

# Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Vayeishev 5778

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פרשת וישב תשע"ח

## *A dialogue between the Gerer Rebbe and The Rav of Keltz.*

Harav Moshe Nachum Yerushalmski, zt"l, was the Rov of Keltz in Poland. In this shtet'l also resided Rav Sheinfeld, who was the uncle of the Gerer Rebbe, Reb Avraham Mordechai Alter Ztz"l. Every so often, the Gerer Rebbe came to visit his uncle and — as was the custom in Europe when a visiting Rabbi visits another town, he pays a courtesy visit to the town's official Rabbi. Therefore, I had yearly visits from the Gerer Rebbe. Reb Moshe Nachum proceeded to relate of his first-hand knowledge that the Gerer Rebbe possessed "Siyata d'Shmaya" During one visit, I was discussing with him the weekly parsha and I told him that I had a question on Parshas Vayeishev.:

## *Who is called a נער – Lad?*

והוא נער את-בני בלהה ואת-בני זלפה נשי אביו: (לו ב)  
 “and he [Yosef] was a lad, [and was] with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah”. (Bereshis 37:2). The Midrash questions the use of the term נער here, which connotes a young immature child, as at this time Yosef was already 17 years old. The Midrash infers from this description that Yosef did childish things. Rashi, citing the Midrash, explains that Yosef used to fix his hair and groom his eyes so that he should look attractive.

Rav Yerushalmski asked the Gerer Rebbe, that by Akeidas Yitzchak, the pasuk says, ונאני והנער גלכה ער-כה [Bereshis 22:5] where the word נער refers to Yitzchak, even though he was 37 years old at the time! Why does the Midrash not question the use of the term נער for Yitzchak, who was more than twice as old as Yosef when he was described as a נער?

The Gerer Rebbe dismissed the question. He explained that in the story of the Akeidah, Avraham Avinu called Yitzchak a נער. To a father, a child is always a child! It is not at all noteworthy to hear a father refer to his son, regardless of his age, as a young child. However, in Parshas Vayeshev, the “Torah” calls Yosef a נער, not his father. Therefore, this usage can be used for Midrashic exposition!

Rav Yerushalmski, walked the Gerer Rebbe out of his apartment when the visit was over. A 100 year old widow lived on the first floor of the building. The widow came out of her house and upon seeing the Gerer Rebbe she asked him for a Bracha. The Rebbe gave her a bracha. This woman had a son who was 80 years old. She then requested of the Rebbe "Give my little one a blessing as well." Here then was an 80 year old man who was referred to as "my little one" by his mother. Rav Yerushalmski was amazed that literally within moments of the Gerer Rebbe giving an answer to the question, his insight was validated with a real life story, proving from Heaven as it were, that the 'vort' was true!

## *A beautiful insight connection to who is called a נער – Lad?*

The current Tolner Rebbe of Jerusalem asks on this answer of the Gerer Rebbe one basic question: In the Akeida we find a later pasuk in which the Angel from Heaven calls out to Avraham and also uses the term נער: ויאמר אל-תשלה ידך: נער (Bereshis 22:12). This was not a parent speaking. Why then does the Midrash ignore the Torah's use of the term נער by Akeidas Yitzchak?

The Tolner Rebbe answers that the Angel speaks in the Name of Hashem and to the Almighty, every Jew is like a child! כִּי נֶעַר (For Israel was a na-ar and I loved him...") (Hoshea 11:1) ; בְּנִים אַתֶּם לַה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם ; "Children are you to the L-rd your G-d" (Devorim 14:1). Therefore once we are like the sons of Hashem, it is understandable why we should always be thought of as a נער young lad.

## *Yosef's dreams and his brothers*

ויהלם יוסף חלום ויגיד לאחיו וינספּוּ עִוְד שָׁנָא אִתּוּ  
 “And Joseph dreamed a dream and told his brothers, and they continued to hate him”. Rav Schwab related the depth of the dream of Yosef. The Chofetz Chaim once had a dream and in the dream he dreamt that he was a wealthy man. The next day, the Chofetz Chaim fasted a *Taanis Chalom*. Rav Schwab explained that it seemed that the Chofetz Chaim held that being a wealthy man is a bad thing, a difficult thing which required a *Taanis Chalom*. To this, Rav Avraham Pam responded that he feels that it was a different reason that he fasted. We have a Kabbalah that most dreams go according to the thoughts of the day. The Chofetz Chaim thought that he was thinking about money too much during the day and he fasted as a way of doing Teshuvah. A disagreement erupted between Rav Schwab and Rav Pam regarding this dream.

Now Yosef has his dream which he relates to his brothers. The question is: Yosef was a bright person, why did he tell this dream to his brothers, didn't he understand that this dream would bring about a negative reaction that it seems that he is bragging. Why is he telling this dream to his brothers? Yosef was like the Chofetz Chaim who was concerned about his dream and he wasn't happy about the dream. Yosef didn't see it as a wonderful dream. He went to his brothers because the Halacha is that if someone has a bad dream it is good for him to be *Maitiv Chalomos*, to go to others and do what is called *Hatovas Chalom*. The concept of *Hatovas Chalom* is an idea that the dream is interpreted by friends as something good. However the brothers had a personal agenda, they interpreted it differently, that all Yosef thinks about is ways he can overcome them. Hence this caused them to continue to hate Yosef on his dreams.

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## STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

**Harav Hatzadik Rav Yochanon Perlow from Stoliner** האדמו"ר ר' יוחנן מסטאלין זצוק"ל כ"א בסלו תשמ"ז

Rav Yochanon was born the 7th day of Av, 1900, to his Holy Father Rav Yisroel from Stoliner and to his mother Brocha Sheindel. He was named after his great-grand-father Rav Yochanon of Rachmistrivka. He was the youngest of 6 brothers. The Rebbe Rav Yisroel praised all his children and once commented "If the world doesn't know who my children are, let me tell them." Reb Yochanon married Margolit the daughter of Reb Shimon Shloma of Alik on the 20<sup>th</sup> day in Kislev 1922. [His wedding was celebrated after the passing of his father Reb Yisroel on Rosh Hashanah 1921.] He lived a short time in Alik and then moved to Lotzk, where he blossomed with a large following and built a successful yeshiva.

The Rebbe's door -as was his father's- was always open to help Jews as well as non-Jews, including many high-ranking officers from the army that frequented the Rebbe's home for help and advice. There were many nights the Rebbe finished receiving the crowds at 4 AM. He would rest for a short time and then he would start to prepare himself to daven. Many years before World War II the Rebbe foresaw the catastrophe that was about to occur and begged his chassidim to improve their ways and improve their service to Hashem. A year before the war, in January of 1938, the Rebbe made a special trip to Eretz Yisrael to pray that Hashem have mercy on Klal Yisrael. The Rebbe spoke openly about the future and stayed in tune with the current events. The Rebbe was ready to flee Lotzk the minute the Nazis entered the city. The Rebbe said "I and the Germans can not be together -- either I or they" When the Rebbe was convinced that the war was nearing his area he fled in a wagon together with his family and some aides. The trip was a difficult one, having to dodge the Germans constantly. His aide Rav Moshe Melamed recounted in his memoirs the miracles and open prophecies from the Rebbe throughout the trip that finally landed them deep in Russia in a city called Frunza. Once the Rebbe reached Frunza the trip took a turn for the worse when his wife and daughter Sarah died of food poisoning. The Rebbe, who was diabetic and needed insulin, suffered tremendously. The Rebbe kept on saying he "sees rivers full of blood flowing from his home towns." After the war was over the Rebbe arrived at the DP camp Feldifing a broken soul, and declared to his surviving daughter that he is no longer a Rebbe. In the camps he was perceived as an interesting person, but no one had any clue who he was and how he managed to have kept his beard intact. When Michael Tress finally caught up with the Rebbe, he worked fervently to secure a visa for the Rebbe to travel to Eretz Yisrael. On the 6th day of Iyar 1946 the Rebbe embarked on the ship -- which coincidentally was the same day of the passing of his holy brother Rav Yaakov Chaim the Stoliner Rebbe from Detroit. When the Rebbe arrived in Eretz Yisrael a large crowd of chassidim awaited him in Haifa. The Rebbe stayed in Haifa and took a look at

the Stoliner Cheder. When he saw the situation there he undertook to be the leader with his last bit of strength. The Rebbe started building the Yeshiva and the Chassidus. In 1948 the Rebbe decided it was time to build in America and came to the chassidus in America that his brother had built for 23 years, and he began working with them. Among other things, he opened a yeshiva in America. The Rebbe didn't enjoy any fanfare and was always avoiding publicity. The middah of "Emes" -- truth -- prevailed at all times. Yet in all his endeavors to hide himself, there were times that he spoke openly and performed many great miracles.

There is one famous story with Reb Avraham Zemba. He was from the only people in the dp camp that the Rebbe trusted. He served the Rebbe with Mesiras Nefesh. Later after the war, Reb Avraham emigrated to the U.S. His wife was diagnosed with a growth on her lungs and the doctor didn't give any hope. Reb Avraham decided now was the time to receive something in return from the Rebbe. He made his way to Williamsburg and knocked at the door. When the gabbai Reb Yisrael Goldhaber ז"ל answered that the Rebbe wasn't feeling well, Reb Avraham told the gabbai to tell the Rebbe that Avraham Zemba was at the door. The Rebbe was excited to see him. When the Rebbe heard what had happened to his wife, the Rebbe said firmly. "It's nothing she is gezunt"! Reb Avraham thanked the Rebbe and the next day the doctor made another x-ray and lo and behold the growth was gone. The Zemba family still have both x-rays.

The Rebbe was asked how it was that his brother the Rebbe from Detroit was so involved in charity and fundraising for the thousands of needy families, yet he shied away from it. The Rebbe answered, "During my brother's time, the world needed chesed. Now, however, the world needs Torah." The Rebbe worked closely with his chassidim in Eretz Yisrael and kept in contact via many letters written back and forth.

The Rebbe, even though he was not well, decided that for Rosh Hashana 5755 he would travel to Eretz Yisrael to lay more foundations for the future. While there, the Rebbe encouraged the chassidim to build a building [Binyan]. Which is today the Mercaz Haruchni. That year, on Rosh Hashanah, they prayed in the new shul, which was not complete. It did not have a roof yet. The davenings were with fervor and the Rebbe commented favorably about the uplifting davenings. The Rebbe left to return to America in Chodesh Cheshvon, saying goodbye to his Chassidim. When he returned to America he became ill. He never recovered from that illness, and 21 days in Kislev 1956, the Rebbe's holy presence left this world and was buried in Deans N.J. After 16 months the Rebbe was taken to Teveria. Eye witnesses in the U.S. and Israel saw a fresh body and his Talis still white. א"י The tireless effort of the Rebbe has paid dividends with the Chassidus blossoming literally worldwide with Yeshivos and Torah Scholars and chassidishe nachas.

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