

As I've mentioned in previous talks, your פרמישלאן – some of your ancestors come from פרמישלאן – ר' מאיר מפרמישלאן – I don't know exactly how many generations back – was a שוחט in עלטער, עלטער, עלטער, עלטער – This was a very בכבוד'דיג position. (I'm not sure if it was at the same time as ר' מאיר. I doubt it. I assume it was afterward, as it's still within the recollection of the previous דור, and ר' מאיר lived a couple of hundred years ago).

I have a story in a **פרשה** **ביכול** **מעשה** about **מאיר**, and I want to use this **מעשה** to make a point about the **פרשה**. In the times of **מאיר**, Jews found it difficult to make ends meet, but they managed as best as they could – the story of all of our generations. Sometimes, however, people couldn't resist an opportunity to make a fast buck. The **ראש הקהל**, the official leader of the Jewish community, once secured a lucrative contract with the army to supply tobacco. Seeing a golden opportunity, he decided to substitute sawdust or other fillers in some of the sacks and collect the payment at the rate for tobacco - not a nice thing to do.

This went on for some time until he heard that an inspector was coming to audit his transactions. Panic-stricken, he rushed to ר' מאיר for advice. It was Friday afternoon, and he couldn't see the רב until after שבת. On שבת morning, the ראש הקהל was honored when the רב called him up for ששי – the sixth עלייה – a position of respect in those times (today, שלישי is generally considered more prestigious, but ששי was significant back then). However, he quickly realized that ר' מאיר was not one to overlook wrongdoing.

The רב was also the בעל קורא and read the תורה each week himself. During the קריאה, he stopped three יִיָּקָה אֲדֹנָי יוֹסֵף אֹתוֹ וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ אֶל: (39:20). The pasuk describes how Yosef was imprisoned over an alleged crime. The רב understood immediately – the רב was hinting at his punishment, implying that his fate, too, was to be imprisoned for his deceitful actions. The רב motioned for him to recite the ברכה and conclude the עלייה, but the ראש הקהל refused, signaling to the רב to continue and stop at the usual פסוק (39:23): מַצְלִיחַ ה' אֶתְּךָ וְאֶתְּךָ הוּא עֹשֶׂה ה' – That at all that Yosef did, he succeeded with Hashem's help. The ראש הקהל wanted the רב to stop at this pasuk, as he felt that he needed this ברכה. Finally, the רב relented, and continued the leining and stopped at the correct place.

After שבת מאיר, ר' summoned the ראש הקהל and admonished him sternly. He explained the gravity of his actions, warning him that he could endanger the entire Jewish community by stealing from the government. The ראש הקהל accepted the rebuke, promising to act more responsibly in the future. The following day, the inspector informed the ראש הקהל that his audit was postponed due to being reassigned to another area. The last פסוק of the פרשה is (40:23) וְלֹא זָכַר שֵׁר הַמִּשְׁקִים אֶת יוֹסֵף, which actually is appropriate to this story. The שר המשקים forgot about יוסף, despite the kindness יוסף had shown him. This פסוק reflects a lack of הכרת הטוב, gratitude, on the part of the שר המשקים. Not only did he forget the בְּשׂוֹנְהָ טוֹבָה that יוסף gave him, but he also disregarded the חיזוק and support יוסף had provided. This is a very good פסוק for people in trouble who are being attacked by someone, it can be used as a תפילה that the pursuers "forget" about them and move on to a different focus. I personally recite both of these פסוקים (39:23 & 40:23) regularly - sometimes daily, sometimes weekly - along with other פסוקים, and Im Yirtzeh Hashem these pesukim can help us in an עת צרה. The best thing to so in an עת צרה is to keep in mind to אֵין עוֹד, which I've said to you before, and I still believe and hold very shtark, is the right answer for all of our צרות. All the efforts we make - whether for ourselves, our communities, or ארץ ישראל - will only succeed if ה' chooses to use them as שליח. Everything comes from Him, and our role is to focus on תשובה, and that in turn should cause Hashem to bring about our ultimate ישועה and גאולה שלמה.

