

# THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Vayeshev

December 20, 2019

## A Taste of Torah

### Prove It

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Was he a very righteous individual, a self-centered individual with delusions of grandeur, or a plain old annoying little brother? If you take some time to examine this week's parsha with Rashi's commentary, you may emerge a bit confused as to which category Yosef belongs. On the one hand, he is busy informing his father of his brothers' perceived shortcomings, and makes it eminently clear to his brothers that he is destined to be their ruler, much to their aggravation. Even after being sold into slavery, he resumes grooming himself as if he is a king upon being appointed the chief caretaker of his master Potiphar's estate. On the other hand, it is clear from the Torah that he lives with Hashem's presence on a constant basis, and overcomes a very difficult moral challenge, all of which seems to mark him as a truly righteous individual. Indeed, he is known as Yosef Hatzaddik for his extreme righteousness. With these various pieces of evidence, how are we to understand this great man?

Rabbi Gedalia Schorr (1910-1979) explains that Yosef knew that his Divinely-ordained mission was to rule over the rest of the tribes. Being a king is not all fun and games, though. It means taking responsibility for those under one's rule. It means leading your constituents to grow spiritually, bringing closer to Hashem and helping them develop into the people they are meant to become. And it means conducting oneself in royal fashion at all times, for a king cannot be viewed as a leader if he doesn't look the part; our Sages teach

that a king cannot simply overlook his honor.

Yosef sought to fulfill his destiny early on. He therefore felt it necessary to let his brothers know that he was ordained to be a ruler. He felt it part of his duty to point out their flaws. Even when serving as a slave in the house of his Egyptian master Potiphar, seeing that Hashem had enabled him to be appointed as the chief caretaker of his master's estate was an indication that he was to resume his role as a king of sorts, and so he resumed grooming his hair and the like as if he were a king.

But, says Rabbi Schorr, there was one problem with Yosef's approach: He had not actually become king yet. By assuming this role at such an early stage, Yosef was essentially declaring that he already had achieved the necessary level of personal spiritual development to serve as a Jewish king. In Yosef's case, that level meant being a perfectly righteous individual, completely dedicated to Hashem and the role as a true leader of men.

Hashem responded to Yosef's assertion by essentially telling him, "Prove it." Yosef's perception that he already deserved to be king had to be manifested by overcoming trials that would severely test his moral fiber. Betrayed by his family, sold as a slave in Egypt, left abandoned and alone, this 17-year-old handsome young man is suddenly faced with terrible temptation, having little to gain and much to lose by resisting, save for his keen awareness of right and wrong. When Yosef successfully overcomes

## Stories for the Soul

### Picture Perfect

Rabbi Avraham Genechovsky (1937-2012), Rosh Yeshiva of the Tchebiner Yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael, suffered the loss of his son, Refoel Yonah, when the latter was still an unmarried young man. Following his passing, Rabbi Genechovsky's wife wanted to hang a portrait of her deceased son in the living room.

Rabbi Genechovsky informed his wife that he would allow the picture to be hung upon the wall with one condition: Underneath the photo, the verse "*Ve'ahavta es Hashem Elokecha bichol livavcha uvichol nafshicha uvichol mi'odecha*," "And you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your possessions" (Devarim 6:5), would be posted.

Rabbi Genechovsky was concerned that, upon seeing the picture of his beloved child, his love for Hashem might be diminished due to a subtle grievance against Him for taking his son from him. He therefore placed a reminder beneath the picture to ensure his love for and faith in Hashem would be unaffected.

In this week's parsha, Yosef is faced with many difficult ordeals. Through it all, he maintains his faith in Hashem. We, too, must strive to emulate these great people throughout life's challenges.

## Kollel Happenings

### HARAV AHRON LOPIANSKY IN DENVER FOR SHABBOS CHANUKAH

The Kollel and Aish of the Rockies are excited to announce that Harav Ahron Lopiansky shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of Greater Washington and author of numerous works, including the acclaimed *Orchos Chaim/Ben Torah for Life*, will be visiting Denver for Shabbos Chanukah. The Rosh Yeshiva will spend Shabbos in Southeast Denver, where he will deliver classes and talks, and will deliver a class on Motzoei Shabbos and Sunday morning in West Denver, as well. For more info and full schedule, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org).

### FAMILY FUN AT JEWISH FAMILY EXTRAVAGANZA ON DEC. 25<sup>TH</sup>

Join the Kollel for family fun at the annual Jewish Children's Extravaganza on Wednesday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. The event will be held at South Suburban Family Sports Center, 6901 S. Peoria. Cost: \$15 per child, \$7.50 per adult; discounted group rates are available before 12/21. Admission includes laser tag, ice skating, Lollipop Park rides, ferris wheel, carousel, and Chanukah activities. For general information, call 303-820-2855 or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### HACHNASAS SEFER TORAH ON JAN. 19

A Sefer Torah is being dedicated to the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/ Ohel Yissachar in memory of Reb Shalom Sommers, father of Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers. Dedication opportunities for the Sefer Torah at all price levels are available. A Hachnasas Sefer Torah will take place at Aish of the Rockies on Sun., Jan. 19. For dedication opportunities or more info, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org), email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org) or call 303-820-2855.

## Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Burning flax          | 4) Burning from shame |
| 2) Raised him like a son | 5) Bad hair day       |
| 3) Divine partner        | 6) Fly and Pebble     |

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk - Part IV

Although Rabbi Meir Simcha was already renowned as a Torah scholar and received offers from various towns to take a position in the rabbinate, he refused them for many years, preferring to study Torah while subsisting on the income provided by his wife's store. It was only 23 years later, in 1883, that he finally accepted a position as rabbi of Dvinsk.

Dvinsk had two communities, one

Chassidic, and one non-Chassidic. Reb Meir Simcha became the rabbi for the non-Chassidic community. The rabbi of the Chassidic community was another famous personage in the Torah world, Rabbi Yosef Rosen, better known as the Rogatchover. The Rogatchover was known as one of the greatest minds of his time. Although they led two distinct communities in the same city, the two great men had a good relationship.

## A Taste of Torah

*continued from front*

this enticement, he catapults to greatness – but his ordeals are not over yet. He is cast into prison, and it seems he has reached the end of the line. Here, too, he does not abandon his faith in Hashem, and proves once again that he is worthy of being Hashem's agent to be a leader who will raise others up to greater levels of spirituality, as he is appointed overseer of the prison and ultimately assists two prisoners in understanding their dreams. Even upon being suddenly sprung from prison to explain Pharaoh's dreams, he claims no recognition for himself, giving all the credit to Hashem. Yosef thus proves himself to be a worthy leader, one who is not focused on self-

aggrandizement and personal interest, but one who is selflessly devoted to his G-d-given mission. Having shown that he is indeed fit to lead, he assumes the position of viceroy of Egypt.

Many people feel they are born to be leaders, and take steps to realize that ambition. But being a leader isn't about personal power and success; it is about maintaining a personal level of moral rectitude that qualifies one to influence others and help them realize their own great potential. A level of perfection on par with Yosef's may not be attainable, but keeping one's moral compass pointed at his paradigm of virtuous leadership is a vital prerequisite for successful leadership.

- |  |   |                                     |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Burning flax 37:1 s.v. vageshev     | 2) Raised him like a son 37:8 s.v. havo natio | 3) Divine partner 37:33 s.v. chaya  |
| 4) Burning from shame 38:25 s.v. h'ish | 5) Bad hair day 29:6 s.v. vagehi              | 6) Fly and pebble 39:23 s.v. chat'u |

## Parsha Quizzers - Answers