





 ${\it A}\ D$ angerous Disagreement

By Yoel Horwitz, 12th Grade

ne of the worst types of fights is one within the family. The bitterness and scars from the fight remain long after the incident that may have originally sparked it. Often, the bitterness and hard feelings remain even in the descendants of the instigators of the commotion.

Yosef and his brothers finally make up in this week's parsha, but the divisions within the Jewish people then and now are apparently never really healed and forgotten. Many commentators point out that the rebellions against Moshe in the desert, that of Korach, and many others are all part of the residue of the fallout of the tragedy of the disagreement of Yosef and his brothers.

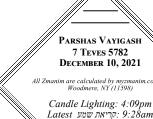
So too is the tragedy of the splitting of the Jewish people living in the Land of Israel into two seperate and even warring kingdoms. In fact, the later commentators say that all later controversies in Jewish life are an echo of this original fight between Yosef and his brothers.

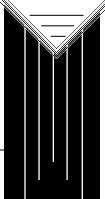
The fact that Yaakov, in his final words to Shimon and Levi, recalled this dispute and its consequences to them only serves to continue the pain and bad feelings. But now that he is gone, the brothers and Yosef remain wary of each other, with the memories of their dispute irrevocably burned into their psyches.

Unfortunately, the outcome is quite similar in family disputes. That is why one must go to all lengths to prevent such disputes, no matter what or how large the seeming cause may be.

Part of the problem is that in the dispute with Yosef and the brothers, one side, Yosef, was eventually right and the other side, Yosef's brothers, seemingly wrong and (Continued on page 6)

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## Constant Forgiveness

By Avi Beylus, 11th Grade

recurring theme throughout Tanach is the idea of Divine forgiveness; Patriarchs, Prophets, Bnei Yisrael themselves and more often the aforementioned Patriarchs and Prophets beseeching HaShem on behalf of the people of Israel, with a repeated confidence in the promise of God's forgiveness. From the implied guarantee of the Covenant to the 13 Attributes of Mercy (Exodus 34:6-7), everything seems to point to the Biblical optimism that when requested (by thought or deed), HaShem will, in fact, forgive.

But what of transgressions bein adam l'chaveiro – transgressions or injury caused to one's fellow man? In Parshat Vayigash we see the truest form of forgiveness -- even an erasure of the transgression itself. Joseph, after giving his brothers a difficult time, reveals himself

(Continued on page 7)

#### Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

## Parshas Vayigash Questions

- 1. In this parsha, in what context is the number five mentioned? (3 answers)
- 2. In this parsha, Yosef sends 10 *atonot* (female donkeys) to Yaakov (Genesis 45:23). Where else in the Torah does someone give a gift of *atonot*? (2 answers) Where in the Torah does somebody ride on an *aton* (not a *chamor*)?
- 3. In this parsha, who is referred to with his name being repeated? Who else in Tanach is called with the repetition of his name? (3 answers)
- 4. Which two females from Yaakov's family does the Torah explicitly state as traveling down to Egypt?
- 5. Who has two sons with the rhyming names Mupim and Chupim?
- 6. Where in this parsha do things not add up?
- 7. What part of the body is mentioned four times in this parsha?

### Answers

- 1. Yosef informs the brothers that five years of famine remain (<u>Genesis 45:6</u>). Yosef gives Benyamin five suits (<u>Genesis 45:22</u>). Yosef brings five of his brothers to meet Pharaoh (<u>Genesis 47:2</u>).
- 2. In Genesis 12:16, Pharaoh gives Avraham many gifts, including 10 *atonot*. In Genesis 32:16, Yaakov sends Esav 20 *atonot* as part of a gift. In Numbers 22:22, Bilaam rides on an *aton* when traveling to curse the Jewish people.
- 3. Hashem calls "Yaakov, Yaakov" when he heads down to Egypt (Genesis 46:2). In Genesis 22:11, Avraham's name is repeated by the angel to stop him from slaughtering his son Yitzhak. In Exodus 3:4, Moshe's name is repeated when Hashem calls to him at the burning bush. Hashem repeats Shmuel's name when He speaks to him for the first time (1-Shmuel 3:10).
- 4. Dina and Serach bat Asher are the only females specifically listed as traveling down to Egypt (Genesis 46:15, 17).
- 5. Two of Benyamin's sons are named Mupim and Chupim (Genesis 46:21).
- 6. The Torah states that 66 of Yaakov's descendents went down to Egypt (Genesis 46:26). It then states that three people (Yosef and his two sons) were already there. Yet the Torah then states the total number in Yaakov's household as 70 (Genesis 46:27). [The most well-known explanation is that Yocheved was born between the walls on the way down to Egypt, as quoted by Rashi.]
- 7. The neck is mentioned four times in this parsha: Yosef cries on the neck of Binyamin, and Binyamin cries on the neck of Yosef (Genesis 45:14). Yosef falls on the neck of Yaakov, and then cries on his neck (Genesis 46:29).

## **ALIYAH SUMMARY**

First Aliyah: Yehudah pleads to Yosef to allow Binyamin to go home and return to Yaakov. He told Yosef of Yaakov's loving relationship with Binyamin and his reluctance to allow him to go to Egypt.

Second Aliyah: Yehudah explains that he had personally taken responsibility for Binyamin's safety and return. Yehudah therefore asked to take Binyamin's place as Yosef's slave. At that point, Yosef could not restrain himself any longer. He asked all the Egyptians present to leave the room, and he revealed his identity to his brothers: "I am Yosef! Is my father still alive?!" He then reassured the brothers not to feel guilty about selling him because it was clear that it was all part of Hashem's plan.

Third Aliyah: Yosef directed his brothers to quickly go home and bring Yaakov and their families to Egypt, where Yosef would provide them with food until the famine ends. Yosef embraced his brothers and cried. Pharaoh was informed that Yosef's family had arrived and also instructed them to come to Egypt and he would give them the best land. The brothers, laden with gifts, returned to Yaakov and informed him that Yosef was alive and was a ruler in Egypt.

Fourth Aliyah: On their way down to Egypt, they stopped in Be'er Sheva and Hashem told Yaakov not to fear going to Egypt because that is where he will make his family into a great nation. He also promised Yaakov that he would take his descendants out of Egypt.

Fifth Aliyah: This section names the members of Yaakov's family that went to Egypt. Excluding the shevatim's wives and including Yosef's two children, they totaled seventy people.

Sixth Aliyah: Yaakov arrives in Goshen, the land Pharaoh gave his family in Egypt. Yosef went to greet his father and instructed his brothers to tell Pharaoh that they are shepherds, who only wish to tend to their flocks in Goshen until the famine ends. The brothers followed what Yosef told them. Yaakov was then brought before Pharaoh, and Yaakov blessed him.

Seventh Aliyah: When the Egyptians ran out of money from paying for food they gave their cattle, their land, and even sold themselves as slaves, in order to get food. Yosef supplied his family with food and they multiplied abundantly.

Adapted from Chabad.org



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## 10-Minute Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz, on yutorah.org Ialacha Shiut Transcribed by Yoni Sheinman

## V'Sein Tal U'Matar in Southern Hemisphere (Part 1)

There are two additions in shemoneh esrei that relate to rain. (1) We mention the power of rain by saying Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hageshem (which you can say even on shabbos). If you forget to say it you must repeat Shemoneh Esrei unless you said Morid Hatal. There is a machloket between Rebbe Eliezer and Rebbe Yehoshua in Masechet Taanit about if you begin saying Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hageshem on the first day of Sukkot or only on Shemini Atzeret. (2) We ask for rain by saying V'Sein Tal U'Matar. If you miss this you can make it up in the bracha of Shomea Tefillah. But if you miss it entirely, you must repeat Shemoneh Esrei. The Mishnah in Taanit says that there is a machloket between the Tana Kama who says that we begin saying V'Sein Tal U'Matar on the third day of Mar Cheshvan, and Raban Gamliel who says that we begin saying V'Sein Tal U'Matar on the seventh day of Mar Cheshvan because that is 15 days after Sukkot and that gives ample time to those who go to Yerushalayim for Yom Tov to get back home. The Gemara then quotes a Braissa that says that those shitas in the mishna are about Eretz Yisroel. In Chutz La'aretz, we say V'Sein Tal U'Matar sixty days after the equinox and thus December fourth (or fifth on a leap year). Since the southern hemisphere is not having winter now, rather summer, what should they do about saying V'Sein Tal U'Matar and Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hageshem? The Gemara does not have any discussion about this since in the times of the Gemara and even during the times of the Rishonim, there were no Jews living in this area. Now, there are big Jewish communities in these countries. The issue first came up in the teshuvot sefer called Shut Torat Chaim. There were people living in Brazil that wanted to know if they can say V'Sein Tal U'Matar only in (our) summer months (their winter months), and not during (our) winter months (their summer months). There is a machloket in the Gemara Taanis about whether V'Sein Tal U'Matar and Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hageshem are said based on local weather conditions. The Gemara also asks, if a city in the northern hemisphere needs rain at a different time, can they say V'Sein Tal U'Matar and Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hageshem at a different time? Would the people have to add V'Sein Tal U'Matar in as a separate request in Shema Koleinu, or would they be able to insert it regularly as part of Barech Aleinu? The Gemara answers that Mashiv Haruach Umorid Hageshem is never said based on local conditions, rather it is based on when the world is saying it, while V'Sein Tal U'Matar is not said in the usual spot (Barech aleinu) but you can stick it into Shema Koleinu.

This was by a city, but what about an entire country? This is a machloket between the Rosh (and he claims the Rambam is on his side) and everyone else. The Rosh says that if it's an entire country that's saying these brachot, they can say it based on the climate. The Rosh understands that the Rambam says this way since there is a contradiction between the Perush Hamishnayot and the Rambam Hilchot Tefillah. In Hilchot Tefillah, the Rambam says that you should say V'Sein Tal U'Matar in Shomea Tefillah in the summer while the Peresh Hamishnayot says that one should say it in Berchot Hashanim. The Rambam holds that one definitely does not have to say V'Sein Tal U'Matar if it will be damaging to them. But what about saying V'Sein Tal U'Matar to help during the season that you need it? So the Rosh explains the Rambam as we can say that if it is just a city, we will say like the Rambam in Hilchot Tefillah that one should just include it in Shomea Tefillah, while when it is an entire country, we will follow the Perush Hamishnayot that one can even include it in Berchot Hashanim. (This is talking about a country in the northern hemisphere, not the southern hemisphere.)

Most Achronim don't explain the Rambam this way since the Rambam would have made a specific point differentiating a city and a country. The Shulchan Aruch does not paskin like the Rosh. He says that if you have an entire country that needs rain during the summer months, they can't ask for rain during the summer months, rather they can include it in Shomea Tefillah. The people in Brazil wanted to go like the Rosh and apply it to the southern hemisphere, but the Torat Chaim said that they may not do that for three reasons. (1) The Rosh's approach was rejected by many Meforshim including the Shulchan Aruch. (2) The Rambam doesn't really hold like the Rosh. The Rosh misunderstood the Rambam. (3) The Rosh himself retracted his shita when he saw that nobody else was following his shita. But, the people in Brazil certainly don't have to say V'Sein Tal U'Matar in the winter months (their summer months) if it will cause damage to them.

דברים היוצאים מן הל"יב

# SPARKS OF With CHASSIPUS Noah Birnbaum

At the start of Parshas Vayigash, Yosef revealed himself to his brothers and showed them that he was the Egyptian ruler that they were talking to. Their brother that they had sold twenty two years ago was still alive and well, and became the second in command of Egypt. However, there is something strange about the way Yosef goes about revealing himself. In doing so, he knew that his brothers would suffer from shock and guilt as they recalled how they got Yosef into Egypt in the first place. So what did he do? He told them repeatedly that their actions were in the past. He said "I am your brother Yosef, the one you sold into Egypt. And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no ploughing and remnant on Earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt." (Bereishit 45:4-8) Why did Yosef reveal himself by reminding his brothers of what they did to him?

What Yosef did was change his brothers' memories of what had happened in the past. Although their relationship started off very poorly—his brother's sold him with malicious intent—they were really being directed by a great force that we cannot understand. They may not have realized at the time that they were part of a larger plan, but Yosef told his brothers not to feel guilty, for he now understood that everything was done at the will of God, and so he didn't seek revenge. In next week's parsha, Yosef will do this again, when his brothers fear that he might finally take revenge after their father, Yaakov, had died: "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Bereishit 50:19-20)

In comforting his brothers in such a way, Yosef challenged the assumption that we can change only the future and not the past. Yosef was saying that the actions of his brothers which were done to harm him were in reality done by God. However, Yosef didn't actually change the past. He merely changed the way he, and now his brothers, looked at the past.

A great contemporary example of someone who redeemed the past with actions in the future is the late Steve Jobs. In a speech at Stanford University in 2005, Jobs explained how the three worst events in his life turned out to be good things. Firstly, his dropping out of college enabled him to audit a course on calligraphy that inspired him to build into his first computers, which gave computer script and elegance that had previously only been available to professional printers. Secondly, he said that being fired from Apple led him to the start of a new company, NeXT, which helped him develop capabilities he could eventually bring back to Apple. It also led him to acquire Pixar Animation. Thirdly, Jobs said that his diagnosis of cancer gave him a new focus on life, and made him realize that time is limited.

There is a great lesson to learn from Yosef and his interpretation of his brother's actions. Our actions in the future can completely redeem those of the past and the way we look at the past. Something awful might happen to you, but remember that if you just try to make the best of it, it can be turned into good. We must always realize that everything is done by Hashem, and that He has a plan to do good for all of us. If we just recognize this, we can completely alter the way past events seem and make them good, just like Yosef did.

## Mordecai Simhaee Our Identity 10th grade

The first words of this week's parsha say, "veala shemot bnei yisrael habaim mitzraima (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 "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 that 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 Soloveitchik then explains that even though bnei yisrael had entered Egypt about 200 years earlier, they were not even considered citizens. We can also see this throughout history. In Germany, even the Jewish people who had arived in the middle ages, had supported Germany, fought for Germany, and were a integral part of the society, were wiped out in the Holocaust. This is sort of the essence of anti-Semitism. Jews are depicted as a stranger, because we do not assimilate ourselves into any other communities.

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 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 Solove-itchik says that there are two special relationships: the relationship between God and the Jews as well as a relationship between God and mankind in general. Usually, the Jewish people are involved in both of 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. In those cases we do involve ourselves with the rest of society. 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 mitzraima" 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 did the Jews join Egyptian society. It was as if they just arrived in Egypt at that moment. It is for that reason that the pasuk describes the Jews' arrival in Egypt in the present sense. Shabbat shalom umervurach!



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## STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: ARIEL KORORI

A Torah scholar was once traveling by ship together with many merchants, each transporting his wares. To pass the time, they took turns describing their goods and boasting of their business acumen. Finally they turned to the scholar, who had been busying himself with his studies.

"Where is your merchandise," they asked mockingly. "We don't see that you have anything with you."

"Oh," replied the scholar looking up from the scroll he was examining, "My product is far greater than yours."

The men looked around in surprise, but saw no packages on board belonging to him. Convinced he was bluffing, they scoffed at him and his invisible business.

Suddenly, their banter was disturbed by a shout. Pirates had attacked and the men scrambled in all directions, each struggling in vain to protect his precious cargo. But to no avail. The ruthless bandits carefully scoured the ship for anything of value. Only once they had taken everything aboard the ship did they allow the frightened passengers to disembark.

Upon dry land, the sorry, bedraggled group made their way to the closest city. They had nothing at all with them, not even a loaf of bread or a change of clothes.

The Torah scholar went directly to the study hall, where he immediately struck up a conversation with the learned Jews gathered there. The locals soon realized he was an accomplished scholar, and they offered him a respectable position. Within days, his needs were cared for and his newfound flock respectfully accompanied him whenever he went out.

Word reached the woebegone merchants of the kind stroke of fortune that had befallen their former traveling companion.

At their behest, he spoke to the local authorities and vouched for their genuine need.

He then chided them gently, reminding them of their conversation aboard the ship. "Isn't this what I told you? My business is greater than yours, for it endures forever."

This, says the Midrash, is the meaning of King Solomon's words: "For I give you a good portion, do not abandon my Torah."

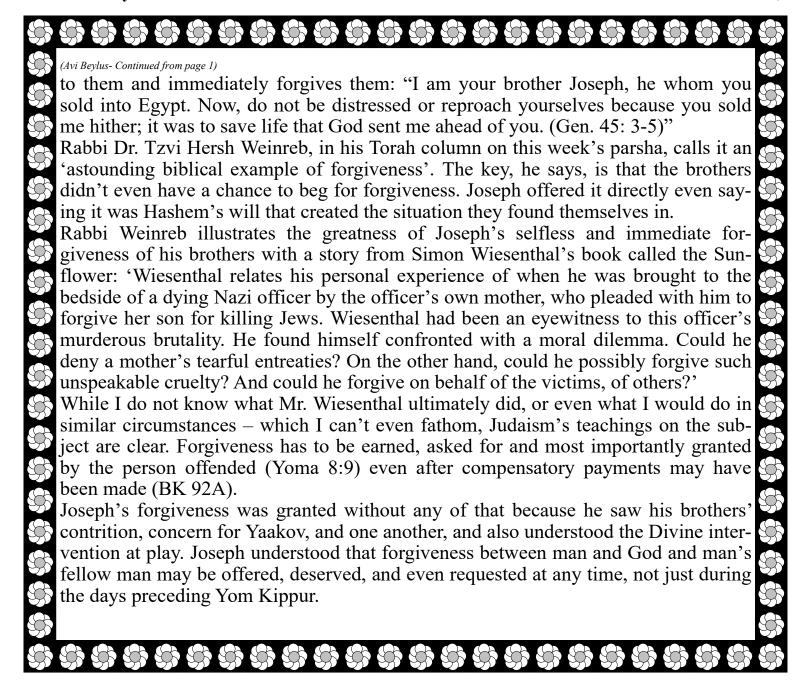
(Yoel Horwitz- Continued from page 1)

guilty. This feeling of guilt and being proven wrong only provokes a greater defensive attitude and a determination not to abandon the blind self-justification that led originally to the incident itself.

One can contrast these types of disagreements to those of Beit Shamai and Beit Hillel. There were about 312 of them, and they never led to any sort of breakup within the society of Israel. They were both right, even though as a practical matter, the opinions of Beit Hillel were followed in halachic practice. The Talmud proclaimed that the opinions of both groups were "the words of the living God." By avoiding unnecessary condemnation of Beit Shamai, even though its opinions were not to be adopted and practically implemented, the Talmud guaranteed the harmony of the rabbis and of Jewish society.

Within the framework of halacha and tradition, there are many varying opinions. Not all of them can be considered a fight and followed, but none of them should be the basis of personal dispute and vilification. The lessons of Yosef and his brothers and their controversy as opposed to the lessons that we learn from Bais Shamai and Beis Hillel should remain for us as a guide in our times and difficulties as well.

Adapted from Torah.org



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## Land For Pharaoh By: Dani Rosner, 11th Grade

Near the end of the Parsha, also able to buy the people - but he Yosef tells the Egyptians "I have didn't give them to Pharaoh. Yosef bought you today and your land for decided that he would buy the Egyp-Pharaoh", but shouldn't the wording tians so that they would become his in the pasuk be, "I bought you and property. Therefore, Yosef said to the your land today for Pharaoh?" When Egyptians, "Behold I have bought Yosef was appointed as the viceroy of you today (for myself) and your land Egypt Pharaoh told him, "You shall (I bought) for Pharaoh". When the be over my house and by your com- Egyptians felt intense hunger, they mand shall all my people be sus-came to Pharoah demanding bread. tained; only [by] the throne shall I Pharaoh advised them to go to Yosef outrank you" (41:40). When the fam- and do whatever he commanded. ine started in Egypt, the people used Rashi explains that the people comtheir savings to buy food. When the plained to Pharaoh that Yosef insisted people ran out of money, they sold that they be circumcised. Why would Yosef their livestock for food. As the Yosef make such a strange request of famine worsened, again they ap- the famine-stricken people? Accordproached Yosef and begged him to ing to halacha, when a Jew buys a give them food and were so desperate non-Jew as a slave, he is required to they sold their land and themselves as have him circumcised. Pharaoh, slaves to Pharoh and Yosef. The To- therefore told them, "Since Yosef had rah tells us, "Yosef bought all the permission to do whatever he wanted, land of Egypt for Pharaoh because and bought only your land for me but the Egyptians sold their land and the kept you for himself as slaves, he was land now became Pharaoh's" (47:20). right in requesting that you be cir-Since Yosef was the viceroy, he was cumcised."

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