Points to Ponder – Mekeitz 5774

**And it was at the end of two years (41:1)** – The commentaries cite the Midrash which notes that Yosef was given two extra years for asking the Sar HaMashkim to remember him. The question of why this was wrong needs to be asked. After all, do we not consider Histadlus important? **The Chazon Ish** (Emunah U’Bitachon 2:6) notes that a man of Bitachon applies Histadlus when it will work. Yosef knew that the Mitzriyim were a narcissistic and selfish people and it was unlikely—almost impossible to expect one of them to remember him. Thus, the request of Yosef (TWICE!) was an act of desperation. It was for this, that he received the second year. The man of Bitachon does what makes sense.

**Mekeitz (41:1**) - **Rav Berel Wein Shlita** points out that the word keitz denotes an end usually to an era. However, he adds, implicit in the use of the word Keitz is the understanding that nothing is forever – nor is anything certain to man – since it all relies on the hand of Hashem. Here Yosef was in the depths of despair and in a moment had the entire social structure of Egypt turned upside down with him at the top. (Think also of Cheeshav Es HaKeitz). Things can turn around in a moment for the Jew – and we long for that turnaround to be L’Tov.

**Can there be one found like him, a man with the spirit of Hashem? (41:38)** - Wisdom, energy and wit are all job qualifications for the position of viceroy – spirit of Hashem is not. Why does Pharaoh care about it? **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** points out that Yosef did not simply do his job. He was asked to provide interpretation of a dream. Yet, due to something special inside of him, he reaches beyond himself and offers advice. Rav Ezrachi explains that only one with the spirit of Hashem – the spirit that says to “be Meitiv” looks at a situation and offers advice on top of the mission that s/he is assigned. It was this extra piece that is invaluable for the success of any project and its leader, and it was this that Pharaoh seized upon.

**After Hashem revealed all of this to you there is none as wise as you (41:39/40) – Rav Schach ztl.** once pointed out that it seemed surreal that Pharaoh’s dreams should occupy such a prominent place in the Torah with such detail. Yet, he added, the same king later turned on the Jewish people and made it as if he had never heard of Yosef. How could that be? He explained that the Torah is teaching us the value of Bechira. Each human has the ability to see the hand of Hashem and to reject it. The choice is ours. A man like Pharaoh can choose to see the hand of Hashem in the words of a prisoner or to reject the wisdom of a viceroy.

**Because Hashem made me forget all my troubles and my father’s house (41:51**) – Why would Yosef praise the ability to forget? **The Netziv** assumes that Yosef would have been overcome with PTSD and would not have been able to accomplish what he accomplished in Mitzrayim without the power to forget. **Rav Moshe Sturnbuch Shlita** offers a different possibility. He suggests that Yosef forgot the message of his father’s house – to be uninterested in the mundane and focus only on the spiritual. If he were never able to forget this message, he too, would not have been able to accomplish. Sometimes, Hashem selects different missions in life for people than the ones they plan for themselves. The ability to switch gears is critical if one is to taste the success of fulfilling the mission Hashem selects for you.

**And Yaakov did not send Binyamin the brother of Yosef because he was afraid that tragedy might befall him (42:4)** – The word Yikraeinu seems to imply that it was pre-ordained. Yet, when Yehuda retells the story to Yosef, he uses the word V’Karahu (42:29) which implies circumstance and coincidence. **Rav Yaakov Galinsky Shlita** noted that a Jew has a responsibility to know that nothing in life is circumstance and happenstance. Hence Yaakov told his sons that perhaps it is preordained. However, Yehuda spoke to Tzafnas Paneiach and used the coincidence word because, he assumed that the non-Jew couldn’t fathom something like this being preordained.

**We are all the children of a single man , we are not spies (42:10-12**) – How could Yosef offer an outright lie in order to protect his ruse? **Rav Soloveitchik** once noted that he was not lying. He was speaking on a different plane than the brothers. They were speaking about their present situation. Yosef was speaking about Jewish destiny as foretold by his dreams. He told them that they were the first sentries and that they were going to be the originals of a large nation destined to descend on Egypt whose weaknesses had to be exploited (Ervas Haaretz – a reference to the weakness of Mitzrayim – namely that they were familially corrupt. By knowing this, the Jews would learn to act differently and to stay away from this style).

**Haftorah – (Shabbos Chanukah) – Remove the soiled clothing from upon him (Zechariyah 3:4)** – Why is Yehoshua wearing soiled clothes in the images of Zechariyah’s prophesy? **Rashi** notes that Yehoshua’s children intermarried and he could have stopped them by voicing his opinion and did not. Accordingly, he is seen as wearing a dirty garment until Ezra’s times when the children divorced themselves from their non-Jewish wives**. Rav Avraham Rivlin Shlita** highlights the importance of getting up and voicing an opinion when one sees a wrongdoing and s/he can impact the situation. Chanukah too, was a time when a group of people said “no!” to wrongdoing and stood up for what was right.