Points to Ponder

Mekeitz 5780

**וַיְהִ֤י בַבֹּ֨קֶר֙ וַתִּפָּ֣עֶם רוּח֔וֹ In the morning Pharaoh was distressed (41:8) - Rav Shimon Schwab ztl.** notes that when we learn this section of the Torah without context, we wonder why Pharaoh didn’t just shake off a bad dream? Why did he let it affect him the way that he did? Rav Schwab explains that in the normal course of events -- the strong defeat the weak. As the leader of the strongest nation at the time, any dream that upset this prevailing philosophy was a cause for alarm for he was clearly underprepared for some sort of rebellion or attack. Thus, he called the leadership together in order to go over the context and make sure that the nation was safe. He adds that it is no surprise that Mekeitz is always read when we highlight Gibborim B’Yad Chalashim.

**וַיַּכֵּ֥ר יוֹסֵ֖ף אֶת־אֶחָ֑יו וְהֵ֖ם לֹ֥א הִכִּרֻֽהוּ Yosef recognized his brothers but they didn’t recognize him (42:8)-** How could it be that the brothers didn’t recognize Yosef? **Rashi** explains that it was because he now had a beard. **Rav Avrohom Rivlin Shlita** explained that Yosef realized that he was sold as a result of his Lashon HaRa and his lording power over his family. However, he learned from the experience and did Teshuva. In essence he become more of a Tzaddik -- hence the “new beard.”

**וַיִּזְכֹּ֣ר יוֹסֵ֔ף אֵ֚ת הַֽחֲלֹמ֔וֹת אֲשֶׁ֥ר חָלַ֖ם לָהֶ֑ם Yosef recalled the dreams (42:9) - Rav Gifter ztl.** noted that until Yosef’s brothers came to him, he had forgotten the dreams. In other words, he did not think that his ascendance to the throne was about himself, it was about the opportunity to help a needy country. But how could he forget a Nevuah? After all, the dreams were a Nevuah? Rav Gifter explains that Yosef thought he had been mistaken about the dreams and the brothers were indeed the correct ones. It was only when he saw them fulfilling the dreams did he begin to reconsider.

**קְח֞וּ מִזִּמְרַ֤ת הָאָ֨רֶץ֙ Take from the praises of the land (43:11)** - What is meant with the word “praises?” **Rav Nachman of Breslov** interprets the possuk literally noting that no two shepherds have the same tune. Each creates his own tune based on his place, his flock and his location. The same was Yaakov’s intent when connecting to the viceroy. He wanted to share his story so that the viceroy not hold him accountable for taking money or stealing the culture. **Sivan Rahav Meir** adds that this is one of the most important lessons of life -- to recognize and appreciate our unique perspective and story and to create the songs for our own families and heritage that will keep future generations connected as well.

**הֲשָׁל֛וֹם אֲבִיכֶ֥ם הַזָּקֵ֖ן אֲשֶׁ֣ר אֲמַרְתֶּ֑ם הַֽעוֹדֶ֖נּוּ חָֽי: Is your father well, is he alive (43:27)** - Shouldn’t the order of the questions been reversed? Shouldn’t Yosef have asked first if Yaakov was alive and THEN ask if he was well? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** explains that Yosef was not asking about Yaakov’s physical state of mind but rather about his outlook on life -- was he well and at peace or did he develop a pessimistic attitude toward humanity and toward the world after losing Yosef or does he still have the vibrance toward the mission as before.

**וַיִּשְׁתּ֥וּ וַיִּשְׁכְּר֖וּ עִמּֽוֹ They drank and got drunk with him (43:34) - Rashi** notes that they had not had any wine from the time that Yosef was sold. But if Yosef was wrong and deserved to be sold, why did they mourn? **Rav Eliyahu Lopian ztl** explains that even though someone is determined to be a Rodef whose death is necessary; it does not mean that the people rejoice in the situation. It is similar to the predicament that Bnei Yisrael had with Achan.

**וַיְחַפֵּ֕שׂ בַּגָּד֣וֹל הֵחֵ֔ל וּבַקָּטֹ֖ן כִּלָּ֑ה They checked beginning with the oldest and ending with the Youngest (44:12) - Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin ztl** quoted a Midrash that stated that the only 2 bags they checked were those of Shimon and Binyamin insofar as the others argued that they had a Chezkas Kashrus since they returned the money sent to them by mistake. Shimon and Binyamin were not given extra money. This, said Rav Yehoshua Leib was the meaning of the Possuk that they started with the oldest (Shimon, of the 2) and ended with the youngest (Binyamin). **Rav Schachter Shlita** would often note that while a novel level of interpretation, he didn’t know where the midrash exists and didn’t think it Peshat in the Possuk.

**Haftarah: עַל־אֶ֥בֶן אַחַ֖ת שִׁבְעָ֣ה עֵינָ֑יִם  On one stone there will be seven eyes (Zechariah 3:9)** - Is it permissible to use a Possuk in context that was not the way it was intended? **Rav Schachter Shlita** told the story of the  MaHarival who was blind in one eye and was resting on a stone with 3 of his students. One turned and quoted the fact to the Rebbe that this is a kiyum of Al Even Achas Shiva Einayim. When things are a melitza – there is room to offer a novel example without concern for kefirah.