Points to Ponder

Chanukah/Mekeitz 5782

**וַיְגַלַּח֙ And he shaved (41:14)** - Why was Yosef allowed to shave? Rashi explains that he did so in order to show respect to the throne. **Chasam Sofer** asks why this was enough of a reason as the day Yosef got out of the pit was Rosh Hashana and the Avos supposedly kept the Torah, how could the honor of a king trump the honor of Hashem? **Rav Simcha Zissel Broide ztl.** explains that this is part of the obligation of Hakaras HaTov -- it extends so far to outweigh an Eino Mitzuveh V’Oseh. **Rav Daniel Feldman Shlita** noted that even though the end of Yosef’s troubles was not as yet experienced, Yosef still had the obligation of Hakaras HaTov since he RECOGNIZED the good even if he did not as yet fully EXPERIENCE it.

**הֲנִמְצָ֣א כָזֶ֔ה אִ֕ישׁ אֲשֶׁ֛ר ר֥וּחַ אֱלֹקים בּֽוֹ Have you seen like this a man with the spirit of Hashem (41:38) - Rav Bernard Weinberger ztl**. noted that if Hashem gives you a dream and the interpretation, He obviously wants you to run with it and have the advice followed as well. He added that this was also a lesson of Chanukah -- preparing in the good days for the tough ones ahead. **Rav Pam ztl.** added that the good days refer to the days that one is young when he asks “What good is an Amen or another Daf?” and making sure that it is important and valuable. Chanukah too, teaches us to appreciate a land filled with olive oil for the times when the land makes that oil hard to find.

**וַיַּכֵּ֥ר יוֹסֵ֖ף אֶת־אֶחָ֑יו וְהֵ֖ם לֹ֥א הִכִּרֻֽהוּ Yosef recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him (42:8) – Rashi** explains that when he left he did not have a beard and now he did. Could that be a complete answer? The growing of a beard really changes us that much? **Rav Avraham Rivlin Shlita** explained that Yosef thought he was sold because of the Lashon Hara he had spoken against his brothers and the attempted power grab over them and his father and Bilha. He had changed. Perhaps now, he changed his understanding of his role as a result of wisdom and this is the intention of Chasimas Zakan – the beard growth which usually indicates growing.

**כִּ֥י הַמֵּלִ֖יץ בֵּֽינֹתָֽם: They did not know that Yosef was listening to them since the interpreter was between them (42:23)** - The **Vilna Gaon** who explains that for the 10 times that Yosef heard the term “your servant, our father” (5 times uttered by the brothers and 5 times translated) he was punished**. Rav Yitzchak Sorotzkin Shlita** noted that although the 5 additional repetitions of the interpreter were unavoidable (Ones) where one should normally be excused, here he was not for he could have silenced the interpreter and did not.

**עָלַ֖י הָי֥וּ כֻלָּֽנָה: They were all on me (42:36)** - The **Vilna Gaon** notes that the word Alai references Eisav (with the Ayin) Lavan (the Lamed) and Yosef (the Yud). According to this idea Yakov was noting that the troubles of Shimon and Binyamin were not supposed to be his to have to suffer. **Rav Asher Weiss Shlita** explained that this is a sign for future Galuyos that his children would endure. Eisav refers to the decrees of death as in the time of Haman. Lavan refers to the decrees against the Jews and the ones that led to forced conversions. Yosef refers to the extended exiles. In our generation sadly, we experience all three.

**וְלָקַ֧חַת אֹתָ֛נוּ לַֽעֲבָדִ֖ים וְאֶת־חֲמֹרֵֽינוּ: And to take us as slaves and our donkeys (43:18**) – Why are the brothers so focused on the taking of their donkeys. In light of the potential of becoming slaves to Yosef forever – the loss of the donkeys seems sort of minor? **Rav Yisroel Reisman Shlita cited Rav Mordechai Druk ztl.** who noted that we find instances of donkeys in Chazal who reflected the honesty of their owners (See Taanis 24a for one). The donkey of Binyamin moved despite possessing a stolen item on its back. This should not have happened. Hence the brothers expressed surprise that the viceroy was able to create such a disturbance that their donkeys ran with a stolen goblet.

**בַּגָּד֣וֹל הֵחֵ֔ל וּבַקָּטֹ֖ן כִּלָּ֑ה They checked with the oldest and ended with the youngest (44:12)** – There is a midrash (location unknown) that notes that the oldest was Shimon and the youngest was Binyamin. Why start with Shimon and not Reuven? **Rav Schachter Shlita quoted the Maharil Diskin** who noted that the Egyptians accepted the brothers’ Kal V’Chomer argument that they could not have stolen if they returned the monies accidentally returned to them the first time. But 2 brothers were not there in order to merit the Egyptian benefit of the doubt – Shimon, who was in prison and Binyamin. Thus, it was the 2 of them whose bags needed to be checked. And the cup, was in Binyamin’s sack.

**Haftara:**

**וִֽיהוֹשֻׁ֕עַ הָיָ֥ה לָב֖וּשׁ בְּגָדִ֣ים צוֹאִ֑ים And Yehoshua was wearing dirty clothes (Zechariah 3:3) - Rav Schachter Shlita** would regularly highlight to us that when children intermarry, it is a terrible stain on the legacy of the parent (especially as in the case of Yehoshua who could have stopped it and did not). When that is the case, it is improper for the parent to wear the Bigdei Kehuna and perform the Avodah.