

# Pardes Yehuda

פרשת וישב  
תשע"ז  
Parshas  
Vayeishev 5777

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Weekly Torah insights translated and revised by David Pinchas Rose, based on the Yiddish יהודה פארדס by Yehuda Zvulun Klitnick

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לעילוי נשמת אביו מרדכי בן ראובן ואמו שרה בת אביגדור ע"ה

## Tosfos and Rashi combine to describe Yaakov's tzaar

וישב יעקב בארץ כנען: אלה תלדות יעקב יוסף... (לו א-ב)  
*Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan (37:1)*

ביקש יעקב לישב בשלוה, הפץ עליו רגזו של יוסף. צדיקים מבקשים: לישב בשלוה. *When Yaakov sought to dwell in tranquility, the troubles of Yosef sprang upon him. The righteous seek to dwell in tranquility.* To gain some insight into the sudden onset of Yosef's tribulations and the toll they imposed on Yaakov, we look to the Gemara (Sanhedrin 19b), which expounds on this posuk from Yeshai'a 29:22: *Therefore, so said Hashem to the House of Yaakov, Who redeemed Avrohom by sparing him the anguish of rearing children (tzaar gidul banim).* How so? Rashi explains that since Hashem had promised a large progeny to Avrohom, and a full-fledged brocho! (Brochos 63b tells of the brocho of multiple births -- a major simcha -- bestowed on one who nourished Torah scholars -- similar to a parent.) And Tosfos remind us further that Avrohom sired many children with Keturah, so how is Rashi's conclusion that Yaakov removed the *tzaar gidul bonim* compatible with that fact? The conclusion is that "removing the yoke of painful child-rearing" means specifically the pain of Yosef and his brothers' descent to Mitzrayim and the subsequent exile and slavery. "The troubles of Yosef" falling on Yaakov means confronting the Golus and Shibud Mitzrayim. Rashi and Tosfos combine to illuminate our parshah: yes, Yosef relieved Avrohom of the yoke of childrearing [of the Shevatim], but expected after the maturation of the Shevatim to focus on Yosef, the one child he was originally destined to have. But, thwarting his most ardent hopes, the unfolding of Egyptian exile and slavery muddled the waters of his tranquility. (תקנתא דמשה-הרי שמריהו)

## Yosef groomed to conceal his anguish!

והוא נער: (לו ב)

*he was a lad... (37:2)* Rashi explains just what Yosef's practices were: *He behaved childishly, fixing his hair and touching up his eyes so that he would appear handsome.* Would behaviour like that not be astonishing for a tzaddik to display? Actually, Yosef HaTzaddik embodied the teaching of the Chovos Halevovos (Gate of Abstinence, chapter 4), regarding a rarefied level of abstinence: בלבו ובלבו בלבו "he is of cheerful [external] countenance, but troubled in his inner heart." Yosef suffered greatly from his brothers' envy and persecution, but he refused to allow his innermost pain to be on display. He wanted to maintain a happy visage. Hair-curling and eye-colouring were his methods of choice in his environment. (תפוחי חיים-פאנעט קארלסבורג)

## Yosef bided his time, with confidence in the outcome

ויהי ה' אתיוסף ויהי איש מצליח ויהי בבית אדניו המצרי: (לט ב)

*Hashem was with Joseph, 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, that he was there? The explanation lies in the Kedushas Levi, who discusses the posuk (39:20) וינקח אדניו יוסף אתו ויגלהו אלבית (מללמוד בעת חזרת הש"ץ)

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*So Joseph's master took him and put him into prison, ... and he was there in the prison.* If anything, this redundancy is even more glaring than the previous one! When the Oibershter causes something to happen to a person which appears bad, he should not resort to physical stratagems in response, but rather rest assured in strong bitachon/faith that Hashem will -- without a doubt -- turn things for the better, or extricate him from oppression. This was the recurrent trait of Nachum Ish Gamzu (*letovab*), who was helped without fail, because he accepted each predicament with equanimity. Yosef could surely have liberated himself from the prison, 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 brocho, and made no attempt to leave. Yosef acquired all of his life skills from Yaakov, who transmitted all that he had learned in the Academy 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 was [i.e. remained] in his Egyptian master's house", sure in the knowledge of a favourable outcome, which benefited the entire Klal Yisroel in years to follow. In Megillas Esther (2:11) we find a similar scenario: ויבקע יוסף ויוסי מרדכי מתהלך לפני חצר ביתהנשים ללעול אתשלומו אשתר: *Every day, Mordecai 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."

(תפארת יעקב ליפשיץ)

## Publicize a noble thought or intention!

ויהאמר אליהם ראובן אלתישכרדם וגו' למען תציל אתו מידם להשיבו אל אביו:

*Reuben said to them, "Do not shed blood! Cast him into this pit, which is in the desert, but do not lay a hand upon him," in order to save him from their hands, to return him to his father. (37:22)* The Torah records Reuven's noble intentions for all posterity. This fact underlay a fundamental teaching of the Rashba, (contained in his classic responsum concerning a charitable donor's contribution) (שו"ת ח"א סי' תקפ"א) that it is right and proper to emulate the Torah's "*mefarsamim osei mitzvab*", publicizing a good deed, especially a charitable act. Although the Torah HaKedosh rarely publicizes the mere thoughts of a person, in this case it does publicize Reuven's good intentions, even though they were never carried out. Had Reuven known of the "honourable mention" he would receive in the Torah, he would have extracted Yosef with a team of skilled workmen. Aharon's attitude to greeting Moshe is also described: והוא יצא לקראתך ויראך ושמח בלבו: *he is coming forth toward you, and when he sees you, he will rejoice in his heart* (Shemos 4:14). Had he known that his greeting Moshe would be described in those words, he would have met him with a large contingent of festive officials. Likewise, Boaz's kindness is also praised publicly, and had he known it would be described as such, the modest meal he provided would have been a full-fledged banquet. A Medrash Rabbah on Rus (chap. 5) says: "When one performs a mitzvah, it should be with a totally sincere heart." The instances we have cited of Reuven, Aharon and Boaz exemplify this, and their greatness is enshrined in Tanach. In discussing Reuven, we can cite the well-known dictum מצרפה טובה הקב"ה מצרפה למעשה. "Hashem reckons even a good [but unrealized] thought as if it has transpired." There is definitely reward for a positive intention. Hashem strongly desires us to think well about our fellow Jew -- and to implement our thoughts! (שמח זבולון)

A certain Reb Gad tore himself away from his shop only twice a year to journey to the Heliger Rizhiner Rebbe -- for Chanuka and Shavuos. The spiritual energy he gleaned at the Rebbe's court recharged him enough to last the entire stretch of months in between. One year, the weeks leading up to Chanukah were bitterly cold, with massive snowfalls, and Gad's family were loathe to let him travel in such conditions. But Gad would not be dissuaded from his mission. He donned every piece of the warmest clothing he had, filled up his brandy keg, and set out in his wagon to be with the Tzaddik. His route was well-trodden, and he customarily got as far as a Yiddishe kretschma (a country inn), where he lit the first Chanukah lamp, and continued the next day on to Rizhin for the remaining holy days. That year, because of the heavy, drifting snow, it was the middle of the night when he reached the kretschma door. Despite the late hour, the innkeeper received his old customer warmly and set down some cake and hot tea to refresh him. This was not Gad's style. He held fast to the Halacha and refused to eat or drink until he had davened maariv and kindled the first Chanukah lamp. After a small repast, he lay his head down to rest, utterly exhausted, and in a trice was in the deepest sleep. It was not to last. Within the hour, he was rudely awakened by raucous pounding on the kretschma door. A band of robbers had broken into the inn, in search of victims. The ringleader of the brigands ordered his men to tie up and rob anyone they found in the inn, showing mercy to no one. Reb Gad did what any pious Jew would do in such dire straits. He beseeched Hashem intensely to save him from the hands of the robbers, but now with an added element: He gazed at the single Chanukah light, which was still burning brightly, and intended specifically that the miracles that Hashem performed for our ancestors should serve as a "precedent" for a new miracle performed for him and his fellow Jews, then and there in the country inn. Moments later, the door to his room was flung open and the ringleader stood there, stretched up to all his fearsome height. Gad trembled from head to toe, thinking that the time to say his final "*Shema Yisroel*" had arrived. But things took an unexpected turn. "**Gad'!**" the criminal shouted. "**Gad'!** Can that possibly be you?" Petrified,

**STORY**  
**OF THE WEEK:**  
**Saved from peril**  
**by one Chanukah light**  
**-- and a wayward**  
**brother returns!**

Gad nodded meekly. "Calm down, my old friend. No harm will come to you. Just stand by; I'm coming back in a jiffy." The villain went to the other members of his sordid band and told them to untie all the captives and to return their money to the last kopeck, and then to return to their hideout, with him following some time later, not saying exactly when. The chief returned shortly. Gad, now calm, took to finding an explanation for the sudden, unexpected mercy the brigand showed him. Then it hit him: "I know that man from somewhere... Wait! Can it be? Yes! It's you, Itzik Feffer, my old buddy, right?" The two boyhood friends fell into each other's arms, tearfully renewing the old bond between them. They had been the fastest of comrades, but went their separate ways after marrying. Gad felt, in the marrow of his bones, that he had experienced a personal miracle of Chanukah, but still felt he had to grill his erstwhile friend about his downward path. Itzik's tale was hair-raising. "My father-in-law was looking for a Torah scholar for his daughter, and I filled the bill. A band of robbers would come to my father-in-law with so-called "halachic" inquiries about dividing their ill-gotten gains. He deflected them to me and, without balking at the absurdity of the situation, I got dragged into responding to their specious questions. That was the start of a slippery slope. The rogues liked my answers and after a few months, they wanted to appoint me as their leader, threatening to inform on me to the authorities as an accomplice in a robbery ring if I did not comply. By that time, I was in up to my neck in illicit dealings and went along with them. *Aveira goreres aveira* ("One sin brings on another in its wake"), as everyone knows. And lower and lower I sank. But now, I feel your Chanukah menorah shining light into my dark heart and I yearn to cast off my rotten sins and become a *ba'al teshuva!*" That's all that Gad needed to hear. "My old comrade, you're coming with me in the morning to the Rizhiner Rebbe for the rest of Chanukah. I'm not taking 'no' for an answer." And so it happened. The Rebbe welcomed Itzik "back home" and prescribed a path of repentance. Itzik became a prominent *ba'al teshuvah* and a staunch chosid of the Rizhiner Rebbe, all thanks to the miracle of Chanukah. As for the wicked robbers, they never did figure out how their leader vanished into thin air.

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