

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Vayeishev 5785 Year 15, #608

פרשת וישב תשפ"ה

The powerful lesson from Yosef staying in Egypt and Esther staying in Persia

וַיְהִי ה' אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצַלִּיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרָיִם: (לט ב)
Hashem was with Yosef, and he was a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. (39:2)
 The Posuk seems to be indicating that because Yosef was successful, he was therefore in his Egyptian master's house. His success was due to his skillful management of Potiphar's household, so would it not be obvious, apparently, with no need of mention, וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרָיִם that he was there? Another difficulty in this Posuk is: There are three parts to the Posuk. *Hashem was with Yosef, and he was a successful man,* and *he was in the house of his Egyptian master.* There must be a connection to all three! Another difficulty is, why didn't Yosef flee the land of Egypt back to his parents, as it seems he was dealing in business for his master and was free to roam around Egypt!

The explanation lies in the Kedushas Levi, who discusses the posuk וַיִּקַּח אֲדֹנָיו יוֹסֵף אֹתוֹ וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ אֵל בַּיִת הַסֹּהַר וּגְוִי וַיְהִי שָׁם *So Yosef's master took him and put him into prison, ..., and he was there in the prison.* If anything, this repetition of messages is even more baffling than the previous one *Yosef's master took him and put him in prison* וַיִּקַּח אֲדֹנָיו יוֹסֵף אֹתוֹ *and he was there in the prison!* The answer is: When Hashem causes something to happen to a person which appears bad, he should not resort to physical schemes in response, but rather rest assured in strong bitachon/faith that Hashem will -- without a doubt -- turn things for the better, and free him from oppression. This was the recurrent trait of Nachum Ish Gamzu (letovah), who was helped without fail, because he accepted each predicament with composure and calm.

Yosef could surely have liberated himself from the prison without and problem, but he remained there, confident that the events unfolding were destined for the good. In Potiphar's house, Yosef clearly perceived his success as flowing directly from Hashem, the ultimate source of bracha, and made no attempt to leave. This is וַיְהִי ה' אֶת יוֹסֵף *Hashem was with Yosef.* He had in his soul that Hashem is always with him. Therefore, whatever happens is for his good, and there is no reason to flee. By living with Hashem, there is reciprocation from above, and Hashem grants that person great success, as was the case

with Yosef. Hence, that is the reason וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרָיִם *he was in the house of his Egyptian master.*

Now of course, Yosef acquired all of his life skills from Yaakov, who transmitted all that he had learned in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever. We can certainly assume that Yaakov taught Yosef the Holy Name of Hashem which causes the earth to contract and condense a journey. That Name also gives the ability to transcend borders and boundaries. With knowledge like that, Yosef surely could have freed himself and sped off to his long-grieving father, but no, he remained in his Egyptian master's house", sure in the knowledge of a favourable outcome, which benefitted the entire Klal Yisroel in years to follow. He also had Ruach Hakodesh that he was destined to be the ruler of Egypt and the bread supplier for his family!

In Megillas Esther (2:11) we find a similar scenario וּבְכֹל יוֹם וְיוֹם מְרַדְּכַי מִתְּהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי הַצַּדִּיק בֵּית הַנְּשִׂימוֹת: לְדַעַת אֶת שְׁלוֹם אֶסְתֵּר *Every day, Mordechai would walk about in front of the court of the house of the women, to learn of Esther's welfare and what would be done to her.* With his connections, Mordechai could probably have engineered Esther's escape from the corrupt Persian court. But with the firm knowledge -- shared by both -- that Hashem had caused her to lodge there for the benefit of Klal Yisroel, he merely "inquired of her welfare." Here too, Mordechai was a Tzaddik and had miraculous power and apparently could have done something to get Esther out of the royal house, but he understood that if Hashem had put her there, it must be a favor to all of Israel, so all he wanted to see was Esther's well being. But at the end it really came out a favor for all of Israel, as Esther saved the Yidden from Haman and the Bais Hamikdash was eventually built with help of Achashveirosh.

This is a powerful lesson in our everyday life, never to push and pursue actions over and above the natural way of doing things. The Gemarra Berachos 64a states: כָּל הַדוֹחֵק אֶת הַשְּׂעָה הַשְּׂעָה דוֹחֵקתּוּ. וְכָל הַנִּדְחָה מִפְּנֵי הַשְּׂעָה נִדְחָה *Rabbi Avin HaLevi said: If one forces the moment and attempts to take advantage of an undeserved opportunity, the moment forces him and he is pushed aside. If one yields to the moment and relinquishes an opportunity that presents itself, the moment yields to him.* (Yehuda Z. Klitnick based on the Sefer Tiferes Yaakov Lifshitz)

The Maggid of Mezritch brings Rav Refoel Hamburg, Gaon of Posen to Chassidus

Rabbi Refoel of Hamburg, was a student the Gaon of Vilna. Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, successor to the Baal Shem Tov, recognized the source of Rabbi Refoel's soul and wanted to attract him to become his disciple. Once during Shalosh Seudos, the Maggid engaged in a Talmudic debate. They knew it was not the norm to discuss Talmudic suggestions in public, and found it surprising, it did not surprise Rabbi Meshulam Zusya of Anopoli when the following day he was sent on a mission by the Maggid. The Maggid had not given him specific instructions. tranquil in his master, he took his cane and wandered from town to town, assured that the goal of his mission would be revealed in due time.

At that time the chief rabbi of Posen, Germany passed away and they were interviewing candidates to fill this rabbinic seat. The custom in those days was that the candidate had to expound on a scholarly Torah subject. Rabbi Refoel was invited to become a candidate and was scheduled to deliver the presentation he had prepared. In order to review his presentation before delivering it in Posen, he stopped at an inn in a nearby village. That same day Rabbi Zusya also arrived at the inn. As he entered he saw Rabbi Refoel sitting in a side room surrounded by open books. Since the door was open, Rabbi Zusya entered the room without knocking. As he approached the desk, he heard Rabbi Refoel reviewing the presentation he had prepared. Rabbi Zusya remembered the lesson he had heard from the Maggid the Sabbath before he set out on his travels and he was stunned that it was the exact same topic that was being rehearsed by Rabbi Refoel! Rabbi Refoel stopped when he suddenly recalled a commentary by Tosfos that contradicted his entire premise upon which his discourse was based. Rabbi Zusya saw his anguish and offered Rabbi Refoel his assistance. At first Rabbi Refoel hesitated but finally agreed to listen. Before Rabbi Zusya told him the answer, he explained that he had heard it from his teacher, the Maggid of Mezritch. He stipulated that in exchange for the answer, after he was appointed chief rabbi in Posen, Rabbi Refoel would have to visit the Maggid. Rabbi Refoel again hesitated for he knew that traveling to the seat of the chasidim in Mezritch was something his teacher, the Gaon of Vilna, would disapprove of. Nevertheless, seeing once more that he had no choice, he gave his solemn handshake to Rabbi Zusya and promised him that he would travel to Mezritch to visit the Maggid. Rabbi Zusya proceeded to resolve all the difficulties in the text in an exceptionally brilliant fashion. He continued to debate with Rabbi Refoel on the topic to further prepare him

for the presentation.

The next day, Rabbi Refoel arrived in Posen and delivered his presentation which found grace in their eyes and they unanimously accepted him as their chief rabbi. Rabbi Refoel had to keep his promise to travel to Rabbi Zusya's teacher, the Maggid of Mezritch. He decided to recount the entire story to his own teacher, the Gaon of Vilna, and seek his advice about the situation. The Gaon of Vilna told him that he was legally bound to keep his promise and make the trip to Mezritch.. When Rabbi Refoel arrived in Mezritch he was careful not to reveal his identity. He entered the study hall and was extremely impressed by their mode of prayer the likes of which he had never seen before in his life. He noted the cheerful familiarity amongst all the students.

Soon after, the Maggid, who was crippled and required crutches, walk in. He had come to teach the day's lesson, when a woman brought a freshly slaughtered chicken to the Maggid for a legal rendering on its questionable status for kosher consumption. The Maggid deferred the question to the students present and they debated the issue at length. They concluded that the chicken was in fact kosher. The Maggid added that according to Kabbalah the same conclusion was reached - the chicken is kosher.

The Maggid concluded, "The chief rabbi of Posen is present with us. Let him come and make a legal ruling." He turned to Rabbi Refoel and inquired how he would render this case. Rabbi Refoel answered. The Maggid remarked, "Your rendering of the law is technically accurate. However, it is an academic answer that lacks practicality."

Rabbi Refoel was very impressed with all that he saw and heard. He saw the supreme respect the students had for the Maggid. He was amazed that the Maggid knew who he was despite the care he had taken to conceal his identify. When he returned to the Gaon of Vilna, he proceeded to give the details of all that he saw and heard.

As for Rabbi Refoel, he did not make a second trip to Mezritch so as not to infringe upon the honor of the Gaon of Vilna. Nor did he travel to the Gaon of Vilna in deference to his experience in Mezritch. During the controversy over the acceptability of the chasidic movement, Rabbi Refoel never took issue with the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov because of his respect for the great Maggid in Mezritch. He even refused to sign the excommunication ban against the Chasidim that issued from Vilna. And it is significant to note that some of Rabbi Refoel's own children eventually became chasidim. The Yahrtzeit of the Magid of Mezritch is 19 days of Kislev 5533.

The place to buy that unique gift and piece of history. A rare sefer, a letter from a Rov or Rebbe. As a service, we will accept at no charge, upon examination, your antique seforim New and out of print, and Rabbinical Letters for sale. Letters from Reb Shimon Shkop, Rav Yafen, Divrei Malkiel, Dvar Avraham Kovno, Kapishtnitzer Rebbe, Toldos Aron Rebbe, Set of Igros Moshe signed by Reb Moshe and Reb David. Pictorial Review of Vaad Hatzalah \$1300. Letter from Rabbi Eliezer silver 1943 on saving the Jews from the Nazis \$500, Sefer with Hakdasha of Hagaon Rav Avraham Kalmonowitz \$1000 and many more We have a list of our antique seforim and letters for sale, available upon request. 4403 16th Ave. Brooklyn N.Y. 11204 U.S.A. www.seforimworld.com or pardesyehuda1@gmail.com 718 438 8414 718 633 5500 Hours are Sun. - Thurs. 12 - 7:30 pm, Fri until 1:00 pm. The Pardes is ready for pickup on Wednesday We sell coins, bills and coins for Pidyon Haben and all coin holders and supplies. Thousands of out of print seforim available.