



## *A Strange Conversation*

*By Jonathan Kazlow, 12th Grade*

In this week's Parsha, Yaakov, the monotheist, meets Pharoh, the king of Egypt and the most powerful man in the world. They could have discussed many things, such as the meaning of life or the famine. But, instead, they talk about age. This seemingly insignificant conversation had severe ramifications for Yaakov Avinu.

The Torah relates how Yosef presents his father to Pharoh. In Bereishis 47:9-10, the Torah relates: "Pharoh asked Yaakov, 'How old are you?' Yaakov answered, 'the years of my sojourns are one hundred thirty; few and bad ones; they have not reached the days of my forefathers in their sojourns.'"

There is a Midrash that notes the bitterness of Yaakov's response and makes an astonishing calculation. Yaakov lived to the age of 147. His father lived until 180, 33 years more than Yaakov. Yaakov, explains the Midrash, lost 33 years of his life due to the 33 words that were used as he cursed his life's struggles.

The Midrash evidently requires explanation. In the Torah's version of the story (and even in the loose translation), Yaakov did not use 33 words to curse his fate. That number is only arrived at if the original question "How old are you," and the words "and Pharoh asked Yaakov," are also counted in the 33. It is understandable that Yaakov was punished for the words that he spoke. But why would Yaakov be punished for a question posed to him, even if his response was improper?

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## *Yosef and the Tunnels: How Forgiveness Can Break Hatred and Save Lives*

*By Moshe Coronel, 10th Grade*

The most famous incident in this parsha, possibly one of the most famous in the entire Torah, is when Yosef says "But now do not be sad, and let it not trouble you that you sold me here, for it was to preserve life that God sent me before you." , Yosef forgives his brothers of all wrongdoing and tells them to approach him in a loving way.

The obvious question is, how did Yosef, after suffering for 22 years because of a cruel act of his brothers, react in such a peaceful manner? He would've been justified if he did something terrible to them and then revealed himself to them?

Perhaps we can learn the answer from what's going on in Israel today: the IDF is in the process of destroying the tunnels that were built by Hezbollah; tunnels that were intended to smuggle terrorists into Israel to kill innocent Israeli civilians. The soldiers in the IDF are comprised of many different places, from Dati Leumi to Chassidish to Yeshivish to Ashkenazi and Sephardi, and everything in between. Each sect of Judaism has its own grievances with

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### Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbet

## Parshas Vayigash Questions

1. In this parsha, in what context is the number five mentioned?
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. What part of the body is mentioned four times in this parsha?
4. Which two females from Yaakov's family does the Torah explicitly state as traveling down to Egypt?
5. 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)

### Answers

1. Yosef informs the brothers that five years of famine remain (Genesis 45:6). Yosef gives Benjamin five suits (Genesis 45:22). Yosef brings five of his brothers to meet Pharaoh (Genesis 47:2).
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. 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).
4. Dina and Serach bat Asher are the only females specifically listed as traveling down to Egypt (Genesis 46:15, 17).
5. 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).



1st Aliyah - In this Aliyah Yehuda approaches Yosef and appeals to him to allow Binyamin to return home to his father.

2nd Aliyah - In this Aliyah Yehuda continues his plea to Yosef and Yehuda asks that he (Yehuda) remain as a slave instead of Binyamin. At this point, Yosef reveals his identity to his brothers. Yosef reassures them that this is all part and was all part of a divine plan.

3rd Aliyah - In this Aliyah Yosef directs his brothers to quickly return to Eretz Cna'an and bring Yaakov and their families back to Egypt. Yosef promised to provide them with food until the famine ends. Pharaoh was informed that Yosef's family had arrived and he too instructs them to come to Egypt where he will give them the best of the land.

4th Aliyah - In this Aliyah the brothers go back to Eretz Cna'an. They have gifts from Pharaoh and from Yosef and they tell Yaakov that Yosef is alive and that he is the ruler over all of Egypt and the Torah tells us that the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived.

5th Aliyah - In this Aliyah Yaakov and his entire family leave Eretz Cna'an and go to Mitzrayim. On the way they stop in Be'er Sheva where Hashem tells Yaakov don't fear going down to Mitzrayim, you will be made into a great nation there. Hashem says that He will so to speak go down with him to Mitzrayim and Hashem will also bring him back up. The Aliyah then names the seventy people of Yaakov's family that went down to Mitzrayim.

6th Aliyah - In this Aliyah Yaakov arrives in Mitzrayim to the province of Goshen that Pharaoh had given his family. Yosef went to Goshen to meet his father and there is an emotional reunion after so many years. Yosef then prepares his family for meeting Pharaoh. Yosef tells his brothers to tell Pharaoh that they are shepherds and that they want to live only in Goshen and the brothers do this. Pharaoh agrees. Yaakov is then brought before Pharaoh and Yaakov blesses Pharaoh.

7th Aliyah - In this Aliyah we hear how the people of Egypt spent all of their money for food that Yosef sold them. When their money ran out they paid for food with their cattle and eventually they even sold themselves to Pharaoh in exchange for food. The Aliyah and the Parshah end by telling us that in the land of Goshen Yaakov's family prospered tremendously.

Transcribed from YU Torah



The complete edition of  
Rabbi Moshe Atik's Torah Teasers  
is available on AMAZON

# 10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz  
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by  
Eli Wiseman

## Saying a Bracha When Seeing a King or a President

Connection to Parshas Vayigash: Yehuda approached the second in command of Mitzrayim- Yosef.

**Q: What Bracha should a man or woman make if he sees a great Chacham?**

**A:** The Gemara (Berachos 58a) places a distinction between a Jewish Chacham and a non-Jewish Chacham.

For a Jewish Chacham, one recites Baruch...Shechalak Maychachmaso Lirayav *Blessed...Who has portioned of His wisdom to those who revere Him.*

For a Non-Jewish Chacham, one recites Baruch...Shenasan Maychachmaso L'basar V'dam *Blessed...Who has given of His wisdom to flesh and blood.*

**Q: What Bracha should one make if he sees the honor given to a king?**

**A:** The Gemara (ibid.) places another distinction between a Jewish king and a non-Jewish king.

For a Jewish king, one recites Baruch...Shechalak M'kvodo Lirayav *Blessed...Who has portioned of His honor with those who revere Him.*

For a non-Jewish king, one recites Baruch...Shenasan M'kvodo L'basar V'dam *Blessed...Who has given of His honor to flesh and blood.*

**Q: Is it important to see the honor given to a king?**

**A:** Further in the Gemara, R' Yochanan said: one should always strive to run toward kings of Israel (to greet them). And not only toward kings of Israel, but also toward kings of the nations of the world, so that if he is privileged, he will distinguish between the kings of Israel and the kings of the nations of the world.

Rashi explains the distinction will be contrasting the Kavod of a non-Jewish king to the Kavod of the Melech HaMoshiach.

**Q: How much can one sacrifice in order to see a king?**

**A:** The Mishna Berura (Siman 224 Sief Katan 13) quotes the Magen Avraham who says one can even stop his Torah learning to see a king.

The MA bases this ruling on the Gemara which rules the Kohanim would become Tamei a Tumas Midirabanan to greet a king. If it is important enough that one can violate a Issur Midirabanan,

so to one can stop his learning to greet a king.

**Q: Why is there a difference between the Bracha for a Jewish and non-Jewish Chochamim and kings?**

**A1:** Rambam (Hilchos Brachos Perek 10 Halacha 11) writes one says Baruch...Shenasan for both a Jewish and non-Jewish king.

**A2:** The Bais Yosef agrees with the Gemara (Berachos 58a) and gives two reasons for the difference between Shechalak for a Jewish king and Shenasan for non-Jewish king.

**Reason 1:** A Jewish Neshama is "cut out from the Kesay Hakavod" ,and therefore is a **Chalek** Eloka Mima'al *A portion of G-D from above.* A non-Jewish soul is more distant from Hashem, and therefore the Lashon is that Hashem gave it, but it wasn't a "portion of Him."

**Reason 2:** The BY quotes the Abudraham who explains the word Shechalak has a connotation of a portion that can expand or diminish based on the merit of the recipient which is more in line with a Jew whose spiritual status is either expanding or diminishing. Whereas a non-Jew was given his predestined life and does not really expand or diminish his spiritual status.

The Levush gives another reason. He says a Jewish person can only get a **Chaleck** portion of the wisdom of the Torah. Whereas A non-Jew can be given all of the wisdom of a secular subject.

The Sefer HaKono Olamo (Part 2 Siman 20) says the reasoning of the Levush works well with the distinction between Chochamim but not kings.

**Q: Which Bracha would one make if a Jew is a king over a non-Jewish land?**

**A:** It depends whether the Bracha is on the king or on what he possesses.

If the Bracha is dependent on the king himself, then one would make a Bracha for a Jewish king.

If the Bracha is dependent on what the king possesses, then one would probably say the Bracha for a non-Jewish king since the Jewish king rules over a non-Jewish land.

**Q: Which Bracha would one make if a Jewish Chocham was a Chocham in secular subjects?**

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# SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



*With Yaakov  
Fuchs*

Yehuda's plead to Yosef mentions his father, Yaakov Avinu, but not the sons of Binyamin. Asks the Kotzker Rebbe, why was Yehuda so concerned about Yaakov Avinu, but not about Binyamin's children? If Binyamin didn't come back home, not only would Yaakov Avinu be losing a son, but Binyamin had ten sons who would be losing their father! Says the Kotzker, a child will not grieve for their father as much as a parent grieves for their child. The Rebbe explains that the same holds true for us. At the end of the day, if Binyamin never came home to his children, they most likely would have gotten over it; however, Yaakov Avinu would have never gotten over it. We do not care for Hashem's anguish as much as He cares for our sorrow. Yes, we care tremendously about Hashem, but it does not compare to how much He cares about each one of us. It is a tremendous Yesod to realize that when Klal Yisrael is in Galus, Hashem is with us in the Galus too! Throughout the sometimes arduous journeys of life when we may be pained, it is important to realize that as much as we are pained, Hashem is pained much more to see His children suffering. This brings to mind the writing of the Aish Kodesh, Rav Kolyomous Kalmish Shapira HY"D, on Parshas Re'eh. He writes that the idea of hastaras panim is, in reality, our misinterpretation of Hashem's infinite chessed, and we have to realize that there is never real hastaras panim! It took someone like the Aish Kodesh, living in an inferno of 1940's Poland to give us this message. This is the message of self-introspection and Teshuva according to the Piaseczna. Sometimes when people struggle and are broken, they think Hashem is "hiding" from them. But if we take our challenges and work with them, realizing that this is an opportunity to return to Hashem, then we can see Hashem in the most difficult of places. Challenges are the catalyst for introspection and subsequent action. Hashem never hides, He is always with us. It is our duty to allow Him into the door. We must always remember the care that a Father has for His son, and the anguish it causes Him to see us suffering.

*(Jonathon Kazlow- Continued from page 1)*

At most, Yaakov should only be punished for the 25 words that he actually used.

In order to understand the Midrash one must understand the unspoken rules of diplomacy. The Ramban writes that world leaders do not normally greet each other with mundane questions such as "how old are you?" Yet those are the only recorded words of the conversation that ensued between Yaakov and Pharoh. "Obviously," explains the Ramban, "Yaakov looked so terrible and so aged that Pharoh was taken by surprise. He therefore disregarded diplomatic etiquette and asked the strange question. Yaakov's response explained why his appearance overbore his numeric age.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt'l explains why the Midrash is upset with Yaakov. Had Yaakov worn his suffering with more cheer, on the inside, he would not have looked as old as he did on the outside. Pharoh would not have been astonished and would never have asked the question, "How old are you?" Yaakov was punished for the behavior that prompted the query that resulted in open discontent of the fate he endured.

The Torah is teaching us a great lesson. No matter what life serves you, do not let the experience dwindle your spirit. One must never let his pain get to him in such a manner that it gets to someone else.

Have a good shabbos!



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## Attitude In Life

### By: Ari Katznelson, 11th Grade

In this week's parsha, the Torah describes the reunion between Yosef, his brothers, and ultimately his father Yaakov. The brothers' reaction to Yosef's decision to keep Binyamin in Mitzrayim lead Yosef to see that they had changed and would go to any lengths to protect their brother. That convinced Yosef that it was time to reveal himself. While reviewing the story of Yosef, some interesting points come up that teach us about how to live our lives. The first point is learned from Yosef. Yosef is the only biblical figure referred to specifically as "haTzaddik" -- "the righteous one."

Why is that? He wasn't totally innocent in this whole story. His behavior didn't exactly endear him to his brothers and there were many other exceptional people in the Torah, so what is it about Yosef that earned him the title of Yosef Hatzaddik?

Yosef possessed one character trait that was different: He took responsibility for others. Even though he did not go about it in the smartest way, Yosef was concerned about the mistakes his brothers were making and therefore spoke to his father about them. In Potiphar's house and when he was in prison, he ended up running the show. When he left prison, he ended up running all of Egypt. When his brothers come to Egypt, he provided for the whole family throughout the famine. We often think of a Tzaddik as someone who does a lot of good. The Torah tells us: It's not enough to just "do" a lot of good.

In order to be truly good, you have to take responsibility for others. That is what made Yosef unique. The second point is learnt from Yaakov Avinu. When Yaakov arrived in Mitzrayim, and met Paroah, Paroah asked him: How old are you? Yaakov answered that he was 130 years old. Yaakov then added: "The years of my life were few and bad." We learn that Yaakov was punished for saying these words, and even for the words that Paroah used when asking him how old he was. For the 33 words used, he lost 33 years of his life. But why? He did have a rough life, but what did he do that was so wrong?

Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz explains that there were two problems. The first was that Yaakov complained, but the second was that Yaakov allowed the stress of his life to weigh him down to the point that he looked older than he was. From this we learn that our attitude is extremely important. The way we choose to live our lives, our emuna in Hashem, the way we approach situations help mold us into who we are. If we can maintain a positive, happy outlook, we will experience less stress and anxiety. This attitude and approach, will allow us to deal with life's challenges more effectively and easily.

*(Moshe Coronel- Continued from page 1)*

each other, yet they band together for the safety of Klal Yisrael.

The answer is that Yosef understood that there was a fork in the road that just appeared before him: his brothers, his former tormentors, appeared before him, defenseless and at his mercy. But Yosef also understood that there was a pivotal lesson that should be taught: anger and revenge won't solve the problem. Had he reacted in a dark or violent manner, that may have exacerbated the problem which could've led to more violence, a vicious cycle of revenge that would've destroyed the Jewish people in its tracks. Rather, Yosef extended a hand of friendship and peace, while imparting a powerful lesson to the brothers: Whatever resentment they harbored toward Yosef, however justified they may have been, didn't give them the right to violate Judaism's most valuable characteristic: Achdus, a trait that has kept the Jewish people going through bad times and worse times.

The lesson we can learn from Yosef is obvious: Whatever bitterness that two parties have with one another shouldn't be so great that it would desecrate the ultimate bond of brotherhood amongst us.

Have a Great Shabbos!

## Instant Understanding

**By: Ephraim Herrmann, 9th Grade**

From the moment the brothers came to Egypt, perplexing events began to take place. First, Yosef accused them of being spies. Then, he wanted them to bring their younger brother to Egypt and took Shimon hostage. Additionally, the Viceroy (Yosef) seemed to know the birth order of all the brothers. The brothers said "What is this that G-D has done to us" (42:28).

The brothers became very frustrated with their situation and could not make sense of the Viceroy's actions. When Yosef said to the brothers, "Ani Yosef" (I am Yosef), suddenly, with that one phrase, everything strange that had happened until that point was clear to them. All of the questions that they had beforehand were now answered.

Rabbi Twersky, in his book *Living Each Week*, quotes the Chofetz Chaim who says that just like Yosef said "Ani Yosef" and everything suddenly made sense to the brothers, Hashem will one day say "Ani Hashem" to us. When He does, everything will suddenly fall into place and make sense. All of the questions regarding why certain things in the world seem strange, out of place, or unfair, will become clear to us. There will be no more questions needed to ask and everything will make perfect sense. May the day quickly come that Hashem will say "Ani Hashem" and reveal Himself to Bnei Yisroel.



## BUT THATS NONE OF MY BUSINESS

**BZ Scheinman, 10th Grade**

The pasuk in this week's parsha reads "And the brothers told him (Yaakov) that Yosef was still alive and that he ruled throughout the land of Egypt. But his (Yaakov's) heart rejected it because he didn't believe them" [Bereshis 45:26]. The next pasuk says that they told him everything that they discussed with Yosef. Finally, the pasuk says that Yaakov saw the wagons (agahlos) that Yosef sent him, and he believed the brothers and his spirit was revived.

Our Sages make a play on words (agahlah / eglah) and explain that Yosef was indicating to his father that when they were last together they were in the middle of studying the laws of the decapitated calf (Eglah Arufah). This is why the pasuk says "the wagons that Yosef sent", when in fact the wagons were really sent by Pharaoh.

Rav Nissan Alpert, zt"l, gives a beautiful explanation regarding why this specific message revived Yaakov's spirit. The law of the decapitated calf is done when a dead body is found between two cities. The elders of the nearest city come and announce their innocence in the matter. They never saw this person, and they were not

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# MASTER PLAN

Dylan Broder. 11th Grade

Yosef is still alive! At this moment of utter shock and disbelief, the brothers of Yosef begin to realize that they are part of the grand plan of Hashem. They realized that it was meant to be that Yosef was sold. They believed he was dead. Who would have thought that he would go from being at the bottom of a pit, to Egypt, to prison, and ultimately become viceroy. The brothers realized that this was all from Hashem. They understood that He had orchestrated this whole incident in order to ensure the survival of the Jews. Without Yosef the Jews may not have been allowed to stay in Mitzrayim and receive food and they definitely would not have gotten the type of accommodations they had, had Yosef not been viceroy.

Rav Dovid Feinstein writes that we see this understanding of the brothers when the brothers say Od Yosef Chai. The gematria of Od is eighty. This alludes to the eighty years that Yosef served as viceroy in Egypt. It was these eighty years that allowed the Jews to survive the next couple hundred years in Galus.

Our mission in life is to do our part in Hashem's master plan by serving Him and doing His will. It is only when we do our part and realize that we are part of a much larger scheme that our life takes on new meaning and joy. Joy knowing that everything is run by Hashem and Hashem only does what's best for us. This allows us to see the light even in the darkest of times and carry the light and inspiration of Chanukah - which officially ended earlier this week - and carry it over to the rest of the year.

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Maggid in Mezeritch, such a sentence would have never left your mouth. The Rebbe teaches us how to value each and every individual soul." The words, said with such honesty, entered the rabbi's heart. It was sometime later when he decided to travel to Mezeritch. He quickly developed a love for Chassidic teachings and a love for the Maggid. In time, he became one of the Maggid's greatest students. Future generations remember him as Rabbi Chaim Cheikel, Rebbe of Amdur. When Rabbi Chaim returned home, he followed Rabbi Schneur Zalman's suggestion and pursued a match between his daughter and the bagel peddler. His perception of simple Jews had gone through a transformation. With his fresh perspective, he soon discovered that the groom, beneath his seemingly simple and coarse exterior, possessed a lofty and sensitive soul.

Adapted from Chabad.org

*(BZ Scheinman- Continued from page 6)*

■ aware of and played no role in his murder. As part of this ritual a calf is decapitated as a type of atonement offering by these elders [Devorim 21:1-9].

■ What is the basic theme of this mitzvah? The fundamental idea is the concept of "All of Israel are responsible for one another" (Kol Yisrael areivin zeh l'zeh). After all, why was it necessary for the elders of the neighboring city to bring an atonement offering? Today, one's next door neighbor could be murdered and the neighbors wouldn't even notice. People see others being mugged in the subway and they look the other way. "It's none of my business."

■ The Torah has a different outlook on life. Even if this person was unknown, even if he was from a different city, if his dead body was found near a city, the residents of that city bear a certain degree of responsibility. This is the meaning of Kol Yisrael areivin zeh l'zeh. We each have a responsibility for our fellow Jew. There is no such

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**A:** In his Teshuvos, Rav Menashe Klein says this person would say the Baruch...Shenasan and maybe one should not say a Bracha at all since this Jew is using his wisdom for secular studies instead of Torah  
The Sefer HaKono Olamo (Part 2) argues with Rab Klein's Teshuva

**Q: What type of leader would warrant a Bracha?**

**A1:** The Radvaz in a Teshuva (Part 1 Siman 296) and the Orchos Chaim (Hilchos Brachos Os 49) say only one who has the ability to execute or pardon warrants a Bracha.

In Yechava Daas (Part 2 Siman 28), R' Ovadia Yosef quotes this Shita and agrees with it.

**A2:** In Teshuvos V'hanhagos (Part 2 Siman 139), Rav Sternbuch writes only a leader who is honored warrants a Bracha because the Gemara in Berachos (58a) is talking about distinguishing between the honor given to a non-Jewish king and the Melech HaMoshiach.

**A practical difference is a president.**

If a Bracha is only made for a leader that can execute or pardon (it does not matter if he is good or not), then the president and maybe even a governor would warrant a Bracha. This is the opinion of R' Moshe Stern.

One can argue a governor would not require a Bracha because he is not the most powerful person in the land.

Rav Schachter Poskins that a president warrants a Bracha with the Name of Hashem and specifically this president because he, more than other presidents, is not afraid to use his power.

If a Bracha is only made for a leader that is honored, maybe one would not make a Bracha for a president since he has a term limit, can be impeached, and he shares his power with 2 other branches. This is the opinion of R' Sternbuch which he says one should make the Bracha, just in case, but without the Name of Hashem.

**Another practical difference is a queen like the Queen of England.**

If it is about power, then one would not say the Bracha with the Name of Hashem.

If it is about honor, then one would say a Bracha with the Name of Hashem because the queen is honored.

**Q: Would one say a Bracha for a female president?**

**A1:** The Sefer Shiarim V'tziyonim B'halacha (Part 1 Siman 60 Os 7) says the Gemara (Kesubos 17a) explains a person cannot stare at the Choson's Kalah even if one's intentions are to make the Kalah more beloved by the Choson. From this Gemara, he suggests since a person cannot look at a woman, one would not make a Bracha on a female leader.

**There are a couple of problems with this reasoning.**

1) In Be'are Moshe (Part 2 Siman 9 Os 4), R' Moshe Stern says since in Halacha one is only prohibited from staring at a woman, they reject the Psak of the Sefer Shiarim V'tziyonim B'halacha.

2) Furthermore, one does not even have to see a leader to make a Bracha; it is clear from the Gemara (Berachos 58a) that it is good enough to just see the honor given to the leader such as a parade.

**A2:** Rav Sternbuch suggests maybe one would not say a Bracha for a female leader because the Torah (Parshas Shoftim 17:15) says the Bnei Yisrael can appoint a king over themselves. The Sifre comments on this Pasuk and says the Pasuk is referring to a male king and not a female leader. So, perhaps a female leader is not recognized in Jewish Halacha as a leader, therefore, no Bracha is required.

**There are again a couple of problems with this reasoning.**

1) The whole reason to meet a non-Jewish leader is to distinguish between the non-Jewish leaders and the Jewish leaders, so why does it matter if a female leader cannot be a leader in Jewish Halacha.

2) Furthermore, the Minchas Chinuch (Mitzvah 497) writes perhaps the prohibition not to appoint a female as leader is only by appointing. However, in a case where the King died and only has daughters, perhaps a woman can inherit the throne. According to this, a female leader can be recognized in Jewish Halacha.

**Q: In what context does one need to see the honor of the leader in order to be obligated to say the Bracha for a King?**

**A:** R' Ovadia Yosef quotes a number of opinions that say if the king was wearing normal clothing and was not accompanied by an entourage, one would not make the Bracha.

The Sefer Pskei Teshuvos holds like this opinion and says one does not make a Bracha on the president because he wears a suit which is a normal type of clothing in America.

Rav Ovadia is not sure if one makes a Bracha if he sees the president, so he advises to make a Bracha without the Name of Hashem.

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Interestingly enough, Rav Sternbuch told over that R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld met the king of Jordan in private, without the royal entourage, and made a Bracha. Rav Sternbuch suggests maybe R' YC Sonnenfeld would agree to the fact that one is not obligated to run to greet a king if the king is not honored (since there would be no distinguishment between the honor of the king of the nations to that of the Melech HaMoshiach), but to make a Bracha one would.

**Q: Would one make a Bracha if he saw a leader on TV?**

**A:** R' Ovadia Yosef writes this is like the Halacha (Birkay Yosef Choshen Mishpat Siman 35 Sief 11), derived from the Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 24b), that one would not say Kiddush Levana on a projected image of the moon since a projected image does not qualify as "seeing" the object. So, one would not say the Bracha.

Projected images are a bigger topic in Halacha, but for simplicity, one can suggest projected might not work to fulfill an active Mitzvah but it might work in a passive manner. Tzarich Iyun.

For example, if one is lighting Chanukah candles and livestreams it, it may work to fulfill Parsumay Nisa because the people watching on the livestream are just passively watching.

But if one would say that one makes a Bracha for a president and seeing via a TV is considered "seeing", then one can fulfill 100 Brachos just by watching the News! (Joke by Rabbi Lebowitz)

But in all seriousness, this probably would not work because you would probably need to see the leader once every 30 days. According to this, a cabinet member and the like would not need to say a Bracha every time they saw the president.

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thing as "It's none of my business."

That is why the elders bring the atonement offering. In truth it is not only an atonement for that neighboring city. It is brought by that neighboring city as an atonement for the entire Jewish people. In some respect, even the far distant Jews share the responsibility for the tragedy. One Jew's murder is the "business" of every single other Jew.

This, then, was the message of the Decapitated Calf (Eglah Arufah). If we look at the life of the righteous Yosef, we see that he was in fact preoccupied with the idea of his responsibility for his fellow brethren. When the Torah tells us that Yosef brought "evil tidings" about his brothers to his father, what was he telling his father? Our Sages tell us that he reported that they were not treating the sons of the handmaidens properly. The sons of Leah were discriminating against the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah.

True, he could have ignored the matter. He could have said, "This is not my business". But that was not Yosef. His entire being was dedicated to a sense of responsibility for each of the sons of Israel (Yaakov). He literally lived a life of "Kol Yisrael Areivin zeh l'zeh". It is my business.

When Yaakov sent Yosef to check up on his brothers, Yosef knew very well how his brothers felt towards him. He knew it would be a dangerous mission, as it indeed turned out to be. Why then did he go? Because of the sense of responsibility, the sense of "Kol Yisrael Areivin zeh l'zeh".

This is why Yaakov responded with disbelief when he was told that Yosef was alive and the ruler of all the land of Egypt. He could not understand how it could be that Yosef, who was always so concerned with his fellow man, could be in such a powerful position now and have ignored the difficult situation of his father, never writing to tell him where he was. "My son Yosef would not ignore his father and family during all the years of famine, not to send them a message. "The Yosef I knew could not be alive." That is why Yaakov did not initially believe his sons.

But then when they told him "All the words of Yosef," something changed. The brothers told Yaakov that Yosef told them "G-d sent me here for providing you with salvation" (Imichyah shlachani HaShem). When Yaakov heard that Yosef felt that his whole reason for being in Egypt was so that he could take care of his family, then Yaakov began to believe.

And when Yaakov saw the wagons, when he understood that Yosef still recognized the implicit message of Eglah Arufah, that every Jew is responsible for his fellow Jew, then Yaakov knew for sure that his son Yosef was still alive, and his spirit was revived.

# STORIES OF GREATNESS

## TOLD OVER BY: TZVI GRUSHKO

"Zalmany," called the Maggid of Mezrich to his youngest student, using his nickname for Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. "It's time for you to go out for a trip." Rabbi Schneur Zalman didn't ask any questions. Gathering his few possessions, he began his journey. With no destination to guide him, he slowly traversed sprawling forests and small towns, hoping to finally encounter what his rebbe had in mind. Rabbi Schneur Zalman spent the holy day of Yom Kippur in a small village and continued on his way until he reached Amdur, Western Belarus, where he secured a lodge for himself hours before Sukkot. After the festival prayers were concluded, someone approached Rabbi Schneur Zalman with an invitation to dine in his sukkah. Rabbi Schneur Zalman accepted the offer and, together with a few other guests, followed his host home. Noticing his guest's scholarly air, the host asked that he share some Torah thoughts. Like a sea with no end, Rabbi Schneur Zalman began to expound upon the rich, inner meaning of Sukkot. Drafts of wine punctuated the beautiful words of Torah. A warm and close bond spread over all the guests, who pushed to huddle closer around Rabbi Schneur Zalman. The pitter-patter of a fresh drizzle drummed outside the sukkah for a few minutes before turning into a roaring downpour. Yet, not a drop spoiled the special atmosphere contained inside the sukkah, as though some miraculous canopy repelled the rain. As the evening progressed into late night, the wine supply began to run low. Fearing the lively mood would be cut short by the lack of spirits, one of the participants volunteered to hunt for some more. Stepping outside the sukkah, he found himself pelted by the cascading rain. It had been raining for quite a while too, as clearly evident by the puddles of mud in the sopping grass. Pressing his coat collar tighter for protection, the volunteer sprinted through the deluge to the house of the local rabbi. He saw the rabbi standing at his window, watching the storm with unease. One of the holiday's chief observances was dining in the sukkah, and

the rain hadn't abated enough to allow him to do so. "What in the world are you doing outside during such a downpour?" asked the rabbi. The man explained in wonderment that there was a guest—a young rabbi—in their sukkah teaching sublime Torah thoughts, mesmerizing everyone gathered. They had been enjoying themselves for so long that he was now on a hunt for some more wine. "But the rain?" spluttered the rabbi. "Our sukkah doesn't have rain!" the man shrugged. The rabbi accompanied the man back to the sukkah where the mysterious rabbi sat. Indeed, the sukkah was as dry as his house! Respectfully, Rabbi Schneur Zalman fell silent at the rabbi's entrance. He motioned to the new arrival to begin speaking, but the rabbi waved it off, choosing to listen instead. Rabbi Schneur Zalman honored the request and continued speaking. The following day, the rabbi invited Rabbi Schneur Zalman to sit in his sukkah as a guest. For three days, the pair discussed a range of Torah topics. "Who are you?" the rabbi finally burst out. "I am Schneur Zalman," Rabbi Schneur Zalman said. "I'm a student of the Maggid of Mezeritch." "You have a rebbe as well?" The local rabbi failed to understand why such a great man needed a rebbe to guide him. He then asked, "Do you have friends—students of the Maggid—that are perhaps interested in a match? I have a daughter who would like to get married, and we are looking for an appropriate Torah scholar." As the two deliberated over the subject, the chants of a peddler slowly grew louder through the open windows. "Bagels for a kopek! Bagels for a kopek! Bagels for a kopek, kopek for bagels!" "And what's wrong with the bagel peddler?" Rabbi Schneur Zalman inquired, speaking up over the hollars. "Our family comes from a long line of Torah scholars," responded the rabbi, sounding wounded at Rabbi Schneur Zalman's suggestion. "His, on the other hand . . . Well, he's a bagel peddler!" Rabbi Schneur Zalman sighed. "You can now understand why a rebbe is required even for scholars. If you were to travel to the

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