

Parshas Mikeitz

December 15, 2017

# A Taste of Torah

## An Impression Is Forever

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

First impressions are important. I don't need to pontificate on that idea, because there is no shortage of evidence - anecdotal, scientific and otherwise - to back it up. I am here to tell you that first impressions are yet another reason why lashon hara can be so destructive.

Yosef's hour has finally arrived. Pharaoh has some indecipherable dreams, he is unhappy with the various interpretations provided, and his butler suddenly remembers a young man he did time with.

"And there, with us, was a Hebrew youth, a slave to the Chamberlain of Butchers; we related [our dreams] to him, and he interpreted our dreams." (Mikeitz 41:12)

Rashi notes that the descriptive language used by the butler was not mere excess verbiage. He deliberately referred to him as a "youth" to indicate that Yosef was foolish and not fit for a position of prominence. He called him a Hebrew to point out that he was unfamiliar with the local language. He stressed that he was a slave because slaves cannot become ministers in Egypt.

The reality is that Yosef was none of the above. He was not foolish, he knew the Egyptian language, and he was not really a slave, but a free man who had been kidnapped and sold. All this would become apparent to Pharaoh a short while later. The butler, for his part, covered himself; he did not blatantly state any of these jibes, but made statements about Yosef that were true - he was a youth, he was a Hebrew, and he sure appeared to be a slave.

The butler's words contained subtle intimations of Yosef's shortcomings.

Ostensibly, the butler's goal in putting Yosef down was to ensure that Pharaoh would not be inclined to give Yosef any power. But, seemingly, his efforts were doomed to failure from the start! Inasmuch as the butler expected Yosef to successfully interpret Pharaoh's dreams, giving Pharaoh cause to raise him to prominence, the butler's insinuations would fall by the wayside, clearly debunked by Yosef's performance.

The Alshich (Rabbi Moshe Alshich; 1508-1593) explains that the butler's goal was to create a bad first impression. Once Pharaoh would get the hint from his words, it would be very difficult for Yosef - no matter how impressive he was - to undo the impression formed by Pharaoh thanks to the butler's malicious slander.

The butler, for all the pains he took to ensure Yosef would not achieve greatness, failed, and he has been relegated to eternal disgrace by the Torah. But he has taught us a valuable lesson. Sometimes, we may discuss someone we know without thinking too much about our choice of words. Of course, we would never speak badly about a person, but a wrong word can create a negative impression upon the listeners. An impression that cannot be easily rectified. Although we may subsequently realize our poor choice of words and attempt to backtrack, first impressions count, and our utterances may have already created a perception not easily undone. Let's take a lesson from the butler. Think before you talk.

## Stories for the Soul

### A Time for Trust

Based on a story on [revach.net](http://revach.net)

A Torah scholar in Bnei Brak was preparing to publish a *sefer* (book) and scheduled an urgent meeting related to its publication in Jerusalem. The man he was meeting made it clear that he could meet no later than 7:00 p.m. The author is a Rosh Kollel (Kollel Dean) in Gush Dan, and he usually arrived in Bnei Brak by 6 pm. From Bnei Brak, he planned on catching a bus to the Jerusalem central bus station and from there he would take another bus to the meeting location - about an hour's trip. The man considered leaving kollel early that day to ensure his promptness at the meeting. However, as the Rosh Kollel, he was hesitant to leave early. In addition, the Kollel members would miss out on the lecture he normally gave during that time. He decided to remain until the end of the study session and trust in Hashem that He would help him arrive at his urgent meeting on time.

Things planned, but things did not proceed smoothly. The ride to Bnei Brak from Gush Dan was delayed due to a traffic jam. When he arrived at the bus stop in Bnei Brak, he was dismayed to see that the bus to Jerusalem had just left the bus stop. The next bus was not until 6:20, which meant he would arrive late to the meeting. In fact, he would have to take a second bus to the meeting's location once he arrived at the central bus station in Jerusalem. As the poor fellow stood at the bus stop contemplating his next step, a very official-looking car pulled up to the bus stop. The driver

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## Kollel Happenings

### SFAS EMES: A PIERCING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

It is one of the most widely-studied works of our time. Sfas Emes gives us a glimpse into the infinite depths of Torah and Jewish thought. Kollel Scholar Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky is an expert in this great work, and a master in bringing its timeless lessons into daily life.

### FAMILY FUN AT JEWISH FAMILY EXTRAVAGANZA ONE DAY EARLY - DEC. 24TH

Join the Kollel for family fun at the annual Jewish Children's Extravaganza on Sunday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, from 11 a.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 - includes entire facility; discounted group rates are available before 12/21. For general information, call 303-820-2855 or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### LEGAL HOLIDAY LEARNING ON DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>

Start your day off on the right foot with Torah study! Join the Kollel for learning at three locations around Denver: At the Kollel West Denver Bais Medrash and Aish Denver, shacharis at 8 am followed by breakfast and learning, and at EDOS, shacharis at 7:30 followed by breakfast and learning.

# Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: When does one repeat the same verses four times in one Torah reading?

**A:** On Chol Hamoed Sukkos in Eretz Yisroel, the same verses are read for all four *aliyos*! This is because we read the *korbanos* (offerings) which would be offered in the Temple on that day of the Holiday. Since there is no *sefeika d'yoma* (status of uncertainty as to the correct day of Yom Tov, as in the Diaspora), only one day's offerings are read. Since the Torah portion of each day's offering is only three verses long, the minimum size of an *aliyah*, the only other option would be to read the offerings of the preceding or following day(s). In the Diaspora, this is done for *shelishi* (or *kohein* on Hoshana Rabba) according to Ashkenazi custom, based on Rama (Orach Chaim 663:1). In Eretz

Yisroel, however, this is not done due to one of two reasons. 1) The Ashkenazi community in Eretz Yisroel was founded, to a large degree, by followers of the Vilna Gaon, who argued on the abovementioned Rema. 2) In the Diaspora, where we are not sticking to an individual day's offerings (as explained earlier), we take the liberty to extend the reading to the offerings of preceding or following day. In Eretz Yisroel, however, where they are able to read that exact day's offering only, we do so.

Sources: Biur Hagra Orach Chaim 663:3 and Bikurei Yaakov 663:2.

**This week's question:** What word, one of the most common in the Torah, appears in every parsha of Torah except Mikeitz and Vayigash?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email [ryz@denverkollel.org](mailto:ryz@denverkollel.org).

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Moshe Alshich, the Alshich Hakadosh - Part III

It is said that Rabbi Caro was informed by Heaven that Rabbi Moshe had been given one of the seventy facets of interpreting the Torah. Rabbi Caro thereupon insisted that his student deliver the sermon that Shabbos. So impressed were those who heard him speak that he was given the position on a permanent basis.

These sermons became the basis for

Rabbi Moshe's most well-known work, *Toras Moshe*. While the pieces are rather lengthy, Rabbi Moshe states that he in fact abridged the sermons, including only the parts that are absolutely necessary and omitting anything he has stated elsewhere. Rabbi Moshe also wrote commentaries on many other books of the Scripture, including a work titled *Masas Moshe* on the Book of Esther, which he presented to his friends and colleagues as Purim gift.

## Stories for the Soul

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rolled down his window and said to the Torah scholar, "If you would like to join me on the trip to Jerusalem, you're invited." The Rosh Kollel, figuring he had little to lose and seeing the Divine hand at work, entered the car. It turned out that the man who sat behind the steering wheel was one of the top aides of the Secretary of State James Baker, who was visiting Israel at the time, and he happened to be Jewish. When he saw a prestigious-

looking Torah scholar standing at the bus stop, he decided to offer him a ride. The driver made it to Jerusalem in record time, and dropped the rabbi off at his final destination by 6:58 pm. Our Sages teach us that Yosef was a master of trusting in Hashem. For a slight shortcoming in his great level of trust, he spent an additional two years in prison. But his trust in Hashem was rewarded as he became viceroy over all of Egypt.