

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE POWER OF LOVE

**“And he (Yosef) fell on his brother Binyamin’s neck and wept. And Binyamin wept on Yosef’s neck.” (45:14)**

‘Free Love’ was a much touted slogan in the sixties. Actually, it wasn’t so much about ‘Love’ as lust. And ‘Free’ meant freedom to ‘do my own thing’ at all costs. Which meant that someone else wound up picking up the tab emotionally. That kind of ‘free’ is pretty expensive.

However, ‘Free Love’ **does** exist.

When someone loves his fellow man not for any reason, but merely and purely because he is a creation of the Master of the World and a reflection of His Majesty, then this Free Love is a love which hastens the final redemption.

The *Beis Hamikdash* (Holy Temple) was destroyed because of ‘Free Hate’ — baseless hatred. What will hasten its return is the reverse — ‘Free Love’ — love which doesn’t depend on conditions.

“And he wept” — Yosef wept about the two *Batei Mikdash* to be built in Binyamin’s portion of the land that would eventually be destroyed. “And Binyamin wept” about the *Mishkan* (Tent of Meeting) that would be erected in Yosef’s portion of the land and also would eventually be destroyed.

Why were Yosef and Binyamin crying now, at this time of consummate joy at their re-uniting, over events which were thousands of years in the future?

Furthermore, why were they crying over the **other’s** loss and not their own?

When the brothers encountered each other after 22 years of separa-

tion, they realized that what had kept them apart was ‘Free Hate’ — the hatred of the brothers for Yosef. Immediately, they saw the future destruction of the Temple which would be caused by ‘Free Hate.’ They cried, for just as Free Hate had separated them all these years, so too it would destroy the Temple in the future.

The cure for free hate is ‘free love’ — to feel such empathy that the pain of one’s fellow is as one’s own.

**“...he wanted to communicate to Yosef the depth of his feelings for words which come from the heart, enter the heart.”**

That’s why each cried over the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* of the other. Yosef and Binyamin were showing a path for generations unborn, teaching us the way to cure ‘free hate’.

For even though Binyamin’s *Beis Hamikdash* would not be built until Yosef’s *Mishkan* would be destroyed — its existence was predicated on the others demise — nevertheless Binyamin cried over the destruction of the *Mishkan*.

Binyamin would have preferred the *Beis Hamikdash* never to have been built, and that Yosef’s *Mishkan* would have stood forever. Such is the power of ‘free love.’

• Based on Rabbi Y. M’Kuzmir  
in *Iturei Torah*

### ALL WILL BE REVEALED

**“And Yosef said to his brothers ‘I am Yosef.’ (45:3)**

When we study history and we learn of wars, pogroms and holocaust; when we read of natural disasters in the newspapers, and see pictures of continents ravaged by famine and disease, people ask “Where is G-d?”

From the moment the brothers came to Egypt to buy food they encountered one disaster after another. The brothers asked each other “Why is Hashem doing this to us?”

With three small words “I am Yosef,” all the brothers’ questions were answered. In a flash, the purpose of all the heartache of the previous 22 years became blindingly clear. So too, in the future, when the world hears the three words “I am Hashem,” all the dilemmas of history will be solved in an instant.

• Chafetz Chaim

### THE ARTICULATE SPEECH OF THE HEART

**“And Yehuda approached (Yosef) and said, ‘Please, my master, allow your servant to speak in the ears of my master.’” (44:18)**

In Czarist Russia many harsh decrees were enacted against the Jewish People.

The Chafetz Chaim once went to plead against such a decree before a high government official. Since the Chafetz Chaim spoke no Russian, and the government official spoke no Yiddish, an interpreter stood waiting.

The Chafetz Chaim spoke with the feeling and sincerity that can emanate only from a heart as pure as his, and when he finished, silence

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**W**ith the discovery of the goblet in Binyamin's sack, the brothers are confused. Yehuda alone steps forward and eloquently but firmly petitions Yosef for Binyamin's release, offering himself instead. As a result of this act of total selflessness, Yosef finally has irrefutable proof that his brothers are different people from the ones who cast him into the pit, and so, he now reveals to them that he is none other than their brother Yosef. The brothers shrink from him in shame, but Yosef consoles them, telling them that everything has been part of Hashem's plan. He sends them back to their father Yaakov, with a message to come and reside in the land of Goshen. At first, Yaakov cannot accept the news, but when he recognizes hidden signs in the message which positively identify the sender as his son Yosef, his spirit is revived. Yaakov together with all his family and possessions set out for Goshen. Hashem communicates with Yaakov in a vision at night. He tells him not to fear going down to Egypt and

its negative spiritual consequences, because it is there that Hashem will establish the Children of Yisrael as a great nation even though they will be dwelling in a land steeped in immorality and corruption. The Torah lists Yaakov's offspring, and hints to the birth of Yocheved, who will be the mother of Moshe Rabbeinu. Seventy souls in total descend into Egypt, where Yosef is reunited with his father after 22 years of separation. He embraces his father and weeps, overflowing with joy. Yosef secures the settlement of his family in Goshen. Yosef takes his father Yaakov and five of the least threatening of his brothers to be presented to Pharaoh, and Yaakov blesses Pharaoh. Yosef instructs that in return for grain, all the people of Egypt must give everything to Pharaoh, including themselves as his slaves. Yosef then redistributes the population, except for the Egyptian priests who are directly supported by a stipend from Pharaoh. The Children of Yaakov/Yisrael become settled, and their numbers multiply greatly.

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## SING MY SOUL INSIGHTS INTO THE SHABBOS ZEMIRO

### HAMAVDIL "THE ONE WHO DIVIDES.."

"Where, please, is the G-d Who  
created me Who places  
songs in the night?"

**T**hings happen to us, which seem because of our limited vision, to be misfortunes. In the end they turn out to have been for our benefit and causes for rejoicing and singing.

In this zemer that we sing as the sacred light of the Shabbat fades into

the comparative darkness of the weekdays, we reflect on this aspect of Hashem's merciful relationship with us. Even in the darkest of circumstances, when it seems that our fortunes are as black as night, we must remember to sing with the confidence that everything will turn out for the best. Hashem, Who created me, places the cause for songs in the very darkness of human existence.

Dedicated In Memory of  
**RABBI BORUCH MOSHE SICKER, OBM**

לע"נ  
**הרב ברוך משה בן חיים ז"ל**  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why did Yehuda say his missing brother died?
2. Why did Yosef send everyone away before revealing his identity to his brothers?
3. Why did Binyamin weep on Yosef's neck?
4. Where did Pharaoh offer to settle Yaakov and his family?
5. Why did Yosef send old wine to Yaakov?
6. What did Yosef mean when he told his brothers "Don't dispute along the way?"
7. What was the last subject Yaakov taught Yosef before Yosef was sold?
8. Why did Hashem tell Yaakov, "Do not fear going down to Egypt" (46:9)?
9. Hashem told Yaakov that He would bring him out of Egypt (46:4). To what did this allude?
10. What happened to the property that Yaakov acquired in Padan Aram?
11. Name Yaakov's two granddaughters.
12. Shaul ben HaCanaanis is listed as one of Shimon's sons. Who was his mother?
13. Where was Yocheved born?
14. Yosef himself harnessed his own chariot, instead of letting a servant do it. Why?
15. What did Yaakov do when Yosef appeared before him?
16. Why were shepherds an abomination in the eyes of the Egyptians?
17. What blessing did Yaakov give Pharaoh when he left his presence?
18. How many years did the famine last in Egypt?
19. Yosef resettled the land of Egypt, forcing the inhabitants to move from city to city. What were his two motives for doing so?
20. Who were the *kohanim* whose fields were not bought by Yosef (47:22)?

## BONUS QUESTION

Last week we read that Yehuda said: **"Behold, we are slaves to my lord; we, as well as the person in whose hand the goblet was found."** Yosef replied: **"G-d forbid I should do such a thing! Only the person in whose hand the goblet was found shall be my slave."** This week we read: **"And Yehuda approached."** (44:16-18) Yehuda first offers all the brothers including Binyamin as slaves. But when Yosef declares his intention to free all of them except Binyamin, Yehuda protests, even speaking harshly. What accounts for this change in Yehuda's attitude?

## I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"And Yosef provided his father, his brothers and his father's entire household with food **enough for even the little children.**" (47:12) Little children need lots of food, because they crumble up more than they actually eat!

• Sforno

## HAFTORAH: YEchezkel 37:15-28

### TWO CHIPS OFF THE OLD BLOCK

One of the ways that a prophecy becomes irreversible is if it is reinforced by a symbolic action.

In this week's Haftorah, the prophet Yechezkel foretells that, in the time of the final redemption, the two halves of the Jewish people, symbolized by Yehuda and Yosef, will be brought together like two blocks of wood. Hashem tells Yechezkel *"Join them together [so that they] look like one. They shall be one in your hands."* (37:17)

Even though nothing could be more separate than two blocks of wood, eventually these two blocks will become one. And even though only Hashem can perform the miracle of making one block out of two, for us to deserve that Hashem will accelerate the redemption, we must "look like one;" i.e., the Jewish People must be united and free from malice and baseless hatred.

For although the redemption is irreversible and inevitable, it is in our hands to delay it or to make it happen today.

• Based on *The Midrash Says*

### THE SHATTERED HALVES

"Say to them 'Thus says my Lord Hashem/Elohim: Behold! — I take

*the wooden tablet of Yosef which is in Ephraim's hand, and of the tribes of Yisrael his comrades, and shall place them with it together with the wooden tablet of Yehuda, and I will make them one wooden tablet, and they shall become one in My hand."* (37:19-20)

Throughout the centuries of exile, the eye of the prophet sees the Jewish People still divided into the two antagonistic kingdoms of Yehuda and Ephraim.

The stamp of Ephraim/Yisrael is religious nihilism —fanatical enmity towards every specifically Jewish point of view, and indiscriminate tolerance for every other point of view.

On the other hand, Yehuda/Yisrael cannot escape the reproach that he picks out which mitzvos he wants to keep, and those that he keeps he performs more or less mechanically.

When these two shattered halves of the Jewish People are again united, it will not be a sad compromise of 'murdering the Torah;' with Ephraim/Yisrael making superficial concessions to the right, producing a 'Kosher-Style' *smorgasbord* of *glatt treif* on the one hand, while Yehuda/Yisrael, the 'fanatical ultra-Orthodox' (as they appear to Ephraim/Yisrael), 'moderate' their demands to comply with the 'modern world.'

Rather, Hashem promises that both will be refined and purified, assured of help to achieve this purity, and these **"two wooden tablets"** will become **"one in My hand."**

• Adapted from Rabbi Mendel Hirsch

## WEEKLY DAF

### CHULLIN 117 - 123

#### SAVING THE SKIN

The skin of a human, as well as the skin of certain forms of animal life, has the same status as his flesh regarding the laws of purity. If one comes into physical contact with the skin of a corpse, or is together with it under one roof, he becomes impure, just as if he would have had the same encounter with the corpse itself or any part of it.

The Sage Ulla explains that according to Torah Law the skin of a corpse does not contaminate one with impurity. When the Torah (*Bamidbar* 19:16) states that even a part of a corpse contaminates, it cites a bone as the classic example. Based on this, our Sages (*Mesechta Nidah* 55a) conclude that only something like a bone, which does not restore itself, contaminates with impurity, but skin, which grows back after it is removed, does not contaminate with impurity.

Why then did our Sages decree that the skin of a human should contaminate with impurity?

They were concerned, explains Ulla, lest someone be callous enough to use the skins of his deceased parents as a mattress for his bed. In order to discourage this they decreed a status of impurity.

But, one may ask, "Since it is forbidden to derive any benefit from any corpse, would this alone not have sufficed as a reason for the decree, without recourse to the extreme issue of misusing a par-

ent's skin? This question is raised by Tosefos in a half dozen places, and we here present the three most prominent solutions proposed:

- One has easier access to the skin of a parent than he does to other corpses, and it was this accessibility which triggered the decree.

- The prohibition to benefit from the skin of a corpse is not of Torah origin, and was only decreed by the Sages out of concern that one would benefit from the skin of his parents in the aforementioned manner.

- Even if the prohibition against benefiting from the skin of any corpse is of Torah origin, this alone would not have motivated the Sages to decree impurity in order to discourage anyone from violating this prohibition, since the probability is not so high. But since there was a concern that someone might not only violate this prohibition but also show such gross disrespect for his parents they made this decree even though the probability was low.

• *Chullin* 122a

#### THE SKIN THAT WAS SAVED

In the repetition of the *Mussaf* of Yom Kippur we traditionally shed tears as we recount the tragic deaths of the ten great martyrs of Israel so cruelly persecuted by the Romans. One of them, Rabbi Yishmael the *Kohen Gadol*, features very prominently in this account based on the

tradition of the Sages.

It is he who used the Holy Name to ascend to Heaven and confirm that there was no escape from the Divine decree calling for their martyrdom. And it was he who wept so profusely upon the death of the first martyr, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, the head of the Sanhedrin. The daughter of the cruel emperor was attracted by his wailing and was so fascinated by his extraordinary beauty that she asked her father to spare his life. When this request was refused she asked that the skin of his face be removed and preserved. This was indeed done while he was yet alive, and the cry he emitted when his tormentors reached the place where he usually put his tefillin shook the heavens until Hashem restored order by reiterating that this was all part of the Divine decree.

This skin of Rabbi Yishmael, it appears from our section of the Talmud, remained a precious talisman for Roman rulers. The rule is stated that when a traveling legion of heathen soldiers enters a house, it is considered to have contracted a state of impurity, because there is no legion which does not carry along with it a few skins of the heads of corpses (as magic charms for victory in war – Rashi). As a support for this apparently startling revelation (perhaps familiar to us from the practice of many ancient tribes of scalping enemies) the Talmud cites the example of Roman rulers who wore the headskin of Rabbi Yishmael on their heads as a good luck charm.

• *Chullin* 123a

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## PARSHA INSIGHTS

filled the room.

The interpreter started to speak. "Your honor, the Jew claims..." The Russian government official raised his hand and said "No translation will be necessary... I understood every word..."

As a result of this meeting, the decree was subsequently revoked.

Until he revealed his true identity, Yosef spoke to the brothers only through an interpreter, and thus Yehuda was under the impression that he didn't understand Hebrew.

Nevertheless, Yehuda approached Yosef and wanted to speak "in his ears." He was aware that the *content* of his words would

not be understood, but he wanted to communicate to Yosef the *depth of his feelings*, for 'words which come from the heart, enter the heart.'

• Based on *Growth through Torah*, by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

#### WITH ALL MY HEART

"He (Yosef) fell on his (father's) neck, and wept exceedingly." (45:14)

Yosef poured out his heart in a sea of tears at the emotional release of seeing his father after so many years. However, Yaakov's reaction is not mentioned at all.

**In fact, at that very moment,**

**Yaakov was reciting the Shema.**

Why did Yaakov choose this, of all times, to say *Shema*?

A *tzaddik* harnesses every opportunity and emotion to serve Hashem. When Yaakov felt a supreme surge of joy and love at the sight of his beloved son, his first wish was to channel his emotions into a sublime expression of love for his Creator.

Thus he recited the *Shema*, the ultimate acceptance of Hashem's sovereignty: "And you shall love Hashem, your G-d **with all your heart...**"

• *Gur Aryeh*

## DIVINE RHYME IN 4/4 TIME

Yerachmiel Garfield from  
<yeshiva@netmedia.net.il>

Dear Rabbi,  
What is the deal with the name of Hashem when singing Shabbat songs? I've noticed many don't say the actual name of Hashem, it makes me wonder what the author of the song had in mind? If we are not to say it why did they use the real names? Or maybe we should?

Dear Yerachmiel Garfield,

We should. Take for example the Shabbat song called 'Shimru Shabbtoti.' It has five stanzas, and each stanza ends in a word which rhymes with Hashem's name — 'Madanai... Mizkenai ... Kohanai ...'

Surely, the author intended that the chorus be sung using the name of Hashem that rhymes with these words. Another Shabbat song, 'Tzur MiShelo,' also works the name of Hashem into its rhyme-scheme.

The composers of the Shabbat songs were great Torah scholars, some living over 1000 years ago. They put Hashem's name in their songs, and it's perfectly appropriate to sing them as the authors intended.

True, it's prohibited to say Hashem's name in vain. This includes making a blessing by mistake or unnecessarily, or any time a person mistakenly mentions Hashem's name thinking he's obligated to do so when in fact he's not.

Shabbat songs, however, don't fall into this category. On the contrary, their melody fills the air with delight, and their lofty poetry lifts our hearts in praise of Hashem for giving us the treasured gift: Shabbat!

Every talent can be used to do a mitzva. So if you have a good voice, use it to sing Shabbat songs or lead the synagogue services. The trick, however, is to focus on the words and not try to impress your audience!

Therefore, it's best to avoid repeating Hashem's name simply because the tune

requires a few extra syllables. Rather, stick to the words as written.

### Sources:

- Berachot 33a
- Maimonides Hilchot Berachot 1:15
- Chavat Da'at 110
- Pele Yoetz: Shira

## O.J. ON TRIAL

Sheldon Rothman  
<sheldon\_rothman@hotmail.com>  
wrote:

*There is a brand of orange juice here in the U.S. that is calcium enriched. The ingredients show CALCIUM LACTATE as the ingredient that is added to provide the calcium. Is that a dairy ingredient? Is the orange juice milchig?*

Dear Sheldon Rothman,

Often, questions such as yours can best be answered by the *kashrut* agencies that deal with these issues on a day-to-day basis. So I forwarded your question to the Orthodox Union *kashrut* department. Here is their answer:

"Thank you for your inquiry to the OU 'Vebbe Rebbe.' In response to your question: Calcium Lactate is not a dairy ingredient.

The Vebbe Rebbe <kosherq@ou.org >"

Thank you, Vebbe Rebbe.

Do You Have  
a Question  
on Judaism  
You Need Clarified?  
'ASK THE RABBI'  
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## YIDDLE RIDDLE

### Last week we asked:

You are one of the judges in a Jewish court in a capital case. It is your turn to state your opinion. If you say, "I find the defendant innocent," then the defendant receives the death penalty. But if you say, "I find the defendant guilty," he goes 'scot-free.' What is the case?

### Answer:

You are the last judge to vote, where all the other judges have already said 'guilty.'

According to Torah law, convicting someone of a capital crime requires a *Sanhedrin* of 23 judges. After hearing testimony from eyewitnesses, the judges vote. If at least thirteen of the judges vote 'guilty' the defendant is executed.

There is a surprising exception to this, however: If ALL the judges vote guilty, then the defendant is acquitted.

Here's why:

There are two ways to look at everything. There's no situation in this world without some merit or positive side. If not one judge was able to see the good side and declare the defendant innocent, something's wrong. The positive side of the case must have been missing during the presentation of the evidence. Therefore, he is acquitted.

### Sources:

- Maimonides, Laws of Sanhedrin 9:1

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## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 44:20 - Yehuda was afraid that if he said that his missing brother was alive, Yosef would demand that he be brought to Egypt.
2. 45:1 - He didn't want his brothers to be shamed publicly.
3. 45:14 - Binyamin wept for the destruction of *Mishkan Shilo* built in Yosef's territory.
4. 45:17 - In Goshen.
5. 45:23 - Elderly people appreciate old wine.
6. 45:24 - He warned that if they engage in halachic disputes they might not be alert to possible travel dangers.
7. 45:27 - The laws of the *eglah arufa* (the calf that has its neck broken).
8. 46:3 - Because Yaakov was grieved to leave Eretz Canaan.
9. 46:4 - That Yaakov would be buried in Eretz Canaan.
10. 46:6 - He gave it to Esav in exchange for Esav's portion in the Cave of Machpelah.
11. 46:7 - Serach bas Asher and Yocheved bas Levi.
12. 46:10 - Dina bas Yaakov.
13. 46:15 - Yocheved was born in Egypt.
14. 46:29 - Yosef wanted to hasten to honor his father.
15. 46:29 - He recited the Shema.
16. 46:34 - Because the Egyptians worshiped sheep.
17. 47:10 - That the waters of the Nile should rise to greet Pharaoh when he approached the river.
18. 47:19 - Two years.
19. 47:21 - In order to remind them that they no longer owned the land, and to help his family by removing the stigma of being 'strangers.'
20. 47:22 - Egyptian priests.

## BONUS ANSWER!

At first, Yehuda thought Hashem was punishing the brothers for their part in selling Yosef 22 years earlier. He reasoned that although Binyamin took no part in that sin, yet he was nonetheless included in the punishment being part of the group. Seeing Yosef's actions as part of a Heavenly decree, Yehuda felt intervention was useless.

But when Yosef declared his intention to free everyone except for the innocent Binyamin, Yehuda realized Yosef's actions could not possibly be the result of a Heavenly decree, but rather were a direct result of Yosef's free will. Therefore, Yehuda took action.

• *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

### RAMBAN

- 44:19 Yehuda's Diplomacy
- 45:16 Egyptian Reaction to Yosef's Brothers
- 45:26 Yaakov's Disbelief
- 45:27 The Lifetime Secret
- 46:15 Hidden Miracles

- 46:29 Who Cried?
- 47:9 Yaakov's Age
- 47:18 The Seven Lean Years

### SFORNO

- 45:16 Pharaoh's Invitation
- 46:3 The Advantage of Exile

### OHR HACHAIM HAKADOSH

- 45:26 Why Yosef Didn't Tell Yaakov
- 46:4 The *Shechina* in Mitzrayim

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