifted Yaakov's spirits because he understood that even after living many years in Mitzrayim, his son, Yosef, knew the truth of life.⁸

This time, it was a close friend from Eretz Yisrael. The friend said, "There was a fire in Bnei Brak in the home of a very special *yungerman*, – a true *talmid chacham*. Baruch Hashem, he and his family are safe, but the house needs renovating. The furniture, the clothing, and all other household items were burned, and they don't have insurance. They need \$100,000 for repairs. What can you do to help them out?"

Reb Yaakov replied, "Call me tomorrow, and I will see what I can do."

Reb Yaakov was in a dilemma. He had \$50,000 cash in the safe. Such an amount will certainly help the family out. But he so much wanted that clock. What should he do?

In the end, he gave the money to the *yungerman*. The other \$50,000 that was needed was supplied by his brother, Reb Yehudah. (Reb Yaakov asked the dealer whether he would incur a loss if he backed out of the deal. He replied that he has a long list of people who were interested in this clock. If he doesn't take it, he can easily sell it to someone else.)

Hashem repaid Reb Yaakov for his good deed when, a couple of years later, there was a large fire in the forests of Eretz Yisrael, and all residents of the town of Beis Meir were evacuated. Reb Yaakov owns a home in Beis Meir. His son lives in that home, and his family was forced to evacuate due to the fire.

This was on Thursday. They spent Shabbos in Yerushalayim. After Shabbos, the son returned to Beis Meir to see what was left of the house. He expected to see total disaster.

He first noticed his neighbor's property. The fire entirely consumed it. Then he looked at his father's property. The fire didn't touch it. Even the recently planted trees survived the blaze.

Three years earlier, Reb Yaakov gave money and saved a family who lost their home in a fire. And now, his property was spared from fire. He was rewarded for his good deed.

Indeed, his primary reward will be in the future, in Olam HaBa. But he also benefited in this world because chesed is rewarded in this world, too.

8. The Gemara (Beitzah 15a) states, הני בבליי טפשיי דאכלא נהמא בנהמא, "The foolish Babylonians, they eat bread with bread." The Dubno Magid zt'l explains that they eat so they can work. And they work, so at the end of the week, they will get a paycheck, so they can eat. So, they work to eat, and they eat to work. Whereas, a Yid eats to have strength to serve Hashem. His intention is always for an eternal, spiritual purpose.

The Skulener Rebbe zt'l (Noam Eliezer, Toldos) quotes the Dubno Magid, and he adds that this is the meaning of the pasuk (Bereishis 25:30) וַיֹּאמֶר עִשָּׂו אֶל יַעֲקֹב הֲלִעֵיטִי נָא מִן הָאֶדָם הָאֶדָם הִנֵּה כִי עָנִי אֲנִי עַל כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמוֹ אֶדֹם, "Eisav said to Yaakov, 'Pour into me some of this red, red pottage, for I am faint', he was therefore named Edom."

For this one statement, his nation is forever called אדום. Why is that? But the answer is that this describes

Pharaoh asked Yaakov how old he was, and he replied (47:9) **ימי שני מגורי שלשים ומאת שנה**, "The days of the years of my sojourning are one hundred thirty years. The days of the years of my life have been few and miserable."

The Malbim explains that Yaakov told Pharaoh that the years of one's life can be divided into two categories. One category is the number of years that one lives. About those years, Yaakov said that he lived 130 years. He called those years **שני מגורי**, the years he lived on earth, but they weren't **שני חיי**, the years of his life, for the years of his life are the years in which he served Hashem. About **שנות חיי**, the true years of one's life, Yaakov humbly said that they were **מעט**, few years, **ורעים**. (Take note of Yaakov Avinu's humility. The Torah testifies that Yaakov was (Bereishis 25:27) **איש תם ישב אתהלים**, always sitting in the beis medresh, studying Torah. For fourteen years, he studied in the yeshiva of Shem v'Ever. Throughout those years, he didn't sleep at night, not once. He was always studying Torah. Nevertheless, he said **ימי שני חיי**, "The days of the years of my life have been few and miserable.")

The Malbim elaborates, "The years of one's life should only be the years that he served Hashem. Those are the years of his life. But the years that he lived like an animal aren't counted among the years of his life."

His body lived, but his mind and soul, which are unique to human life, were dead. These years are called **שני מגורי**, but they aren't called **שנות חיים**.

"Pharaoh considered all of a person's life to be years, and Yaakov replied that Pharaoh didn't present the question accurately. If you ask me about my age, I am 130. But if you want to know how many years I have been *alive*, they were few and bad years."⁹

Caution from Anger

Chazal tell us that when a person is destined for greatness, he loses it with anger. The Yaavatz says that this is what Yehudah meant when he said to Yosef (44:18) **וְאֵל יְהוָה אֶפְרָח**, "Let now your servant speak something into my master's ears, and let not your wrath be kindled against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh." Rashi writes **חשוב אתה בעיני כמלך**, "You are honored to me, like a king." The Yaavatz explained that since Yosef was like a king, he should be cautious not to lose this status by becoming angry. Because when one becomes angry, he loses the greatness that was given to him.

This can be the meaning of Chazal (Kidushin 41a) **רגון לא עלתה בידו אלא רגונותא**, "When one

the essence of Eisav. He eats to work, and he works to eat. It is a cycle around **הָאָדָם הָאֵדָם הָיָה**, and thus, this is a fitting name for that nation.

9. The father of Reb Meir Premishlaner zt'l saw a vision in a dream. He saw heaven calling young people "old" and old people "young," and he asked them why they do so. Heaven explained, "Here we view people according to how long they serve Hashem. We don't look at the age they lived. We measure them according to the amount of time they served Hashem."

A similar story is told about a person who came to a cemetery, and he read on one grave, "Here lies a person who was niftar at the age of two." Another grave says, "Here lies the rav who was niftar at seven years." There wasn't anyone in the graveyard who had lived more than ten years. He asked, "What happened in this city? Was there an epidemic, and everyone died young?"

Most people didn't know the answer, but after asking around enough, he found an old person who supplied the explanation. "In this city, they didn't write the number of years one lived. They wrote on the tombstone the number of years one served Hashem because only those are considered years of life. Some lived until eighty years or more, but on the tombstone, they wrote that he lived a few years because that was how long they served Hashem."

The hint is from the pasuk **ימים שנתים**. Sometimes, from **שנתים** years of life, all that was used was **ימים**, a few days' worth of time in Hashem's service.

becomes angry, all he has in his hand is anger." The simple meaning is that anger doesn't accomplish anything, other than the anger itself. There is no other gain. But we can also translate this Chazal that when one becomes angry, he has nothing at all. Whatever quality or greatness he had, he lost it all due to his anger. Now, all he has left with him is his anger.

A similar lesson is written in Agra d'Kalah (from the Bnei Yissaschar zt'l). Yehudah was telling Yosef the following: You were chosen to be the viceroy of Mitzrayim because of your wisdom and your prophecy. As Pharaoh said (Bereishis 41:38-39) וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל עֲבָדָיו הַנְּמוּזָא כֵּן הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹקִים בּוֹ, וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל יוֹסֵף אַחֲרֵי הוֹדִיעַ "Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Will we find anyone like this, a man in whom there is the spirit of Hashem?' Then Pharaoh said to Yosef, 'Since Hashem has let you know all this, there is no one as understanding and wise as you.'"

So, Yosef was chosen to lead Mitzrayim because of his spirit of *nevuah* and for his wisdom. However, Chazal (Pesachim 66b) say, כָּל הַכּוֹעֵס, אִם נָבִיא הוּא נְבוּאוֹתוֹ מִסְתַּלֶּקת מִמֶּנּוּ, וְאִם חָכָם הוּא, חֲכָמָתוֹ מִסְתַּלֶּקת מִמֶּנּוּ, "Whoever becomes angry, if he is a navi, his *nevuah* leaves him. If he is wise, his *chachmah* leaves him." So, Yehudah told Yosef וְאַל יָהֵר אַפְּךָ, don't become angry. You will lose all your qualities and benefits for which you were chosen. You will have descended to Pharaoh's level, as Yehudah said, וְאַל יָהֵר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדְּךָ כִּי כְמוֹךָ בְּפַרְעֹה, "let not your wrath be kindled against your servant, for then you will be like Pharaoh," at the same level. And then Pharaoh will demote you from your high-ranking position and rulership.

It states (44:18) וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֲדֹנִי יִדְבָּר נָא, עַבְדְּךָ דָּבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְאַל יָהֵר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדְּךָ כִּי כְמוֹךָ בְּפַרְעֹה,

"Yehudah approached and he said, 'Please, my master. Let now your servant speak something into my master's ears, and let not your wrath be kindled against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh.'"

Meir Nesivim (Miketz) asks why there are extra letters and words in this pasuk. He discusses the words וְאַל נָא and בִּי, and the כִּי in כְּפַרְעֹה¹⁰. The Meir Nesivim answers, "I received from my teacher, the Baal Shem Tov, a wonderful segulah to annul anger. One should say the pasuk (Tehillim 119:9) בְּמָה יִזְכָּה נָעַר אֶת אָרְחוֹ לְשֹׁמֵר בְּדַבָּרְךָ, "In what manner should a youth purify his way? To observe according to Your word." Thinking this pasuk is a segulah to annul anger.

This means contemplating the holy name that comes forth from the roshei teivos of these words. This will save a person from anger. So, although Yehudah wanted to argue with Yosef, he didn't want to become angry. Chazal speak at length about how destructive anger is (see Zohar Bereishis, 27b). Therefore, Yehudah added the words and letters וְאַל נָא בִּי כְּפַרְעֹה, because the letters of these words spell the roshei teivos of the pasuk בְּמָה יִזְכָּה נָעַר אֶת אָרְחוֹ לְשֹׁמֵר בְּדַבָּרְךָ. (This is printed in Baal Shem Tov al HaTorah, Vayigash, note 6)

The Sfas Emes (Chanukah 5650) writes that since we light Chanukah lecht on rosh chodesh Teves, it is certain that the light of Chanukah shines throughout the entire month of Teves, because the first day of the month has in it the entire month. "It is possible that we light 36 lecht on Chanukah, because there are 36 days from the beginning of Chanukah until the end of Teves [the days the light of Chanukah shines]. I heard from my grandfather [the Chidushei HaRim] that טבת is from the phrase הטבת הנרות." [This means that the light of Chanukah shines throughout טבת.]

10. He asks (1) that the word בִּי is unnecessary in this pasuk. (2) Why did he say וְאַל יָהֵר אַפְּךָ, "Let not your wrath be kindled"? On the contrary, let him become angry! And why does it state נָא, please, since we know that Yehudah spoke harsh words to Yosef. He adds that the כִּי in כְּמוֹךָ כְּפַרְעֹה is also extra.