

## Bringing the Farbrengen Home

### HURRY

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

It's been 22 years.

22 long years since Yosef was dumped in a pit, left for dead.

Yosef rises to power in Egypt, and his brothers end up standing before him, not knowing before whom they stand.

And then comes what is perhaps the most dramatic moment in the Torah, as Yosef identifies himself to his brothers:

*"I am Yosef -- is my father still alive!?"*

It seems a bit odd that Yosef would ask if his father Yaakov is still alive. If you've been reading the story up until this point, it would be fairly obvious that indeed, Yaakov is still alive.

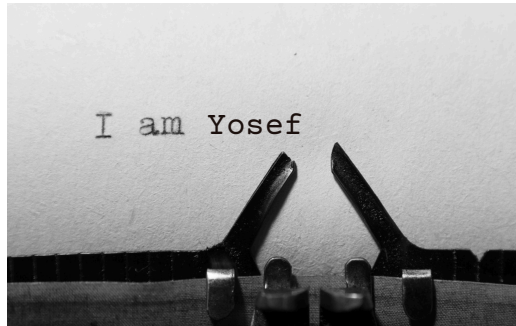
In fact, Yehuda and Yosef have been discussing their father; Judah expresses that Yaakov doesn't want to send Binyamin to Egypt. Yosef was privy to this information and nevertheless asks if his father is alive.

Moreover, he doesn't even wait for his brothers' response, instead continuing to detail his rise to power, concluding, "go quickly to my father [to bring him to Egypt]!"

All this indicates that Yosef certainly knew that his father was alive.

So why did he ask?

One explanation is that Yosef was expressing contrition over having neglected to find a way to notify Yaakov that he was still alive.



"I am Yosef," that is to say, I'm still alive, and I have left my father in a terrible state for so many years.

Another explanation is that our sages tell us that a person can be consoled after a loved one passes away; however, if one thinks that a loved one has passed but they are in fact still alive, one will be inconsolable.

And so it was with Yaakov. After the brothers return to him with Yosef's coat, covered in blood, Yaakov declares, "my son has been eaten by a wild animal."

But Yosef was still alive.

So Yosef declares, "I am Yosef" -- since I am still alive, that means that my father has been suffering for 22 years. Unthinkable! Such suffering is totally out of the ordinary, and it is hard to imagine how any person could endure such pain for so long, and still remain amongst the living.

This explains why Yosef didn't need them to respond to his question, but instead instructed them to "go quickly" and bring Yaakov to him. Yosef needed his brothers to notify Yaakov as quickly as possible that he was still alive; it was a matter of life and death!

Even after the brothers would notify Yaakov of the good news, after so many years of suffering, Yaakov would need to see Yosef in the flesh.

But if that's the case, then why didn't Yosef himself go to fetch his father? Wouldn't that have been the quickest way to meet in person? Also, it would be more in keeping with the commandment to respect one's parents for the son to go to his father, rather than the father to come to the son.

Yosef anticipated this question by stating -- no less than three times -- that G-d sent him to Egypt.

Yosef was not in Egypt of his own volition. He was G-d's ambassador to provide for all the people of Egypt, and he thus did not have permission to leave.

*Based on Likkutei Sichos vol.15, Vayigash sicha 1; Shach Al HaTorah, v'lo yachol Yosef l'hisapek*

## Me שו"ת Just A Question

**Q: What is Muktzah?**

A: Muktzah is a rabbinic enactment that forbids moving (certain) items on Shabbos in the same manner that one would do so during the week.

Three reasons are given:

1. If we move all items in the same manner that we do during the week, then Shabbos may end up being treated like a regular day;
2. If we can move any/all items, then we may be more likely to carry items outside (which is prohibited on Shabbos);
3. If we can move all the same items, then it may not be recognizable that we are resting on Shabbos.

*Source: Shulchan Aruch HaRav O.C. 308*

**א גוט שבת!**

# Hey Teives

## Most Cherished

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

What do you do with your most cherished possessions? Do you have a family heirloom? A special piece of jewelry? An object of sentimental or monetary value?

Perhaps you keep it in a safety deposit box, or maybe just in a secure place in your home, bringing it out only for special occasions.

Thursday was Hei Teives, the 5th day of the Jewish month of Teives. In 1987, on this day, a court ruled that books that had been surreptitiously removed from the Chabad library did not belong to the individual who had taken them, claiming to be the rightful heir.

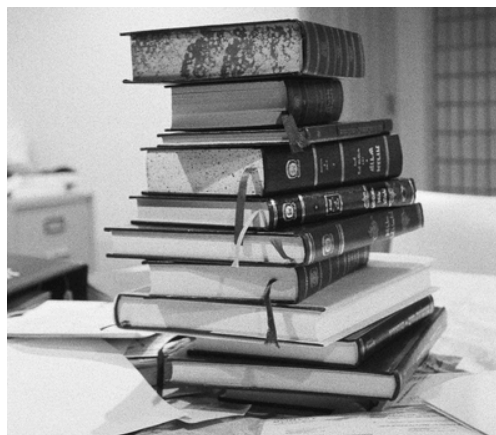
Rather, the seforim (books) belonged to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe in turn belonged to the Chassidim. The court ordered the books returned to their place in the Chabad library in Brooklyn.

Although some of these books could have been replaced, this dispute wasn't just about the books, per se.

It was about the enduring leadership of the Rebbe, as well as libraries as bastions of knowledge for all. How is one to celebrate this day?

The Rebbe suggested that we purchase Torah books. And most of all, we celebrate by cherishing & learning from those Torah books.

"Tatty," began Zalmi when he came home from school today, "today I saw a Tanya that the Rebbe touched. I kissed it." Zalmi turns 11 on Friday.



We kiss that which is precious to us.

I once heard from Rabbi Adin Even-Yisrael Steinsaltz that when one walks into a yeshiva, one sees people sitting with their study partner, Talmud open on the table in front of them. The conversation between the pair would likely be animated, one of them may even slam his fist down on the open volume to emphasize his point. And upon concluding their learning for the time being, they would close the book, kissing it ever-so-gently.

The way we cherish the Torah is by learning it. Even the Torah scroll itself, which is safeguarded in the Ark, is taken out at least three times a week to be read from.

The greatest respect we can show the Torah is by learning until the pages are worn from use.

Hei Teives is a day to purchase Torah books, to learn more Torah, to commit to learn Torah with more regularity and more passion. 🕊

## Hayom Yom

7 Teves

To avert *chibut hakever* ("Purgatory of the grave") recite words of Torah, Tehillim, etc., for one sixth of the day. To merit purity of the soul that obviates *kaf hakela* ("the hollow of a sling"), spend as much of the day as possible in reciting Mishna, Tanya and Tehillim by heart.

## Chassidic Story

Reuven was very wealthy and something of Talmud chocham. Despite his Torah learning, he was very cheap and a pauper could never get a meal in his house.

One day a beggar came to the bais medresh and Reuven invited him back to his house. Despite the warm, beautiful home the beggar was not offered any food. Reuven engaged the man in a deep Torah discourse and sent him on his way. The man was starving but having once been wealthy he could not bring himself to beg for food.

The same thing happened the following day. After the visit to Reuven's house the poor, hungry man collapsed and died. That night Reuven had a dream and a man in white appeared saying that he'd been summoned to appear before the heavenly court. Reuven recognized the man as the beggar who he had mistreated. He begged for mercy.

"Meet me in the woods outside of town tomorrow night," said the man in white. The following night Reuven made his way to the meeting with a heart filled with fear.

"Take off your clothes and put on these rags," the man instructed. Reuven replaced his fine garments with the tattered shrouds.

"Now return to the beis medresh," the man said. "You will not be recognized and you will be taken as just another beggar. You must not ask for food or take when offered. You must starve yourself to the brink of death. When you feel that you are just about to collapse, you may go to your own home and ask for food. You will not be recognized. You may be refused hospitality by your own instructions."

You must live this way for the next 12 months. If you die it will be your atonement. Otherwise meet me here in 12 months time. (to be continued) 🕊

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לשמואל חיים בן מרים  
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