

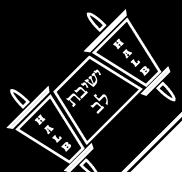
היוצאים

דברים



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The DRS Weekly Torah Publication



## We Are Bnei Yisrael

By Freddie Grunsfeld, 11th Grade

**A**fter leaving Eretz Kena'an, Yaakov and his extended family found themselves living in Egypt. As time went on, Bnei Yisrael started becoming larger and larger as a people. Eventually the nation's potential power in number struck fear in the eyes of Pharaoh, so he decreed that Bnei Yisrael should be a slave nation. However, even as slaves Bnei Yisrael continued to be fruitful. Fear rose once more in the eyes of Pharaoh, and he declared that all male babies should be thrown into the Nile River. After all is said and done, what did Bnei Yisrael really do wrong to deserve such harsh conditions? Why did God feel it necessary to punish them so severely?

A look at Yechezqel's recounting of these events may shed light onto the answer to this question. "Say to them: Thus said the Lord GOD: On the day that I chose Israel, I raised My hand to the seed of the House of Jacob; when I made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand to them. When I said, "I the LORD am your God," That same day I swore to them to take them out of the land of Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey, a land which I had sought out for them, the fairest of all lands. I also said to them: Cast away the detestable things that catch your eyes; do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt—I the LORD am your God. But they defied Me and refused to listen to Me. They did not cast away the detestable things their eyes were drawn to, nor did they give up the idols of Egypt. Then I resolved to pour out My fury upon them, to vent all My anger

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## Our Identity

By Mordecai Simhaee, 9th Grade

**T**he first words of this week's parsha say, "Veala shemot bnei yisrael habaim mitsrima (and these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt)". Rav Yosef Dove Soloveitchik asks, why does the Torah write the word "habaim" which more literally translates to as "who are coming"? Wouldn't it make more sense to have used the past tense, "Asher bau" instead?

He answers by noting a Midrash that says, the term "habaim" suggests that the people of Egypt did not consider the Jewish people as part of their state or of their society. The Egyptians looked at them as if they had just entered Egypt. Rav Salavatick then explains that even though the Jews had entered Egypt about 200 years earlier they were not even considered citizens. We could also see similar examples of this throughout history. In Germany even the Jewish people that had arrived in the middle ages, and had supported Germany, fought for Germany, and were an integral part of the society, were still wiped out in the Holocaust. This is the essence of anti-Semitism. Jews are depicted as a stranger, because we do not assimilate ourselves into any other communities.

There is another implication of why there is the use of the present tense. Chazal states that there were four main reasons why the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt: they did not change their names, they did not

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**Torah Teasers**

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

**Parshas Shemos  
Questions**

1. In Egypt the Jews are forced to produce bricks (Exodus 1:14). In what context are bricks first mentioned in the Torah?
2. Aside from this parsha, where do midwives assist in a birth? (2 answers)
3. In what context does the number three appear in this parsha? (2 answers)
4. In this parsha, who runs away? What two other places in the Torah does it explicitly state that somebody runs away?
5. In this parsha, who is called a Levite?
6. In this parsha, who is called a kohen (priest)?
7. In this parsha, where do five verses in a row begin with the same word?
8. In what context is snow mentioned?
9. Straw was used by the Jews in Egypt to make bricks (Exodus 5:12). Where else in the book of Exodus is straw mentioned?
10. In this parsha, who does Hashem call by repeating his name? Who else in the Torah has his name repeated when called? (2 answers) Who is the only person in the Prophets whom Hashem calls with the repetition of his name?

**Answers**

1. Bricks are first mentioned in parshas Noah where the people produced bricks to build the Tower of Bavel (Genesis 11:3).
2. In parshas Vayishlach a midwife is involved in the birth of Binyamin to Rachel (Genesis 35:17). In parshas Vayeshev, a midwife assists in the birth of Peretz and Zerach to Tamar, the wife of Yehuda (Genesis 28:38).
3. Moshe's mother hid him for three months before placing him in the Nile (Exodus 2:2). At the end of the parsha, Moshe requests from Pharaoh to allow the nation to travel on a three-day journey to serve Hashem (Exodus 5:3).
4. In this parsha, Moshe runs away after killing the Egyptian (Exodus 2:15). In parshas Vayetzei, Yaakov runs away from Lavan (Genesis 31:21). In parshas Lech Lecha, Hagar runs away from Sarah (Genesis 16:6). [Although Yaakov also runs away from Esav, the Torah does not explicitly state so.]
5. Aharon is called a Levite (Exodus 4:14).
6. Yisro is called a kohen (priest) (Exodus 2:16).
7. Verses 3:11-15 all begin with the word "Vayomer" - "And he said."
8. When Hashem inflicts Moshe with leprosy on his hand, the Torah states that Moshe's hand is "as white as snow" (Exodus 4:6).
9. In parshas Beshalach, the drowning of the Egyptians is compared to straw sinking in water (Exodus 15:7).
10. In this parsha, Moshe's name is repeated when Hashem calls him by the burning bush (Exodus 3:4). Elsewhere in the Torah: In parshas Vayigash, Hashem calls "Yaakov Yaakov" on the way down to Egypt (Genesis 46:2), and in parshas Vayera, Avraham's name is repeated (by an angel, not by Hashem Himself) when he is told to stop the binding of Yitzhak (Genesis 22:11). In the Prophets, Shmuel's name is repeated when Hashem speaks to him the first time (1-Samuel 3:10).

**ALIYAH SUMMARY**

1st Aliyah - In this Aliyah, we begin hearing about the enslavement of Bnei Yisroel in Mitzrayim. Pharaoh, along with everybody in Egypt, forgets everything that Yosef and all the brothers did. There is a plan to enslave Bnei Yisroel. When that does not work Pharaoh calls the midwives and tells them to kill the Jewish firstborns and, of course, the midwives fear G-d and do not listen to Pharaoh's order.

2nd Aliyah - In this Aliyah, Pharaoh rebukes the midwives for not killing all of the newborn Jewish males. They answer that the Hebrew women are skilled in giving birth without using midwives; therefore, Pharaoh commands the Egyptians to throw all newborn males into the river. Moshe is born in this Aliyah. Moshe is put into a basket. Pharaoh's daughter finds the basket and nobody is able to nurse this child. Miriam, who is Moshe's sister, suggests that she find a Jewish woman to nurse the baby; that is what happens. When Moshe finishes nursing he returns back to Pharaoh's daughter.

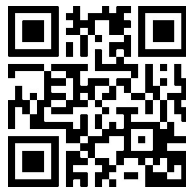
3rd Aliyah - In this Aliyah, we hear how Moshe was raised in Pharaoh's palace. When he gets older he goes out one day and he sees an Egyptian hitting a Jew. Moshe kills the Egyptian and the next day Moshe sees two Jews fighting and he tries to stop them but he is forced to run away. Moshe runs away to Midyan where he meets and marries Tzipor, the daughter of Yisro. She has a baby named Gershom. Meanwhile, back in Egypt, the slavery gets worse and worse. Bnei Yisroel cries out to Hashem and Hashem remembers, so to speak, the covenant that He had made with their forefathers.

4th Aliyah - In this Aliyah, we have the episode of the burning bush. While he was shepherding his father-in-law's flocks, Moshe sees a bush that is burning but is not being consumed. It was from that bush that Hashem called out to Moshe and said that He has seen the Avdus and the terrible afflictions in Mitzrayim and He has decided to deliver the Jews from Mitzrayim.

5th Aliyah - In this Aliyah, Moshe and Hashem continue their conversation at the burning bush. Hashem wants to send Moshe on the mission to bring Bnei Yisroel out of Eretz Mitzrayim. Moshe protests tenaciously. Hashem, in this Aliyah, gives Moshe three miracles to perform for Bnei Yisroel in order to prove that he is indeed from Hashem. Moshe continues to protest and Hashem assigns Moshe's brother Aharon to be his spokesperson.

6th Aliyah - In this Aliyah, Moshe takes his wife along with his two sons and they head back towards Egypt. Moshe gets permission from his father-in-law, Yisro, and they head to Mitzrayim. On the way, Tzipora rescues Moshe from punishment by giving a Bris Milah to their son. Moshe meets Aharon - who had come from Mitzrayim to greet him - and together they go to Egypt. They gather the Zikainim and they perform the wondrous, miraculous signs that Hashem had given to Moshe.

7th Aliyah - In this Aliyah, we hear how Moshe and Aharon go to Pharaoh to present Hashem's demand: Let Bnei Yisroel leave. Pharaoh mocks the request and he tells the Egyptian taskmasters to increase Bnei Yisroel's workload. Bnei Yisroel is unable to meet the new demand and they are beaten as a result. Moshe talks to Hashem and he says, "Why have You mistreated the people?" Hashem responds in the last Pusuk of the Aliyah and says, "Don't worry, you will see what I will do to Pharaoh; I will send Bnei Yisroel out with a mighty hand."



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# 10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by *Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz*  
on *yutorah.org*

Transcribed by  
*Yoni Sheinman*

## Filtering Water On Shabbos

Are you allowed to use a Brita filter on shabbos? The Shulchan Aruch Paskins that filtered water or wine from sediment is Mutar since most people would drink it without filtering. It is therefore not considered Borer. The Biur Halacha quotes the Pri Megadim that for someone who is an Istonis which means someone who is finicky and would not drink the water or wine with small impurities, it is seemingly Assur to filter it on shabbos. However, in the Sefer Hilchos Shabbos it says that even if you are finicky, it is still Mutar to use the Brita filter on Shabbos, Paskining like Rav Eliyashiv. Rav Eliyashiv gives two reasons why this is true. The first reason is that since the water looks exactly the same before it is put through the filter as when it comes out of the filter, it is not considered Borer and is therefore Mutar. The second reason is that even a finicky person would most probably drink the tap water if it is absolutely necessary and therefore it is not a Borer problem. In 2003, people discovered that there are bugs in the New York City water. They were washing lettuce and found bugs in the lettuce even after it was washed. They concluded that the water was the cause of all the bugs. Many poskim hold that these bugs called Copepods are Assur and therefore one needs a filter on their sinks in order to drink the New York City water. So the question arises, are people who live in New York City allowed to use their sinks on Shabbos for drinking purposes? What about just washing their hands? The Kaf HaChaim says that the water supply in Yerushalayim had an infestation of Mutar bugs. (This is the exact opposite of the above case since here it is Mutar yet they are grossed out, while in our case the bugs are Assur yet people don't mind drinking the water.) He held that if the halacha requires straining water it would be Assur and if it does not require straining water, it is Mutar since it is not going to be something that you are strict about. Rav Belsky says that if you hold that the bugs are Assur, then you would not be allowed to filter them out on shabbos even according to Rav Eliyashiv. This is because the people know what the Copepods look like and the water will therefore look different after filtering it, and the people would never be willing to drink the tap water since they hold it is Assur. Rav Belsky says that for just washing hands, one can use the sink with the filter on it. Rav Schachter says that there are a few reasons to be Makel in these cases. First of all, the Copepods may not be Assur. It is only a Chumrah to Assur the Copepods since they are spawned in a vessel and it would therefore not be an issue of Nisraf Telaim. Second, since the amount of bugs in the water varies throughout the day, when you turn on the water there is a possibility that there are no bugs in the water at that moment. Rav Blaich says that this reason wouldn't work since if you filter out a bug, it will be stuck in the filter and then every time you filter new water it is still technology filtering out this bug from the water. There is a Mishnah in Shabbos that says that if there is garbage in a filter you can still filter water through it and drink the water. This seems to oppose Rav Blaich's idea. A third consideration is that if you are separating food from food it is different from separating food from waste. The Chai Adam says that maybe we can say that the bugs are considered food. The Minchat Yitzchak says that the Chazon Ish allows using a teapot with a built-in strainer on shabbos. The Minchat Yitzchak understands that since the strainer is allowed as part of the pot, it is not an issue of Borer and it is Mutar to use. So too by the filter, since it is always part of the sink even when just washing your hands, it is Mutar to use and doesn't have a problem of Borer. Rav Blaich quotes someone who argues that the Chazon Ish permits such a teapot only because the strainer is an integral and inseparable part of the teapot. The filter on the sink is regularly removable and does not become part of the faucet. The Shulchan Aruch writes another potential Heter that you can put a filter right above your mouth and then filter the water right into your mouth. The bottom line is that the Brita filter is fine. If you are finicky it should be a problem but Rav Eliyashiv has two reasons to permit using it. Rav Belsky did not hold that the bugs in the New York City water were Assur but he said that if you do hold its Assur, then you can filter them out. Rav Schachter holds that the bugs are Assur but it's not a problem to filter them out on shabbos.

# SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



With  
Noah Birnbaum

As we all know, in the Parsha of Shemos, God reveals himself to Moshe in the form of a burning bush. When Moshe asks Hashem what name for Hashem will he give the Jewish people, Hashem cryptically responds "Ehkyeh asher ehkyeh (Ex. 3:14)." This famous phrase has been translated in several different ways: it was translated into Greek as "ego eimi ho on," which means "I am who I am," and into Latin as "ego sum qui sum", meaning 'I am He who is'. Medieval Christian theologians understood this as being the metaphysical existence of God and his nature: "He was 'Being' itself, timeless, immutable, incorporeal, understood as the subsisting act of all existing." In reality, it means "I will be what, where, or how I will be." The essential element of the phrase is the dimension omitted by all the early Christian translations, namely, the future tense. Hashem defines himself as the one who has, is, and will liberate the Jewish people. In this phrase, Hashem foreshadows the doom that will arise on the most powerful nation around at the time: Egypt. In saying this, Hashem shows that his omnipotence goes beyond that of occupying social hierarchies. Rather, Hashem is literally every single past, present, and future. He cannot be anthropomorphized. This idea drives upon the thought of Ain Od Milvado: the idea that God is literally the only occupying force in the world. Everything else just exists within him. Hashem describing himself in the future tense is a very peculiar idea, because it displays humans as future-oriented characters (as Hashem uses the future to explain who he is to the Jewish people). On this, Rabbi Lord Johnathan Sacks, former chief Rabbi of the UK says that "Science searches for causes... Science cannot account for the future because something that hasn't happened yet cannot be a cause. Therefore, there will always be something about intentional human action that science cannot fully explain." Essentially, by searching for causes, scientists fail to understand why Jews do certain things when those things are motivated by that which will happen in the future. Additionally, by searching for causes alone, scientists must reject free will, because they are essentially admitting that everything is predetermined by events that already happened. This is another lesson taught by Hashem's response to Moshe: that we have free will, and we must use that future orientation to liberate ourselves and others as Hashem does. With that, I hope everyone takes this message to heart and really tries to take advantage of their free will and make the right choices. Have a good shabbos!

Adapted from Rabbi Johnathan Sacks

*(Simahee- Continued from page 1)*

change their language, they did not change their clothing, and they did not change their God. The Jews were conscious of their individual identity.

There are certain ideals that Jewish people are committed to and cannot forfeit. Rav Salavetick says that there are two special relationships which are, the relationship between God and Jew, as well as a relationship between God and mankind in general. Usually the Jewish people are involved in both these relationships. In certain areas of human endeavour, such as healing and helping other people, we are a part of the relationship between God and man. Additionally, we do participate in society in general. Yet when other people try to tell us how to live, we are very stubborn.

Pharaoh thought that the Jewish people were not interested in the welfare of Egypt. Yet pharaoh was wrong, because "habaim mitsraima" Actually has two meanings. One is that we have a special, internal identity. Nevertheless we also participate in society. Only when pharaoh told the Jews to abandon their own identity and leave their own internal society. Do the Jews remove themselves from Egyptian society, as if they'd just arrived in Egypt.

Shabbat shalom umervurach!

Ariel Rogoff

Connected Cries

10th Grade

In this week's Parsha, the classic story of Batya, daughter of Pharaoh, finding Moshe in the river took place. When Batya saw a basket flowing in the reeds, Hashem stretched out Batya's hand so that she could reach the basket. When she pulled the basket out, Batya saw Moshe and said, "this must be one of the Hebrew children".

Many meforshim ask a question on this: How did Batya know that Moshe was one of the Jewish children? What was it that made her immediately jump to this conclusion?

The answer to this is that Moshe was crying like a Naar. There are multiple explanations of what this might mean. The Ibn Ezra says that Moshe's limbs were bigger than those of a regular baby. Rashi says that his voice was like that of a Na'ar, meaning that it was more mature. However, the Ramban has a question on Rashi and the Ibn Ezra: Why does the Torah make it seem like Moshe was a freak of nature? Why should it matter how his voice sounded?

We answer as follows: Moshe wasn't going to cry until the angel Gavriel hit him. When he did cry, he did it with the voice of a grown man. Batya recognized the cry because it sounded like that of the Jewish people. We can see from the story of Batya how connected the Jewish people are to one another. Batya recognized the sound of a Jewish cry because all of the Jews shared one cry. Just like they all had one cry, the Jewish people are and always will be one connected person and nation.

*(Grunsfeld-Continued from page 1)*

upon them there, in the land of Egypt."

The way Yechezqel presents the narrative, *Bnei Yisrael were not simply put into slavery by an external king. Rather when God tried to "reach out a hand" and save Bnei Yisrael, the nation rejected the offer and God. Instead they turned to the Gods of their Egyptian hosts and thereby tried to assimilate with them. As a punishment, God orchestrated events so that Bnei Yisrael would be enslaved.*

There is a very intriguing irony in the way that Yechezqel portrays the narrative. The reason for *Bnei Yisrael's enslavement and the genocide that was inflicted upon them were to distinguish between the two populations, due to Bnei Yisrael's attempt to be more like the Egyptians.*

Throughout the whole narrative, a large emphasis is placed on God separating between Israel and Egypt. The Torah makes this point many times. For example, "but not a dog shall snarl his tongue at any of the Israelites, at man or beast—in order that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel." Ultimately God had planned to redeem *Bnei Yisrael. However before they could become a nation and enter into a covenant with Him, God had to show Bnei Yisrael that they were not Egyptians; this became especially necessary after they started worshipping the Egyptian deities. God's punishment that He chose was not a thoughtless one, rather it was what the rabbis call a "Midah Keneged Midah". Bnei Yisrael thought that they could try to erase their own national identity by engaging in foreign worship, so God's punishment allowed for a distinction between the Jews and the Egyptians. Only after this thought provoking punishment - a negative distinction between Bnei Yisrael and the Egyptians - could God continue to develop Bnei Yisrael's collective and distinguished identity through the makot, allowing for Bnei Yisrael's distinctiveness to be a distinctiveness of positivity.*

We living in the 21st century must recognize that we too must not try to assimilate into the outside culture, because that is what causes our ultimate downfall. With thanks to God, we are living in a time where we can live in our own country, *Medinat Yisrael. A country in which there may be problems, however the country is our own country, the culture is our own, the legal deity is our own, and the moral and ethics are our own.*



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## STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: ARIEL KORORI

The train was about to leave. It was a two-and-a-half-hour ride from Port Authority to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and almost every seat was full. Jack Eastman, a successful lawyer and an impressive-looking gentleman, hopped on the train and settled in on the last remaining seat. Jack was sharply dressed with a black pinstripe Giorgio Armani suit, an off-white Valentino shirt with an arc spread collar and split toe Mezlan shoes. He placed his raincoat in the small compartment above his seat and pulled out a state-of-the-art laptop from his sleek leather attaché case. Satisfied with his preparations, he settled in for the trip. As the doors were about to close, in dashed Jason Gross, a disheveled looking 19-year-old boy, his hair unkempt, his clothing wrinkled and messy. With no seats available, Jason reached up to grab hold of the plastic hook next to his head. Just then the doors of the train closed and the train sped off. Jack had been working studiously on his laptop when he noticed the boy standing above him. How sad, he thought. The young man appeared to be totally lost, with nowhere to go. "Excuse me, would you like to sit down next to me?" A seat had opened up next to Jack and he offered it to Jason. "Nah, it's okay. I'm just gonna stand here." Jason hadn't even made eye contact with him. He just stared straight ahead. A half hour passed and once again Jack offered the seat. At this point, Jack couldn't get back to his work, wondering why this boy seemed so troubled. Jack had two kids: a 15 year old boy and a 12 year old girl. He tried not to imagine his children ending up this way, and if they did, he would want an older, caring person to help them. Once again Jason refused the offer. He obviously wanted to be left alone.

Another half hour passed and finally Jason's weary feet convinced him to accept the seat. He was happy to finally be able to rest. He muttered a meek word of thanks and rested his head against the cold window. Although his head bobbed back and forth from the vibrations of the train, the cool feel of the window against his cheek was refreshing. "Do you want to talk? It looks like something's bugging you." Jason continued to stare blankly out the window. "If I want to talk I'll let you know." For the very first time Jack made eye contact with this troubled young man. He had once heard that if you look into someone's eyes you can see what's in his soul. What he had seen in this boy's eyes was pure sadness. Just by looking at him you could see he was lonely and lost. Jack tried a few more times to extract from Jason what was troubling him, and how he could help, and finally Jason relented. "It all started when I was around 15," Jason began to bare his soul as Jack sat back and listened carefully. "I was the type of kid who was into electronics and was generally viewed as a recluse. My parents constantly encouraged me to get together with friends and they would always bother me. I would tell them to let me run my own life but they kept sticking their noses into my business. Well, one of the advantages of being an electronics 'nerd' is the ability to create and invent different things. And that is precisely what I did. I created my very own invention and made a mint off of it. I became a millionaire overnight. By then I was 17 years old. Sure enough I became popular. My parents tried to warn me about the 'groupies' who wanted to get close to me because I was rich. But I had had enough of their advice; I told them once and for all that they should stay out of my life. They pleaded with me and begged me but the last time we spoke I hung up on them, insisting that they never call me again."

By now Jack was hanging onto every word of Jason's tale of woe. He watched closely as Jason shifted uneasily in his seat. He felt Jason's parents' pain, yet sympathized with Jason as well. He wondered how much suffering this boy had endured. "Money helped me find a wife and we got married immediately, with neither of our parents present at the wedding. Nine months later we had our first child. Life seemed to be perfect. There we were, a young couple living in a beautiful high-rise Manhattan apartment with a precious little baby. Then one day a shady character, one that in hindsight I should have stayed away from, offered me the 'chance of a lifetime' - an investment that would allow me to retire. I invested the millions that I had made and waited for a phone call that never came. The entire thing was a scam. Just like that, I was poor again. When my wife discovered what happened she left me and took our child. I was evicted from the

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(SOG-Continued from page 6)*

apartment and suddenly had no friends to turn to. My entire world had crumbled. Less than two months earlier I had been sitting on top of the world and now I was penniless, homeless, and lonelier than I had ever been. I scrounged around like a beggar going from restaurant to restaurant pleading for food. Doors were slammed in my face; the humiliation was unbearable. Finally, starved and ashamed, I stretched out on a park bench, closed my eyes and went to sleep, thinking, 'This is where I'm going to die.' ”

“I don't know how long I had been sleeping but a man tapped me on the shoulder. I had never seen him before and he didn't know who I was, but he sat down next to me and listened to my story. He cared about me and encouraged me to come back to his home, change my clothing and contact the only people that still cared for me - my parents. I thought to myself, 'How could I use them like this?' For as long as I could remember I had treated them more like my worst enemy than my parents. I showed them no respect and refused to include them in any part of my life. And now that I needed them I should use them?! I felt remorseful and ashamed about my entire existence. But left with no other choice, I decided to write them a letter. I sat down and tried to write. Tears blinded my vision and stained my words. I poured out my soul to them and related the entire chain of events that had transpired since we last spoke. I imagined them reading the letter, and even though I knew they loved me, I was uncertain what their reaction would be. After all, I'm sure I had caused them great pain and frustration. I told them that I needed them in the worst way but that I did not have the courage to ask them in person to take me back. What if they refused to have anything to do with me? I knew it was cowardly of me but I had no choice. This was my last resort. So instead I asked them for a favor. I informed them of the train ride that would be bringing me back home on the third of June at 7:30 in the evening. Approximately fifty yards from the train stop there is a large oak tree. If they found it within themselves to forgive me for my past sins they should hang a small white flag on one of the branches of the tree. And if not ... then I'll just stay on the train and continue on to the next stop.”

Jason was spent. He had just bared his soul to this complete and total stranger but he had no choice because the stop was just ahead and he didn't have the courage to look and see if the flag was there. Jack held what was now a little scared boy close to him. He had cried throughout the story and was anxious to do what he could. The train slowed and the stop was near. Jason put his head between his knees and was nearly shaking with fear and apprehension. One hundred yards. Seventy-five. Fifty. Jack looked out the window. The train had almost stopped completely. The sound of its screeching wheels was growing louder. Jason looked up, his eyes red, his face white. "So tell me... what do you see?" Jack stared at Jason and smiled. "The ... entire ... tree ... is ... covered ... in ... white ... cloth!!" Jason stood up, hugged his friend and walked toward the exit of the train. Standing there with tears in their eyes were his loving parents. At first he hesitated, but then ran into his parents arms and held them closer than he ever had before. His mother and father too held their broken son close and whispered into his ears, "Welcome home, son, welcome home."

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## Do You Know Yosef?

By Yosef Adler, 9th Grade

In the beginning of this week's parsha, it says, "There was a new king who didn't know Yosef" (1:8). How can that be? Can you imagine a United States presidential nominee who hasn't heard of Abraham Lincoln? Yosef was second in command of the entire Mitzrayim, he saved everybody from a famine, and he made Mitzrayim the richest country in the world. Yet the new king doesn't know of Yosef? Why?

One answer is that the king didn't forget Yosef, but the significance of what Yosef did was forgotten. This happens everyday, where someone does a favor for us, and a couple minutes later it completely leaves our minds. Once their assistance isn't needed anymore, we sadly forget about what they've done for us. Parshas Shemos addresses this problem, and it's something that we have to work on. When someone does something nice for you, thank him for it. This act of being appreciative towards each other is something we all have to work on, and it's what will bring Mashiach.

A similar answer with a different lesson is given by the Kli Yakar: the new Egyptian king knew Yosef, but he failed

to understand Yosef's legacy, which led to the eventual downfall of himself and his nation. He failed to understand that Yosef was the ultimate survivor. First, his brothers sold him into slavery. Then, when he started to succeed, his master's wife threw him into jail. Nevertheless, he survived again and became the second-in-command of Egypt. His rise to power is absolutely incomprehensible considering the opposition that he faced.

Yosef survived because he had a dream that the sun, moon, and stars would bow down to him, and nothing would interfere with the realization of that goal. We, the Jewish nation, also have a dream: to live in peace in the Holy Land with God as our king and Mashiach as our leader, with the Beis Hamikdash once again standing. History is filled with kings, regimes, and dictators who made the same mistake as Pharaoh. They thought that slavery, persecution, throwing babies into the Nile, gas chambers, and more could solve the "Jewish problem." However, like a phoenix, we have risen up from the ashes again and again. We should never forget who Yosef was and that we are his heirs.

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