Points to Ponder

Vayigash 5781

**וּבִ֨נְיָמִ֔ן בָּכָ֖ה עַל־צַוָּארָֽיו: And Binyamin cried on his shoulder (45:14)** - The Gemara (Megillah 16b) notes that they cried for the destruction of the different Batei Mikdash. Why couldn’t we assume that they cried tears of joy for the emotions of the present? **Rav Shimon Schwab ztl.** explained that the Beis HaMikdash is the source of Simcha. Upon its destruction, true Simcha has been lost to the world and was replaced with Tzaar (pain). Hence, even in moments of Simcha we cry as we still feel the Tzaar that accompanies it.

**וַיַּרְא֙ אֶת־הָ֣עֲגָל֔וֹת  And he saw the wagons (45:27) - Rashi** explains that Yosef was sending a sign to Yaakov about the lesson of Egla Arufa -- the final lesson that they had shared together before they separated. What is the significance of the message of the lesson? **Rav Amital ztl.** explained that the message of escorting a guest is a lesson in creating a feeling of security in the mind of the traveler. By accompanying him part way, you help the guest feel that he is being attended to, that he is not alone. This strengthens his self-confidence, thereby making it easier for him to face the dangers of the journey. Even in today’s motor travel, every person deserves our attention; we must not allow a situation in which a person feels alone.

**וַיָּבֹ֖א בְּאֵ֣רָה שָּׁ֑בַע And he came to Be’er Sheva (46:1) - Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl** highlights the fact that Be’er Sheva is the place that the Avos went to get calm and comfort. It was the place that Avraham planted the wood for the Beis HaMikdash and where Yaakov uprooted them to bring with them into Galus as a testament to the children that Hashem would come and redeem them.

**מֻפִּ֥ים וְחֻפִּ֖ים  Mupim and Chupim (46:21**) - The Gemara (Sotah 36b) notes that the names refer to the fact that neither Yosef nor Binyamin was at each other’s wedding. **Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz ztl.** asked why it was important and painful that Binyamin missed Yosef’s wedding? After all, that was a turnaround moment in Yosef’s life? He answered that when one gets a chance to rejoice with destiny and cannot, it is worth noting in the name of a child. There is no purpose of a Simcha in this world if one cannot rejoice with destiny.

**וְאֶת־יְהוּדָ֞ה שָׁלַ֤ח לְפָנָיו֙ אֶל־יוֹסֵ֔ף לְהוֹרֹ֥ת לְפָנָ֖יו גּ֑שְׁנָה And he sent Yehuda first to Goshen (46:28) - Rashi** notes that Yehuda was sent to establish a Yeshiva. Why? **Rav Pinchas Teitz ztl.** noted that while it might be ok for a Yosef to live without a Yeshiva  to light the way for the people, it does not work for the masses. Therefore, when establishing a Jewish community, one needs to establish a Yeshiva in order to make sure that there is a place where the entire community can grow spiritually.

**וַֽאֲמַרְתֶּ֗ם אַנְשֵׁ֨י מִקְנֶ֜ה הָי֤וּ עֲבָדֶ֨יךָ֙ מִנְּעוּרֵ֣ינוּ וְעַד־עַ֔תָּה Tell him that you are shepherds and have been from youth until today (46:34) - Rashi** highlights that Yosef wanted his brothers to highlight their sheep herding in order to get them to separate from the main area of Egypt. **Rav Nosson Wachtfogel ztl.** explained that this is based on the ideas of Shemaya and Avtalyon not to be too well known to the government. Sometimes, being too close to the government and right under its direct influence is dangerous to the Jewish people.

**מְעַ֣ט וְרָעִ֗ים הָיוּ֙ יְמֵי֙ שְׁנֵ֣י חַיַּ֔י וְלֹ֣א הִשִּׂ֗יגוּ אֶת־יְמֵי֙ שְׁנֵי֙ חַיֵּי֣ אֲבֹתַ֔י  And I did not achieve the years that my forefathers did (47:9)** - How did Yaakov know what he would achieve? His life wasn’t over yet? (See Ramban) **Rav Asher Weiss Shlita** explained that Yaakov felt that he was not living like his forefathers -- with Sheleimus and learning and Avodas Hashem.

**Haftara**

**Connecting Parsha and Haftara: Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that there is a strong connection between the Parsha and the Haftara.  In Parshas Vayigash the brothers were missing an important piece of information (that the man that they were talking to was Yosef) and that's why they couldn't understand what was happening. Once they were told that he was it all made sense. Similarly, in the haftara we are told that in the future, after all of Jewish history will be unfolded before us, everything will be understood in context.