

## Yaakov perceived that there were provisions in Egypt. (42:1)

When the *Baal HaTanya*, *zl*, was taken to prison in St. Petersburg, he asked one of his *Chassidim* to take a *kvittel*, written petition asking for a blessing, to his *mechutan* (father of child's spouse) and close friend, *Horav* Levi Yitzchak Berdichever, *zl*. The Berdichever asked the messenger for *Rav* Shneur Zalman's mother's name. The *chasid* did not know. *Rav* Levi Yitzchak took out a *Chumash* and made a *goral*, lot, a means of turning pages in such a manner that the last page will have a *pasuk* which reveals the answer to one's question. Obviously, only a Torah scholar of great repute is qualified to employ the *goral*. The *pasuk* which appeared to him was the *pasuk* above: *Va'ya'ar Yaakov ki yeish shever b'Mitzrayim*. *Rav* Levi Yitzchak said, "The word *shever* – *shin*, *beis*, *raish* is an acronym for Shneur *ben* Rivkah. Probably, the *Baal HaTanya's* mother's name was Rivkah." The messenger asked, "Perhaps her name was Rachel?" The Berdichever replied, "The *pasuk* is coming to 'help.' The word *shever* has two letters – *bais* and *reish* of the name Rivkah, while it only has one letter of the name Rachel."

The purpose of the above is only to demonstrate the various ways in which the Torah's verses may be interpreted. Indeed, in *Chassidic* literature, the word *shever*, which is the root of *mashbir*, is interpreted as "to break," rather than "food." In *pasuk* 6 it says, *V'Yosef...hu ha'mashbir l'chol am ha'aretz*, "Now Yosef...he was the provider to all the people of the land." *Horav* Avraham, *zl*, *m'Slonim* says that, through the power of *Yosef HaTzaddik*, with the power generated by one's righteousness, the individual is able to break himself before Hashem. The Almighty seeks a person with a broken heart, a heart that realizes the effects of sin. A *tzaddik* reaches up to Hashem via his broken heart. The *Kotzker Rebbe*, *zl*, was wont to say, "There is nothing so whole as a broken heart." The *tzaddik* stands before Hashem, broken, lost, entreating His favor, yet feeling unworthy of His kindness. The attitude defines his "wholeness."

The holy *Horav Menachem Mendel*, *zl*, *m'Vitebsk* once said, "When I arrived in Russia, I met people with torn garments and whole hearts. During my tenure, I saw to it that they had whole clothing, but torn hearts." What the *Vitebsker* meant was that, in order for a Jew to beseech Hashem, he has to feel broken hearted, lost without the Almighty. He realizes that his behavior leaves much to be desired and that he is unworthy of Hashem's favor. It takes a holy man, a *tzaddik*, to "break" someone's heart, by teaching him what it is that Hashem asks of him, and what his shortcomings are. A *tzaddik* imbues a person with humility by showing him how distant he is from achieving closeness with the Almighty. It is through the power of *Yosef HaTzaddik*, the power of the righteous, that a person is able to be *mashbir*, break the hearts of his fellow Jews, so that they can properly turn to Hashem and succeed in their entreaty.