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INTRODUCTION TO PARASHAT HASHAVUA

by Zvi Shimon
PARASHAT MIKETZ

The Path of Repentance

(The following was adapted from an article written by Rabbi Yaakov Medan, a teacher at the Yeshiva, which originally appeared in Megadim (vol. 2) a Torah journal published by the Herzog Teachers' College, an affiliate of Yeshivat Har Etzion)

The sin of Joseph's brothers is one of the more serious sins related in the book of Genesis. Both the Torah (Exodus 21:17, 20:13; see Rashi *ibid*; Deut. 24:7) and the Prophets (Joel 4, Amos 2:6-10 and many others) equate this sin of selling a free man into bondage with the gravest of sins. The penitence of Joseph's brothers is thus a major theme of the narrative. While the process of penitence involves all the brothers it centers primarily on

Reuven and Judah were vying for the family leadership, Jacob having effectively ceased playing the leadership role (see for example 34:5, 34:13-14, 35:22, 43:5). After Shim'on and Levi are excluded from the race for leadership, the struggle continues between Reuven and Judah. It finds expression in their argument over Joseph's fate (37:22,26-27), in the recognition of the sin of his sale (42:22 contra 44:16), in the assumption of responsibility for Benjamin in Egypt (42:37 contra 43:8-9) and in additional verses in the Torah.

Reuven and Judah were each engaged in a process of penitence for similar sins: Reuven for having slept with his father's wife, Bilhah, (as appears from the simple textual reading 35:22). and Judah for having slept, albeit unknowingly, with his son's wife (38:16). It would seem clear that their individual repentance is also part of the leadership struggle. At first glance there seems to be no connection between Reuven's sin with his father's wife and the selling of Joseph. This, however is misleading. According to the simple reading of the text, Reuven's intention was to inherit his father's leadership in his lifetime. (compare Absalom who slept with David's concubine, Second book of Samuel 16:22). His attempt to rescue Joseph and his dreams of royalty (37:20) is part of his repentance for his sin with Bilhah. Reuven acknowledges Joseph's right to be the leader.

The process of repentance accompanies the brothers wherever they go. When the Egyptian viceroy commands them to bring Benjamin, the second son of Rachel, the brothers are immediately reminded of the sale of Joseph. Once again the two contenders - Reuven and Judah - respond in character. Reuven sees only the punishment for the crime, and he does not suggest any means of rectification.

And Reuven answered them: 'Did I not tell you, do not sin against the child, and you did not listen; now his blood is being avenged.' (Gee. 42:22)

Judah acknowledges his sin and even suggests a positive path of repentance for the evil done. He is not satisfied with sackcloth and fasting, which are merely expressions of mourning and acceptance of the verdict.

And they tore their clothesAnd Judah said, 'What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has revealed the sin of your servants; we have become my lord's slaves' (44:13-17).

And further on,

Let your servant stay instead of the boy as a slave to my lord and let the boy go up with his brothers (44:33).

From Judah's speech it is apparent that he did not confess to stealing the cup. He considered the whole episode of the stolen goblet as a fabrication. His words, "God has revealed the sin of your servants," undoubtedly relate to the sin of selling Joseph.

It would also seem that the struggle between Reuven and Judah regarding the assumption of responsibility for Benjamin in Egypt is connected to their desire to amend the sin of selling Joseph. Reuven's words, "you may kill my two sons if I do not bring him [Benjamin] back to you. Put him in my care and I will return him to you" (42:37) are an attempt to make amends for failing to ensure the safety of Joseph (37:29). Similarly, Judah's words "If I bring him not to you and set him before you, then I shall have sinned to you forever" (43:9), indicate his understanding of the connection between Joseph's being brought down to Egypt and Benjamin descending to Egypt. Benjamin's abandonment in Egypt would be a continuation of his grievous sin of selling Joseph. Otherwise, it is unclear what the sin is and why he should be punished if Benjamin is forcibly taken from him. For Judah, protecting Benjamin at all cost is the atonement demanded for the selling of Joseph, a heaven-sent opportunity to make amends. In offering their respective propositions, Reuven and Judah remain faithful to their personalities: Reuven through acceptance of the punishment, and Judah through confrontation with the sin itself.

Our assumption is that Joseph too was plagued by his brother's sin and, consequently, with the future of the house of Israel, no less than with his own fate. From the time he was sold, he had begun to rebuild not only his own life, but his family's unity. This unification was not to be forced upon

his brothers, but rather achieved by willingness and love. Joseph desired a unification born of his brother's regretting their sin, a product of wholehearted repentance.

It is on the basis of this explanation that we can understand Joseph's reaction to his brother's behavior and more specifically Joseph's crying three times. The first two times are inner, bound by self-restraint. The third time he breaks down totally and cries, openly and without control. What is the connection between the different occasions in which Joseph cries? What is unique about the third episode in which Joseph can no longer restrain himself?

A) First Tears The brothers are subjected to an intensive interrogation during three days of imprisonment: "When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them; but he acted like a stranger toward them, and spoke harshly to them...You are spies, you have come to see the land" (43:7,9) This induces the brothers to repent for their sin and accept the punishment and suffering, with Reuven in the lead:

"On the third day, Joseph said to them, 'Do this and you shall live, for I am a God-fearing man. If you are honest men, let one of you brothers be held in your place of detention, while the rest of you go and take home rations for your starving households; but you must bring me your youngest brother, that your words may be verified and that you may not die.' And they did accordingly. They said to one another, 'Alas, we are being punished on account of our brother, because we looked on at his anguish, yet paid no heed as he pleaded with us. That is why this distress has come upon us.' Then Reuven spoke up and said to them, 'Did I not tell you, Do not wrong to the boy? But you paid no heed, Now comes the reckoning for his blood.' They did not know that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between him and them. He turned away from them, and wept. But he came back to them and spoke to them; and he took Shim'on from among them and had him bound before their eyes." (Genesis 42:18-24)

We have previously defined this kind of repentance as "Reuven's repentance," a repentance which involves submission and acceptance of the verdict, but lacks a program for improvement and change. Joseph is prepared to accept his brothers' confession and their submission. He witnesses the newly reestablished connection of the ten other brothers to the sons of Rachel, and he cries (42:24). But this is not sufficient for him. He requires a fuller, deeper repentance.

B) Second Tears Joseph had commanded his brothers to bring Benjamin to Egypt (42:20). Joseph might have expected that the brothers would return to him empty-handed, placing themselves in danger by explaining to him that they had decided not to endanger Benjamin for the sake of Shim'on and were willing to suffer the shame of hunger. This is what would have happened, had Jacob had his way. Thus Joseph was disappointed when it became clear to him that the brothers had brought Benjamin in order to redeem Shim'on, despite the danger to their youngest brother.

"Looking about, he saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and asked, 'Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?' And he went on, 'May God be gracious to you, my boy.' With that, Joseph hurried off, for he was overcome with feeling toward his brother and was on the verge of tears; he went into a room and wept there." (Genesis 43:29,30)

Joseph is unaware of Judah's assumption of responsibility for Benjamin. His mercy is aroused when he realizes that his younger brother's fate is to be no better than his - Joseph views Benjamin's being brought to Egypt as a reoccurrence of his own sale. True, in this case it is brought on by hunger and circumstances and is not the outcome of jealousy or hatred. Nonetheless, this was not the total repentance that was expected in the wake of the confessions he had heard from the brothers and Reuven in Egypt.

The verse tells us that Joseph feels compassion towards Benjamin, and weeps in private, yet restrains himself in public. His weeping here is in opposition to the previous weeping, where he felt compassion for his submissive brothers. Joseph understood that Judah, the man who proposed the sale, had prevailed over Reuven, the man who tried to save him. This is the only possible explanation of Joseph's crying over Benjamin, his tears being tears of mercy for him and not tears of happiness at the event of their

meeting. Why else, should the exiled, beloved brother, who had spent a third of his life in prison, have pitied his thirty-year old brother, who had remained with his father and raised a large family?

C) Third Tears Joseph decided to test his brothers once more. This time, however, the test would be more difficult. He makes his brothers jealous of Benjamin in the same way as they had once been jealous of him. He displays more outward affection for Benjamin than for them and increases his portion five times: "Portions were served from his Table; but Benjamin's portion was five times that of anyone else" (43:34). He also attempts to arouse the brothers' hatred towards Benjamin, for having stolen his goblet, an act which re-implicated them for the crime of espionage: "Put my silver Goblet in the mouth of the bag of the youngest one" (44:2). Joseph's aim is to test their reaction to the prospect of Benjamin's permanent enslavement in Egypt.

The brothers rent their garments (parallel to Joseph's coat 37:23). Judah says, "God has found the iniquity of your servants," and then offers himself into permanent slavery as atonement for his lifelong sin towards his father.

"Now your servant has pledged himself for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, I shall stand guilty before my father forever.' Therefore, please let your servant remain as a slave to my lord instead of the boy, and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father unless the boy is with me? Let me not be witness to the woe that would overtake my father.' Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, 'Have everyone withdraw from me!' So there was no one else about when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. His sobs were so loud that the Egyptians could hear, and so the news reached Pharaoh's palace." (Genesis 44:32-45:2)

At this point, Joseph is convinced of their total repentance. Judah's act combines two kinds of repentance. The first form of repentance is that required by the early mystics, (foremost, Rabbi Eliezer of Worms, author of the book *Sefer Rokeach*), whereby penance must counterbalance the crime. Judah, in a torn garment as a permanent slave in Egypt, is in the exact position he had placed Joseph. Secondly, we have the repentance as defined by the Rambam (*Law of Repentance* 2:1):

...what is complete repentance? When a person is confronted with the opportunity to repeat his sin but restrains himself because of repentance, and not because of fear or weakness.

Here too, deserting Benjamin to lifelong servitude is similar to Joseph's situation in the past. But Judah now is prepared to give his life to save Benjamin. Joseph comes to realize his mistake in crying for pity over Benjamin. He understands that Benjamin's being brought down to Egypt was not the result of the brother's disdain for Benjamin but rather the result of Judah's becoming Benjamin's guarantor. Judah's repentance, including his attempt to amend the past, is a continuation and completion of Reuven's atonement. Joseph's weeping for the third time is a continuation of his weeping the first time, when Reuven submitted. When the repentance is complete Joseph is no longer capable of restraining himself, and he weeps openly. At this stage the brother's repentance for selling Joseph into slavery is complete and Joseph can reveal himself to them.

PARASHAT HASHAVUA

PARASHAT MIKETZ

Why Didn't Joseph Contact His Father?

Adapted by Zvi Shimon

***** This shiur is dedicated l'zecher nishmat Yehuda ben Harav Yosef Dov, by his son Asher Reimer.

The following is an abridgement of articles written by Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun, a teacher in the Herzog Teachers' College affiliated with Yeshivat Har Etzion, and Rabbi Yaakov Medan, a teacher in the yeshiva, which originally appeared in Hebrew in *Megadim* 1.

Ramban poses a difficult question, one which continues to puzzle whoever studies the book of Genesis:

"How is it that Joseph, after living many years in Egypt, having attained a high and influential position in the house of an important Egyptian official, did not send his father even one message to inform him (that he was alive) and comfort him? Egypt is only six days' travel from Hebron, and respect for his father would have justified even a year's journey! (It would) have been a grave sin to torment his father by leaving him in mourning and bereavement for himself and for Shim'on; even if he wanted to hurt his brothers a little, how could he not feel pity for his aged father (Ramban to Gen. 42:9)?"

Abarbanel poses the same question, but more bluntly:

"Why did Joseph hide his identity from his brothers and speak harshly to them? It is criminal to be as vengeful and recriminating as a serpent!... How is it that as his brothers were starving and far from home, having left their families and small children and, above all, his aged, worried and suffering father waiting for them, did he not show compassion, but rather intensified the anguish by arresting Shim'on?" (chap. 4, question 4)

1) RAV YOEL BIN-NUN'S SOLUTION:

The usual solution, advanced by the Ramban that Yosef was trying to fulfill the dreams, is rejected by R. Bin-Nun, chiefly because it doesn't address, in his opinion, the moral question. How could Yosef have left his father in torment, only to bring his dreams to fruition?

Our entire outlook on this story changes, however, if we accept the fact that Joseph did not know that his brothers had fooled his father with the coat, the blood, and the lie that Joseph had been devoured by wild animals. Such thoughts never occurred to him! Hence it was Joseph who spent thirteen years of slavery in Egypt and, the following years of greatness wondering: "Where is my father? Why has no one come to look for me?" All the factors are now reversed, when seen from Joseph's point of view. Egypt is, after all, close to Canaan, and Jacob was a rich, important and influential man, with international familial and political connections. The Midianites or Ishmaelites who brought Joseph to Egypt were his cousins; is it possible that no one from that caravan could be located in all those years? We know that Jacob does not search for his son, as he thinks Joseph is dead, but Joseph has no way of knowing this.

Joseph's wonder at his father's silence is joined by a terrible sense of anxiety which grows stronger over the years, as seasons and years pass by and no one comes. Joseph's anguish centers on his father: the voice inside him asking "where is my father?" is joined by another harsh voice: "Why did my father send me to my brothers that day?" He concludes that his brothers must have succeeded in convincing Jacob, and he has been disowned. Years later, when Joseph rides in the viceroy's chariot, when he shaves his beard and stands before Pharaoh, it is clear to him that God must have decreed that his life would be lived separately from his family's. He gives expression to this feeling in the name he gives his eldest son, born of an Egyptian wife:

...he called him Menashe, because God has made me forget (nashani) all my labor and my father's house (41:51).

To forget his father's house!

Joseph's entire world is built on the misconception that his father has renounced him, while Jacob's world is destroyed by the misconception that Joseph is dead. Joseph's world is shaken when his brothers stand before him, not knowing who he is, and bow down to him. At that moment, he must question this new reality -

("he remembers the dreams he dreamt about them") and is thrown back into the past. Stalling for time, he begins a line of inquiry - and action - which is geared to one end: to find out why his father had rejected him, if at all. He plots to keep Benjamin, so that his maternal brother can tell him all that has transpired. This was Joseph's plan to find out what had happened and how to deal with it.

Judah's response was an attempt to obtain Benjamin's release by appealing for mercy for his aged father. In so doing, he tells Joseph - totally unintentionally - exactly what he wanted so desperately to hear, thereby

freeing him and eventually Jacob, from their mutual errors.

"Your servant our father said to us: 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. One has left me; I said he was devoured and I have not seen him since. (If) you take this son too and tragedy befalls him you will bring my old age down to She'ol in agony' " (44:24-30).

Joseph needs to hear no more. He finally realizes the naked truth: No one has cut him off at all! He has not been forgotten!

Joseph could no longer restrain himself before all who were standing before him, and cried: 'Have every one leave me!'... and he cried out loud... and he told his brothers: I am Joseph: Is my father still alive? (45:1-3)

Does he live? Is he yet my father, who loves me and has not forgotten me? Is it possible?

Each of the players in our scene had a plan, and pursued that plan. But the plan which was finally revealed was a higher plan, geared at bringing Jacob's family to Egypt and creating the Jewish people.

2) RAV YAAKOV MEDAN'S CRITIQUE OF RAV BIN-NUN'S SOLUTION

This thesis of Joseph's suspicion towards his father is untenable. Joseph knew that he was, after all, his father's favorite son and that his father had made him the striped coat. He also knew that his father had loved Rachel most of all his wives. Above all, would a man like Jacob behave deceitfully, sending Joseph to his brothers on the false pretext of ascertaining their well-being, intending in fact that they sell him as a slave? Is there a son who would suspect his father of such a deed? This assumption is totally unrealistic.

It also remains unclear why Joseph, surprised that his father did not seek him out, came to harbor the kind of suspicions attributed to him by R. Bin-Nun. How could he be certain that his father knew of the sale, but refrained from searching for him? Why did it not occur to him that his father regarded him as dead? To this day, a person who disappears without a trace is presumed dead. Why should we assume that Joseph did not believe that the brothers were lying to his father? It was precisely because the brothers did not habitually report their actions to their father that Joseph found it necessary to tell his father all their misdeeds (37:2).

In addition, R. Bin-Nun claims that Joseph's stubborn silence was broken upon hearing Judah say "he was surely devoured and I have not seen him since (44:28)." Joseph realized at this point that his father had not deserted him. However according to the simplest reading of the text, Joseph's resistance broke down when Judah offered himself as a slave instead of Benjamin:

Therefore please let your servant remain as a slave to my lord instead of the boy, and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father unless the boy is with me? Let me not see to the sorrow that would overcome my father! ...Joseph could no longer control himself (44:32- 45:1).

R. Bin-Nun claims that Joseph's feelings of rejection by his family are the foundation for the naming of his first born "Menashe," meaning "God has made me forget my hardship and my father's home" (nashani - made me forget).

In my opinion, the meaning of the verse is different. "My hardship" (amali) is to be understood as follows (see Ibn Ezra - Genesis 6:13): "God has made me forget completely my hardship and the HARDSHIP of my parental home." Joseph does not offer thanks to God for having made him forget his parental home, but rather offers thanks for enabling him to forget his tribulations (his labors) in his father's house. It is only after Joseph rises to the throne that he is able to make sense of his suffering in the two previous episodes, in prison ("amali") and in his father's house (beit avi).

3) RAV MEDAN'S SOLUTION: "THE PATH OF REPENTANCE"

Abarbanel offers the following explanation for Joseph's not contacting his father while in Egypt:

"Even after Joseph tested his brothers by accusing them of espionage, he was still not certain whether they loved Benjamin or whether they still hated Rachel's children, so he focused on Benjamin to see whether they would try to save him." (chap. 42, quests. 4, 6)

Joseph's behavior is part of an overall scheme to test the brothers and provide them with an opportunity to fully repent for selling him into slavery. The sin of Joseph's brothers is one of the more serious sins related in the book of Genesis. Both the Torah (Exodus 21:17, 20:13; see Rashi *ibid*; Deut. 24:7) and the Prophets (Joel 4, Amos 2:6-10 and many others) equate this sin of selling a free man into bondage with the gravest of sins. The penitence of Joseph's brothers is not an incidental event appearing as part of another story, but a major theme of the narrative.

Reuven and Judah were vying for the family leadership, Jacob having effectively ceased playing the leadership role (see for example 34:5, 34:13-14, 35:22, 43:5). After Shim'on and Levi are excluded from the race for leadership, the struggle continues between Reuven and Judah. It finds expression in their argument as to Joseph's fate (37:22,26-27), in the recognition of the sin of his sale (42:22 *contra* 44:16), in the assumption of responsibility for Benjamin in Egypt (42:37 *contra* 43:8-9) and in additional verses in the Torah.

Reuven and Judah were each engaged in a process of penitence for similar sins, Reuven for having slept with his father's wife (as appears from the simple textual reading), Judah for having lain, albeit unknowingly, with his son's wife. It would seem clear that their individual repentance is also part of the leadership struggle.

At first glance there seems to be no connection between Reuven's sin with his father's wife or Judah's sin with his son's wife and the selling of Joseph. This, however is misleading. According to the simple reading of the text, Reuven's intention was to inherit his father's leadership in his lifetime, like Absalom who slept with David's concubine. His attempt to rescue Joseph and his dreams of royalty (37:20) is part of his repentance for his sin with Bilhah.

The proximity of the story of Judah and Tamar to the selling of Joseph indicates a connection as well. The chain of disasters that strike Judah, the loss of his wife and two sons, is apparently a punishment for selling Joseph. Reuven later advances the strange suggestion that Jacob kill his two sons, should he fail to return Benjamin from Egypt (42:37). It would seem that he was influenced by the punishment Judah had received for selling Joseph - the death of his two sons. This terrible punishment for a terrible sin is branded into Reuven's consciousness. Reuven is ready to receive the same punishment if he deserts Benjamin in Egypt.

Initially, Judah did not imagine that his sons died due to his sin, saying "Tamar's fate is that her husbands will die (Yevamot 34 and Genesis 38:11)." Finally, Judah realizes that Tamar was in the right and he admits "she is more righteous than I.(38:26)" Only at this stage did he realize that she was not destined to have her husbands die but rather that it was his destiny to lose his sons. The sin was his. From this recognition he rebuilds his shattered home.

The process of repentance accompanies the brothers wherever they go. When the Egyptian viceroy commands them to bring Benjamin, the second son of Rachel's, the brothers are immediately reminded of the sale of Joseph. The two contenders - Reuven and Judah - respond in character. Reuven sees only the punishment for the crime, and he does not suggest any means of rectification.

And Reuven answered them: 'Did I not tell you, do not sin against the child, and you did not listen; now his blood is being avenged.' (Gee. 42:22)

Judah acknowledges his sin, but also suggests a positive path of repentance for the evil done. He is not satisfied with sackcloth and fasting, which are merely expressions of mourning and acceptance of the verdict.

And they tore their clothesAnd Judah said, 'What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has divulged the sin of your servants; we have become my lord's slaves' (44:13-17).

And further on,

Let your servant stay instead of the boy as a slave to my lord and let the boy go up with his brothers (44:33).

From Judah's speech it is apparent that he did not confess to stealing the cup. He considered the whole episode of the stolen goblet as a fabrication.

Otherwise there is no sense in telling us of Benjamin's journey to Egypt, or his suggesting that he replace Benjamin. This is how Rashi and other commentators interpret Judah's words. His words, "God has revealed the SIN of your servants," undoubtedly relate to the selling of Joseph.

Similarly, Judah's words to his father, "If I bring him not to you and set him before you, then I shall have SINNED to you forever" (43:9), indicate his understanding of the connection between Joseph's being brought down to Egypt and Benjamin being brought down to Egypt. Benjamin's abandonment in Egypt would be a continuation of his grievous sin of selling Joseph. What sin is there and why should he be punished if Benjamin is forcibly taken? We must therefore see the necessity of bringing Benjamin down to Egypt as a consequence of the sin. For Judah, protecting Benjamin at all cost is the atonement demanded for the selling of Joseph. In offering their respective propositions, Reuven and Judah remain faithful to their personalities: Reuven through acceptance of the punishment, and Judah through confrontation with the sin itself.

Our assumption is that Joseph too was plagued by his brother's sin and, consequently, with the future of the house of Israel, no less than with his own fate. From the time he was sold, he had begun to rebuild not only his own life, but his family's unity. This unification was not to be forced upon his brothers, but rather achieved by willingness and love. Joseph desired a unification born of his brother's regretting their sin, a product of wholehearted repentance. Joseph believed in his own ability to initiate such a process or at least to test its existence.

Joseph had commanded his brothers to bring Benjamin to Egypt. When the brothers actually brought Benjamin to Egypt, despite the danger, in order to redeem Shim'on and to buy food (in a way similar to how Joseph was sold "for shoes"), Joseph, who was unaware of Judah's assumption of guardianship and its importance, presumably saw the brothers' action as yet another failure to meet the test and challenge that he had set before them.

Joseph cries three times. The first two times are inner, bound by self-restraint. The third time he breaks down totally and cries, openly and without control. R. Bin-Nun ignores the obvious connection between three instances.

A) The brothers are subjected to an intensive interrogation during three days of imprisonment, inducing them to repent for their sin and accept the punishment and suffering, with Reuven in the lead (42:21,22). We have previously defined this kind of repentance as "Reuven's repentance," a repentance which involves submission and acceptance of the verdict, but lacks a program for improvement and change. Joseph is prepared to accept his brothers' confession and their submission. He witnesses the newly reestablished connection of the ten brothers to the sons of Rachel, and he cries (42:24). But this is not sufficient for him. He requires a fuller, deeper repentance.

B) Joseph expected that the brothers would return to him empty-handed, placing themselves in danger by explaining to him that they had decided not to endanger Benjamin for the sake of Shim'on and were willing to suffer the shame of hunger. This is what would have happened, had Jacob had his way. Thus Joseph was disappointed when it became clear to him that the brothers had brought Benjamin in order to redeem Shim'on, despite the danger to their youngest brother. Joseph is unaware of Judah's assumption of responsibility for Benjamin. His mercy is aroused when he realizes that his younger brother's fate is to be no better than his - Joseph views Benjamin's being brought to Egypt as a reoccurrence of his own sale. True, in this case it is brought on by hunger and circumstances and is not the outcome of jealousy or hatred. Nonetheless, this was not the total repentance that was expected in the wake of the confessions he had heard from the brothers and Reuven in Egypt.

The verse tells us that Joseph feels compassion towards Benjamin, and weeps in private. Joseph believes that Judah, the man who proposed his sale, had prevailed over Reuven, the man who tried to save him. This is the only possible explanation of Joseph's crying over Benjamin, his tears being tears of mercy for him and not tears of happiness at the event of their meeting. Why else, should the exiled, beloved brother, who had spent a

third of his life in prison, have pitied his thirty-year old brother, who had remained with his father and raised a large family?

C) Joseph decided to test his brothers once more. This time, however, the test would be more difficult. He makes his brothers jealous of Benjamin in the same way as they had once been jealous of him. He displays more outward affection for Benjamin than for them and increases his portion five times over as well as giving him a striped coat (and five other garments, 43:34). He also attempts to arouse the brothers' hatred towards Benjamin, for having stolen his goblet, an act which re-implicated them for the crime of espionage. Joseph's aim is to test their reaction to the prospect of Benjamin's permanent enslavement in Egypt.

The brothers rent their garments (parallel to Joseph's coat 37:23). Judah says, "God has found the iniquity of your servants," and then offers himself into permanent slavery as atonement for his lifelong sin towards his father. At this point, Joseph is convinced of their total repentance. Judah's act combines two kinds of repentance. The first form of repentance is that required by the early mystics, (foremost, Rabbi Eliezer of Worms, author of the Sefer Rokeach), whereby penance must counterbalance the crime. Judah, in a torn garment as a permanent slave in Egypt, is in the exact position he had placed Joseph. Secondly, we have the repentance as defined by the Rambam (Law of Repentance 2:1):

....what is complete repentance? When a person is confronted with the opportunity to repeat his sin but restrains himself because of repentance, and not because of fear or weakness.

Judah now is prepared to give his life to save Benjamin. Joseph comes to realize his mistake in crying for pity over Benjamin. He understands that Benjamin's being brought down to Egypt was not the result of the brother's disdain for Benjamin but rather the result of Judah's becoming Benjamin's guarantor. Judah's repentance, including his attempt to amend the past, is a continuation and completion of Reuven's atonement. His weeping for the third time is a continuation of his weeping the first time, when Reuven submitted. When the repentance is complete Joseph is no longer capable of restraining himself, and he weeps openly. At this stage the brother's repentance for selling Joseph into slavery is complete and Joseph can reveal himself to them.

4)RAV BIN-NUN RESPONDS

After carefully reading Rabbi Medan's detailed arguments, I nevertheless maintain that my presentation of the events is the correct one. There is clearly a process of repentance and rectification on the part of Joseph's brothers, and this is our guide to understanding the affair. But all this is God's plan. All Medan's evidence proving a process of teshuva and restoration is correct; but there is no reason to credit Joseph with this. The challenge of repentance offered the brothers regarding Benjamin is a challenge issuing from God. Joseph was forever acting according to natural, human considerations. It should be noted that Rabbi Medan gives an extremely contrived interpretation of the verse "for God has forced me to forget all my tribulations and my father's house." The verse seemingly coheres with my explanation. He also totally ignores Judah's words, "You have know that my wife bore me two, one departed from me and I said he was surely devoured."

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* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion with "Sing, My Soul!" thoughts on Shabbos Zemiros Parshas Miketz For the week ending 4 Teves 5757 13 & 14 December 1996

Insights

WINDOW SERENADE "Since G-d has made all this known to you (Yosef),

there is none more discerning nor wise than you." (41:39) Once, there were two rich men who lived next door to each other. A dispute arose between them. They each claimed that a certain harp player had come to play outside his window and in his honor. In view of their wealth, and the seriousness with which they both took themselves, they brought their case before the great rabbi, the Noda B'Yehuda. They both apportioned a large sum to be given to the rabbi for judging the case. The rabbi said to them: "It is clear to me that the harp player came to play in the honor of neither of you; rather it was in my honor he came, seeing as I am receiving such a large sum for judging this case!" Thus it was with Pharaoh. When Pharaoh heard Yosef telling him that he should appoint a wise and discerning man, he remarked that his dream had not been, as he had thought, in his honor; neither was it so that they would not be devastated by famine, as the Egyptians had thought. The purpose of Pharaoh's dream was none other than that Yosef be raised to the pinnacle of power, and "since G-d had made all this known to you, there is none more discerning nor wise than you..." (Shaar Bas Rabin in Iturei Torah)

Effecting Cause "It happened at the end of two years to the day; Pharaoh dreamed..." (41:1) Cause and effect are frequently mistaken for each other. When we see someone who has been very successful in business, we assume that the cause is his business acumen. The reverse is in fact the truth. Hashem decides how much money this person will have, with the effect that he is given the necessary ability and opportunity to acquire the wealth. Similarly, Pharaoh's dream did not cause Yosef's release from prison, but rather Hashem decreed that the time had come for Yosef's release with the effect that "Pharaoh dreamed". (Beis HaLevi)

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Haftorah: 1 Kings 3:15-4:1

The reading of this week's Haftorah is a rare event in the Jewish Calendar. The reason: Parshas Miketz is nearly always read during Chanukah, and a special Haftorah for Chanukah is read. For Parshas Miketz to fall after Chanukah, three events have to coincide: Rosh Hashana must fall on a Shabbos, and both the months of Cheshvan and Kislev must be 'chasser' (deficient), having only 29 days instead of 30. Interestingly, it makes no difference whether the year itself is a regular year of 12 months or a leap year of 13 months. There is also no difference between Eretz Yisrael and the rest of the world in regard to this occurrence. The Haftorah itself describes the famous incident where King Solomon discerns the true mother of a baby claimed by two mothers. How ironic that one of the most famous incidents in the Prophets should be the least read of all the Haftorahs!

On The Cutting Edge The king said "This one claims: 'This is my son who is alive, and your son is the dead one', and this one claims: 'It is not so! Your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.'" ... "Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other." (3:23-25) It is usually assumed that King Solomon ordered the baby to be cut in half in order to determine the real mother. In reality, it was already clear to the king who was the true mother from the way the two women had expressed themselves: The first one started by saying "This is my son who is alive" and only then "and your son is dead;" whereas the second mother commenced her claim by saying "Your son is the dead one" and only afterwards said that "my son is the living one." The second woman, who was lying, wasn't really interested in getting the living child, for why should she want to expend the considerable effort of raising a child which wasn't really hers. Rather, out of jealousy alone, she wanted to prevent the other woman from keeping the living child. For that reason her focus was on "Your child is dead," rather than "My son is the living one," since her whole point was to prove the dead child belonged to someone else. On the other hand, the real mother was only concerned to prove that her child was alive. >From these tell-tale subconscious hints, King Solomon was able to discern the true mother. It was only to prove to the world that his analysis was accurate that he went through the theatrics of calling for the sword to divide the living child, knowing that the real mother would far prefer that the child should live, even if it meant having to give him up. However Solomon, the wisest of men, had already arrived at the truth of the matter as soon as the two women had opened their mouths. (Kochav

then may she remarry (Yevamot 105b). (Even should she want to marry this minor, and have him perform "Yibum," she must wait at least until he is 9 years old -- Niddah 45a.)

IV THE WILY YEVAMAH Let us now return to Shlomo's judgment. The Midrash (Koheleth Rabba 10:16) tells us that the reason both of these women were so desperate to have the living child declared theirs was that they were both potential "Yevamot" [=widows subject to "Yibum"; singular form is "Yevamah"]. Neither of the two had any other offspring. Whoever would be judged to be the childless woman would not only lose the infant, but would also be trapped in the unpleasant status of "Yevamah," being dependent upon her brother-in-law's good will.

There is another Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 2:175), that asserts that the husbands of the two women were father and son. That is, one woman was the mother-in-law of the other. The above commentators suggest that these two Midrashim may be complementing each other. The two women -- the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law -- had just been bereaved of their husbands, and needed a live child to exempt them from the status of "Yevamah." Both gave birth to babies. However, these two babies were still less than thirty days old at the time that one of them died, as the verse indicates. The mother of the dead child would therefore be subject to the laws of "Yibum" (rule #4). This, then, was the motivation of the lying mother to try to kidnap the other woman's child. Now, if it was the mother-in-law's child who had died, she would have no reason to try to seize her daughter-in-law's child. Even though her son (husband of the daughter-in-law) had passed away *before* her husband had, and therefore *he* would not exempt her from "Yibum" (rule #1), nevertheless, she would be exempt from "Yibum" for another reason. The living child, if he was not her own child, was at least her *son's* child, and a grandchild is enough to exempt one from "Yibum" (rule #2)! Only the daughter-in-law would have a motive to lie and to try and claim (falsely) that the child was hers. If it was her baby who had died within 30 days of its birth, leaving her childless, she would indeed be bound to her husband's brother as a "Yevamah" (rule #4). And who would that brother be? None other than the living baby, who was in fact her mother-in-law's child -- i.e., her deceased husband's brother! Since her brother-in-law was a newborn infant, the daughter-in-law would have to wait thirteen years before this baby would be able to perform Chalitzah on her and free her to marry others (rule #5)! (This baby was the only living brother of her husband. There could not have been any other, older brothers, because, as the Midrash points out, the mother-in-law was herself a potential "Yevamah." This means that she had no living children except for the baby in question.) The youthful King Shlomo, in his wisdom, realized all of this. He suspected that since the only one with a strong motive to lie was the daughter-in-law, the child must really belong to the mother-in-law. In order to confirm this conclusion he ordered that the child be cut in half.. What would that accomplish? If the remaining child were to be killed, this too would free the daughter-in-law from her "Yevamah" status -- since the living baby was her only brother-in-law (rule #3). In fact, killing the child would be an even *better* solution from the daughter-in-law's perspective. By just kidnapping the child she might convince the court that she was not a "Yevamah." However, she herself would know that the child was not really hers, and that she really was not permitted to remarry, halachically speaking, until Chalitzah was performed. By having the baby killed, though, she would truthfully be released from the bonds of "Yibum!" This is the reason the daughter-in-law suddenly lost interest in keeping the child when she saw that Shlomo was ready to cut the child in half. This would serve her interests even better than taking the child for herself. "Cut!" she insisted. Shlomo had guessed that this would be the woman's reaction to his suggestion. By tricking her into making such a seemingly ludicrous statement, he revealed her true motives. In this manner, Shlomo demonstrated beyond doubt that the daughter-in-law was indeed lying!

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The Two Year Prison Extension: Theory of Relativity

Our Parsha begins with the words, "And it was two years later, and Pharaoh dreamt that he was standing by the Nile" [Bereshis 41:1]. The obvious question is: what happened during this two year interval? At the end of last week's Parsha, Rash"i quotes a Medrash that tells us what happened during this period.

Rash"i says that because Yosef put his trust in the Butler, by asking the Butler to put in a good word for him with Pharaoh, Yosef was punished. For the two words he spoke -- "u'zchartani, v'hotzaisani" (and remember me and take me out) n Yosef's stay in jail was extended for two more years.

Rash"i alludes to a very enigmatic Medrash [M. Rabbah] at the beginning of this week's Parsha. The Medrash says: "Happy is the man who places his trust in G-d... [Tehillim 40:5] -- this refers to Yosef; '...and turned not to the arrogant and to strayers after falsehood' [ibid.] -- whose sentence in jail was extended for two years because of the two words he said to the butler."

This Medrash contains an internal contradiction. At first it singles out Yosef as the prime example of a person who places his trust in G-d. Then it turns around and says, because he asked the butler to put in a good word for him and did not trust G-d sufficiently, he was punished with two extra years in jail.

Which way is it? Is Yosef the "Truster" par excellence, or is Yosef a person who puts his trust in people?

There are two basic approaches used to answer this question. Rav Eliyahu Lopian, the Beis HaLevi, and many others use the approach that Bitachon [trust] is a relative concept. It depends on a person's level.

For instance, the Ramba"n states in Parshas Bechukosai that the Talmudic teaching [Brochos 60a] which tells us that it is permitted to seek medical treatment, and for doctors to practice medicine, based on the verse "and he shall surely heal" [Shmos 21:19], is only a permission for "everyday people." However, those individuals who live on such an exalted level that they put all their trust in G-d, should not go to doctors. They can (and perhaps should) rely on miracles. {Certainly, the Ramba"n says, a normal person who conducts himself in all matters "based on the laws of nature," must use a doctor.}

Similarly, we find in Brochos [35b] a disagreement between Rav Shimon bar Yochai and Rav Yishmael regarding how a person should balance his obligation to learn Torah with his need to support himself and his family. Rav Yishmael says that a person should work, and set aside regular times for learning Torah. Rav Shimeon bar Yochai says no: a person should sit and learn, and G-d will send him a livelihood. The Talmud says that many people followed the teaching of Rav Yishmael and were successful, and many people followed the teaching of Rav Shimeon bar Yochai and were unsuccessful. The level of Rav Shimeon bar Yochai was not appropriate for the masses. There are individuals who are on that level, and for them G-d will send them their livelihood - but this is not to be common practice.

Bitachon, say Rav Eliyahu Lopian, is a relative concept that depends on the level of the individual. If one clings to G-d, does everything for the Sake of Heaven, and is perfectly righteous, then it is true that G-d will provide for him. G-d will take care of his sicknesses, and He will feed and sustain him. The person will not have to make any human effort.

However, if one is a normal human being, not only is he allowed to make an effort (hishtadlus) for his living and his health, but he is obligated to make that effort.

This is the interpretation of the Medrash. "Happy is the one who places his trust in Hashem" -- this refers to Yosef." Yosef was of such a stature that he put his entire trust in G-d. He was a Tzadik, who was a pillar of the world. Therefore, commensurate with the type of person he was, he was obligated not to make an effort. He should have remained at his level of trusting in G-d alone and not seeking human intervention (by the butler). For Yosef to step down from this level was in fact a sin, says Rav Eliyahu Lopian, and so

he was punished with two extra years in jail.

The Two Year Prison Extension: Theory of Cause and Effect

There are, however, those who understand that the two year prison extension was not a punishment. Yosef did no sin in asking for the butler's intervention. The other approach to the above-quoted Medrash is that what we have here can be called 'the natural consequences of a person's actions.'

This means as follows: there was absolutely nothing wrong with Yosef exerting effort by seeking human intervention to gain freedom. The two extra years in prison were not a punishment. They were, however, the natural consequence of his actions.

If one wants to conduct himself with G-d in a manner that rises above nature (l'maale m'derech haTeva), and this is how the person always conducts himself with G-d, then G-d will respond to him in the same way. But if one lives his life according to the way of nature, then G-d's response to him will also be according to the way of nature.

The Baal Shem Tov offers a beautiful parable to illustrate this concept. It says in Tehillim [121:5] "G-d is your shadow next to your right hand." The Baal Shem Tov explains the metaphor. When one raises his hand, one's shadow raises its hand. When one jumps, the shadow jumps. When one goes fast, the shadow goes fast. The relationship a person has with G-d is like that of a shadow. However one conducts him/herself with Him is reciprocal. That is how G-d will conduct Himself with the person.

If one conducts himself in such a manner that he places all his trust in G-d, there will be a reciprocal relationship -- that trust will be well placed. But if one conducts himself through "normal channels," the conduct of normal human beings, then that is how G-d will conduct Himself with the person.

The reason Yosef had to spend the extra two years in jail was not a punishment. Rather, by virtue of the fact that Yosef went through the channels of normal human beings, and asked the Butler to intervene for him with Pharaoh, G-d allowed nature to take its course. It is quite natural that if one asks a person to do a favor, the person forgets about the favor and remembers two years later.

The Key To Confession: No Buts

It says in the Parsha that Yosef told his brothers "If you are truthful people, one of your brothers must remain here as a prisoner..." To which the brothers respond among themselves, "Indeed (Aval) we are guilty concerning our brother, inasmuch as we saw his heartfelt anguish when he pleaded with us and we paid no heed; that is why this anguish has come upon us."

[Bereshis 42:19-21]

The usage of the word 'Aval,' over here, is somewhat troubling. Literally the verse means "But, we are guilty." How does 'but' fit in here? Rash"i quotes the Targum that, over here, the word 'Aval' does not mean 'but', rather it means 'Indeed.' Rash"i then cites a Medrash Rabbah that the interpretation is in fact 'but.' If so, our original question returns, how does 'but' fit in this context?

We see that there are a number of connections between Yom Kippur and the sale of Yosef. On Yom Kippur we read the narrative of the Ten Martyrs, who were an atonement for the sale of Yosef. Furthermore, according to Kabbalah, the reason we do not wear shoes on Yom Kippur is that Yosef's brothers (according to the Medrash) took the money they received from the sale of Yosef and bought shoes. Finally, the Ramba"m in Hilchos Teshuva [2:8] defines the essence of Confession (Vidui) on Yom Kippur as the recital of the formula "But we and our fathers have sinned" (Aval anachnu v'avoseinu chatanu). These are almost the same words that we have in our Parsha "But, we our guilty" (Aval ashemim anachnu).

We see that there is a link between the confession that we say on Yom Kippur and the confession of Yosef's brothers. Beyond that, there is a link between the whole incident of the sale of Yosef and the service of Yom Kippur.

I saw a commentary who explained this homiletically as follows: The brothers are saying "Our sin was 'aval' -- the word 'but.'" They said, "We weren't maliciously trying to hurt Yosef." They felt that it was self-defense.

They thought Yosef was trying to kill them. They had all sorts of calculations. Their crime was not one of malice, but of rationalization.

"But... he's trying to get us." "But... father loves him more." But... if we don't do something, this will be the end of us." "Our sin," the brothers said, "stems from the fact that we said 'but.'" By saying 'but,' one can rationalize anything.

Rav Yitzchak Breuer says that there are three types of senses. There is the animalistic feeling that a person has, there is the human feeling that a person has, and there is a prophetic or profound feeling that a person can have. If a person only has the first two senses, he can take those urges and rationalize that anything is not only permissible but that it is a mitzvah. A person needs, not only the human feeling, but he also needs the prophetic vision to know whether this is really what G-d wants of him.

This was the sin of the Yosef's brothers. 'But, we have sinned.' Our sin came about because we did everything through rationalization. We rationalized our jealousy and our hatred and the hidden feelings we had toward him. We went ahead and put it in the guise of a mitzvah.

This is what we try to do on Yom Kippur. We state that we are not people that are maliciously bad. We are not wicked or intentionally evil. What then is the nature of our sin?

"Aval, it's too difficult to learn every night. But, it's too difficult to give maa'ser. "But, but, but, but..." Ours are sins of 'but.' That is why we read the incident of the Ten Martyrs. That is why we take off our shoes. To remind ourselves that they sold him and took the money to buy shoes... because with 'aval' one can rationalize anything. We take off our shoes to remind ourselves what can happen when one lets rationalizations take over. Therefore, this is the text of our Confession -- BUT, we and our fathers have sinned. We say 'but' too often. We rationalize everything. This is the tikun we seek on Yom Kippur.

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STUCK ON GUM -- DRASHA PARSHAS MIKEITZ

In this week's parsha Yaakov wants to appease the viceroy of Egypt who had taken his son Shimon as a hostage and had demanded that Binyamin be sent down to Egypt. Yaakov sends a variety of food gifts, among them an item the Torah terms botnim. (Genesis 33:11) Rashi says, "I don't know what botnim are," then he adds, "Rabbi Meir explains them as pistachios, and I think they persimmons." When I was a child my rebbe told us, "you see? Rashi said, 'I don't know!'" We were supposed to learn something from that -- although I was not sure exactly what until I heard a story last week.

A group of Yeshiva boys, all dressed in traditional Rabbinical garb, gathered around a Rabbi who had just emerged from a store in the Meah Shearim section of Jerusalem. Craig, who was spending a year of Torah study in Israel after graduating from a coed Jewish High School, saw the scene out of the corner of his eye. Then he realized that a picture of the Rabbi who had attracted all the attention hung on his classroom wall. Indeed, his favorite teacher could not stop singing the praises of this brilliant and equally humble Torah sage. "Yes," thought Craig, "it is none other than Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach." Quickly, he raced over to partake of the conversation -- he, too, wanted to speak to the great man. The Yeshiva students were peppering Rabbi Auerbach with complex Talmudic questions. "How does one reconcile the opinion of Rambam with the Gemorah in the third chapter of Bava Kama?" one asked. "How can one answer the contradictory opinions of the Shach in Choshen Mishpat?" another demanded. "Does the Rav concur with the ruling of the Chazon Ish (Rabbi A. Y. Karelitz) regarding the completion of electrical circuits on the Sabbath and Festivals?" another probed. To each young man the sage had a simple reply. "Look at the Pischei Tshuva in Yoreh Deah," he nodded at one. "The Maharam Shif asks your question in Bava Kama," he smiled at the next, the complex Talmudic

reasoning flowing effortlessly. "Look in the 12 chapter of my work Minchas Shlomo," he replied humbly. I discuss it there in detail. So it went: deep question; short answer. Eventually, some of the boys went away, and the crowd got smaller. Craig's mind raced. While he was no student of the Talmud, he badly wanted to partake in the banter, but what could he ask this great scholar? Suddenly, a warm hand was outstretched and a broad smile appeared on Rabbi Auerbach's face. The rabbi was shaking his hand. A few of the older boys were watching the encounter of the Gadol HaDor (sage of the generation) and the American high school kid.

"And how can I help you?" asked the Rabbi. Craig's mind raced. "Umm, Umm," he stammered. "Is it true that Bazooka Bubble Gum is really kosher in Israel?" Rav Shlomo Zalman stopped. He pondered. He shook his head. "This is something I really don't know," he said. "You have truly stumped me."

Craig went back to his Yeshiva a different boy. He, a simple graduate of a Hebrew day school, had asked the generation's leading sage a question that he could not answer! Thus encouraged, Craig got serious about Torah study. All his frustration about not understanding Talmudic complexities had dissipated. After all, the great Rabbi Auerbach could not answer his question! When I learned the Rashi for the first time at the age of seven, I could not get over the fact that Rashi did not know something. I was even more amazed that although Rashi had two alternate explanations, he boldly opened his commentary by stating, "I don't know."

Rashi sends a message to every student. You can still be a Rashi -- the single greatest commentator on the entire Torah, Prophets, and Talmud -- and still not know the translation of a simple word! Rashi clearly sends a message that one not need be afraid to declare on a tiny and perhaps insignificant translation -- one that can be interchanged with a variety of variables from pistachios to persimmons -- "I don't know." What is the exact reason for Rashi's declaration? Did he have in mind all the intensity that I set forth? I have grappled with those questions since that day in third grade. I got from Rashi what I had to get. What he meant -- I really don't know. Good Shabbos

Dedicated by Dr. and Mrs. Philip Felig in memory of Elias M. Fellig Mordechai Kamenetzky - Yeshiva of South Shore <http://www.yoss.org>

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"halacha@jer1.co.il" Parshas Miketz
SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS MIKETZ

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

They replied, Your servant our father is at peace; he still lives... (Gen. 43:28)

Honoring Parents: What is the limit?

The sensitivity that one must have in performing the Mitzvah of Kibud Av V'aim, honoring one's parents, is expressed in our Sages' comment on the verse quoted above. Chazal(1) criticize Yosef for not objecting to hearing his revered father described as "your servant, our father". Even though Yosef was not at liberty to reveal his identity at the time, he is nevertheless faulted for not being offended by the desecration of his father's honor. This teaches us that it is not enough to merely honor and fear one's parents in their presence. Even when they are not physically present, we are commanded to see that their honor is not compromised in any way. Let us explain: The are two

major categories under which the Halachos of conduct towards parents are subsumed: Kibud, honoring them, and Morah, revering them.

Kibud Av V'aim - Honor of Parents Kibud is accomplished in three different ways: Through the children's thoughts - children are supposed to view their parents as being honorable and respected people - even if they are not considered as such in the eyes of others. This attitudinal aspect of the Mitzvah is the main part of Kibbud(2); Through the children's actions - this includes feeding, dressing and escorting them, and generally assisting them in all of their needs as a servant would do for his master. These actions must be done B'sever Panim Yafos, pleasantly and enthusiastically. The manner in which one assists parents is a crucial aspect of the Mitzva(3). Through the children's speech - e.g., when a child is honored, he should credit his parents for the honor bestowed upon him. When a child needs to have a request or a favor granted, he should not request it in his own merit, but rather, in the merit of his father or mother(4).

Parents may excuse their children from the Mitzva of Kibud(5). In fact, it is advisable for them to do so. A parent who constantly exacts respect from his children will surely cause his children to be punished on his account(6). Consequently, although according to the Halacha a child should stand up when a parent enters the room(7), in practice this Halacha is not widely observed. It is safe to assume that most parents excuse their children from demonstrating this honor towards them(8), and since they do, the children are not obligated(9).

Reciting Kaddish after a parent's death falls into the category of Kibud(10). Consequently, a parent may excuse his child from saying Kaddish after his passing(11).

Morah Av V'aim - Reverence of Parents

The second category of the Halachos governing the conduct of children to parents is Morah, reverence, or fear. It means that one should act towards his parents as he would towards a sovereign with the power to punish those who treat him disrespectfully(12). Specifically, this commandment prohibits a child from sitting in his parents' set places in home or in Shul, interrupting them, contradicting them in an abrupt or disrespectful manner and calling them by their first names(13). Most Poskim hold that parents may also excuse their children from the Mitzva of Morah(14). Consequently, it has become customary that children sit in their father's place in Shul, since parents are not particular about this show of respect(15). Parents may not, however, allow themselves to be degraded, hit or cursed by their children. Those actions are not excusable(16). Even if a parent is, G-d forbid, insane and has embarrassed the child in public, it is nevertheless forbidden for the child to shame or degrade the parent(17). One may however, take steps to ensure that they are not publicly embarrassed. E.g., one may arrange to have others bar the parents from a public gathering etc.(18). When an elderly father lives with his son, the son is not required to give up his seat at the head of the table. The son must, however, allow his father to wash his hands first and to be served first, etc.(19). If her husband objects, a married woman is not required to honor her parents. She is, however, obligated to revere them and to avoid demeaning them(20).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Sotah 13b. 2 Chaye Adam 67:3. 3 YD 240:4. 4 YD 240:5; Chaye Adam 67:5. 5 The parents may change their mind and revoke their excuse - Maharam Shik YD 218. 6 YD 240:19. 7 YD 240:7. This is an obligation of Kibbud - Aruch Hashulchan 240:24. 8 See Sefer Chasidim 339. See also Shu"t Shevet Halevi 1:111-4. Avne Yashfe 1:185 quotes Harav S.Y. Elyashiv as ruling that it is proper to specifically ask one's parents to excuse him from this obligation. 9 Even when parents have excused their children from honoring them, if the children honor them they are doing a Mitzva - Reb Akiva Eiger and Pischei Teshuva YD 240:16. 10 Chaye Adam 67:6. 11 Pischei Teshuva YD 344:1. 12 Rambam, Sefer Hamtizvos 211. 13 YD 240:2. 14 Birkei Yosef 240:13. 15 Aruch Hashulchan 240:9. 16 Shu"t Rivash 220. 17 YD 240:8-10. 18 Aruch Hashulchan 240:32. 19 Aruch Hashulchan 240:11. 20 YD 240:17, Shach 19 and Aruch Hashulchan 38.

HALACHA is published L'zchus Haya'ed Doniel Meir ben Hinda.

Parsha Questions 1. How many different dreams did Pharaoh have? (Warning: Trick question!) 2. How did some of Pharaoh's advisors misinterpret his dream? 3. How did Pharaoh's recollection of his dream differ from Nevuchadnetzar's recollection of his dream? 4. What was significant about the fact that Pharaoh dreamed repeatedly? 5. What is the significance of the king giving someone his ring? 6. Pharaoh gave Yosef the name 'Tsofnas Panayach.' What did that name mean? 7. Whom did Yosef marry? 8. What happened to the Egyptians' grain that was stored in anticipation of the famine? 9. What did Yosef require the Egyptians to do before he would sell them grain? 10. What prophetic significance lay in Yaakov's choice of the word 'redu' -- 'descend' (and not 'lechu' -- go), when telling his sons to go to Egypt? 11. Under what pretext did Yosef accuse his brothers of being spies? 12. Why did the brothers enter the city through different gates? 13. What language did the brothers use when speaking to Yosef? 14. Why did Yosef place Shimon in prison? 15. Which of the brothers found money in his sack first? 16. How did Reuven try to persuade Yaakov to send Binyamin to Egypt? 17. When did Yehuda approach Yaakov about bringing Binyamin to Egypt? 18. How much more money did the brothers bring on their second journey than they brought on the first journey? Why? 19. For whom did Binyamin name his ten children? 20. When the brothers were accused of stealing Yosef's silver goblet, they refuted the claim with the logical principle known as Kal V'chomer. What did they say?

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Recommended Reading List
Ramban 41:2-4 Pharaoh's Dream 41:33 Strategy of Dream Interpretation
42:8 The Riddle of Recognition 42:9 Fulfilling the Dreams 42:21 The Guilt of a Hard Heart 44:10 Collective Guilt
Sforno 41:8 The Magicians' Failure 43:2 Yaakov's Suspicion 43:16 Binyamin's Gifts 44:16 Admission of Guilt

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 41:25 - One. Yosef told Pharaoh that his dream was a single, repeated dream. 2. 41:10 - They said "Seven daughters you will bear, seven daughters you will bury." 3. 41:8 - Pharaoh remembered the contents of his dream but didn't know its meaning. Nevuchadnetzar forgot even the contents of his dream. 4. 41:32 - It showed that the seven good years would start immediately. 5. 41:42 - It shows that he is second in rank to the king. 6. 41:45 - He who explains things that are hidden and obscure. 7. 41:45 - Osnat, the daughter of Potiphar. 8. 41:55 - It rotted. 9. 41:55 - Become circumcised. 10. 42:2 - It hinted to the 210 years that the Jewish people would be in Egypt: The word 'redu' has the numerical value of 210. 11. 42:12 - They entered the city through ten different gates rather than through one gate. 12. 42:13 - To search for Yosef throughout the city. 13. 42:23 - Hebrew. 14. 42:24 - To separate him from Levi, because together they posed a danger to him. 15. 42:27 - Levi. 16. 42:38 - Reuven said: "You can kill my two sons if I fail to bring Binyamin back to you." 17. 43:2 - When the grain they had purchased in Egypt was finished. 18. 43:12 - Triple. This was in order to repay the money they found in their sacks. The rest of the money was to buy more food, in case the price had doubled. 19. 43:30 - For Yosef. 20. 43:8 - They said "Look, the money we found in our sacks we returned; therefore, how can it be that we would actually steal from you!"

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The Rav discussed the story of Yosef and his brothers, who upon arriving in Egypt to purchase food are recognized by Yosef. The Torah, several verses later, repeats this notion again saying that Yosef recognized his brothers though they did not recognize him.

The Ibn Ezra says that the first recognition refers to all his brothers in general. The second recognition refers to his recognizing each one individually. After speaking with them he was able to tell them apart but they were not able to recognize him.

The Ramban says that Yosef would have had difficulty recognizing all his brothers as such, for some of them were about the same age as he was at the time of his sale into slavery and after all these years would have matured physically just like he did. Yet after conversing with them all he began to realize that these were his brothers. He recognized the older brothers and was able to realize that the other, less familiar people were the other brothers even though he did not recognize them immediately. The Ramban also says that Yosef recognized on his own that his brothers would eventually need to come to Egypt, yet they never thought, nor could they recognize, the possibility that the brother they sold into slavery might be elevated to the level of prime minister.

Rashi brings a Midrash that Yosef behaved with mercy towards his brothers even though they did not show him kindness when he was at their mercy. Even though Midah Kneged Midah would demand that Yosef should have treated them badly, he did not. The term recognized refers to how Yosef acted towards his brothers. He recognized them by acting kindly towards them even though they did not act the same towards him.

The Rav added an explanation along the lines of what Rashi said.

Ramban says that Yosef knew that the Hashgacha was served by Yosef being in Egypt. Yosef never informed his father that he was alive even after he was elevated to prime minister. He knew that there was a greater purpose for his being sent to Egypt.

What was Yosef's purpose in talking harshly to his brothers? Why cause so much aggravation to his father and brothers? Yosef knew that the Hashgacha was unfolding events in a specific way that showed a definite purpose. He did not want to inform Yaakov that he was alive because he saw the need to allow the Hashgacha to unfold on its own.

What did Yosef want to accomplish in talking to his brothers? The Rav explained that Yosef wanted to see if his brothers had repented for what they had done to him. He wanted to see if Yehuda who was the one who suggested selling him into slavery would fight to protect his brother Binyamin. Yehuda was guilty in the sale of Yosef. After Yehuda was willing to stand up for Binyamin Yosef realized that this was no longer the same Yehuda who sold him into slavery. Had they not been willing to lay down their own lives to save Binyamin, the entire Jewish history would have unfolded differently. Therefore the Torah says that Yosef recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him. Yosef recognized that the divine plan was unfolding, but his brothers did not.

The Rav asked why the Torah states so many times that Yosef remembered his brothers and the dreams that he told to them. Why not say that Yosef remembered what his brothers did to him: he remembered that they sold him into slavery! Why did he have to say that they were spies who had discovered the weak parts of the land?

The Rav explained that Yosef had doubts up till this point as to what was the purpose of his being sold into slavery in Egypt. He wanted to determine if indeed the arrival of the brothers in Egypt and the fulfillment of the dreams that he had many years before were all part of the master plan of Hashem for the Jewish People. Was he the messenger of Hashem who was to play a role in the destiny of the Jewish people, and were his dreams a part of that role, or were he and his dreams insignificant in the context of Jewish destiny. Yosef recalled his dreams and realized that they were important and that he was meant to play a central role.

What did his dreams indicate? They told him that he was the messenger of

Hashgachas Hashem. The dreams indicated that he, Yosef, would be the leader. But beyond that he had another mission. He would blaze the trail that the Jewish people would follow during their exile and for their eventual redemption. Yosef was an integral part of the process of exile and redemption in that he showed that it was possible to remain faithful to the principles of Avraham Avinu while trapped within even the mightiest empire. It was possible to rise to the level of viceroy of Egypt, and still be faithful to the beliefs of Yaakov. As the midrash says (brought down by Rashi) on the verse Pi Hamedaber Alaychem that Yosef was speaking to them in Lashon Hakodesh. In fact, this was the greatest miracle of the sojourn in Egypt, Reuven VShimon Nichnasu Reuven VShimon Yatzu, they entered and left Egypt with the same convictions and were not changed by Egyptian society. Yosef was required to be the leader in order that he might set an example of how to survive in a foreign land and remain true to the Bris Avraham.

When Yosef saw his brothers, he remembered them and the dreams he told them. He recognized that the Hashgacha appointed him as leader and as such he had to make sure that they would be ready for the difficult exile period that awaited them. He had to determine if they were still the same divided group that sold him into slavery years before. It was the dreams that gave him the right to test and even torment his brothers in order to find out. The dreams said that he was the leader. As the leader he had a right to use whatever means at his disposal to accomplish his task. The Midrash says that Hashem told Moshe that he had to take a stick and hit the people over the head to get them to listen to him. Even though Moshe was the most humble of men, a leader must often put aside his humility, even inflict pain if necessary, when called upon to act decisively. The Torah mentions that Yosef remembered his dreams at the point where he met his brothers in order to indicate that the message of the dreams, that he was to be the leader, were his sanction to act harshly with them, as he did in the following chapters.

The Torah says that Bnay Yaakov were among the multitudes that came to purchase food from Egypt. They had a very simple intention in coming: to purchase food. They did not realize that their trip was another step in the process of their eventual exile and subjugation in a foreign land as foretold in the Bris Bayn Habesarim as well as the ultimate redemption from there. The Hashgacha was that the Bnay Yaakov should arrive in Egypt in stages, first 1 (Yosef) followed by 10 others, followed by the last brother and eventually to be followed by the rest of the house of Yaakov.

The Torah says that Yosef was the overseer of all of Egypt and that he was the supplier of food overall. Why mention this in connection with the arrival of the brothers and Yosef's recollection of his dreams? Why are we interested that Yosef was the mainstay of the Egyptian economic system? Because it was necessary to get the brothers to come down to Egypt to prove that the entire plan of his leadership was foretold in his dreams and to fulfill them. The brothers had to come down to Egypt and bow before Yosef to fulfill his first dream.

The Torah says that Yosef recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him. This implied a simple recognition of them as his brothers, the same brothers who had sold him into slavery years before. He asked them why they came to Egypt and they replied that they had come to purchase food. Yosef knew that thousands of people were arriving daily in Egypt to purchase food, many from Canaan as well. Their reason for coming should have been obvious, why ask them? Because Yosef recognized something that they did not: that the real reason they had come was to begin serving the exile period that was foretold in the Bris Bayn Habesarim. The Torah tells us again that Yosef recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him. His brothers thought that they had come down to Egypt simply to purchase food. Yosef recognized that they had come to begin their exile in Egypt. At that point he recalled his dreams and he realized that the divine plan was playing itself out and that he would be the leader. However he needed to see if they were capable of withstanding the difficult period that awaited them. People who were willing to sell their own brother for 20 shekalim would not last long in a difficult exile. They had to show that they were Shivtei Kah, above all others. As a leader, he had a right to test them to verify that they were ready for their ordeal. He had to wait to see if Yehuda, the one who agitated

to sell him, had changed and would be willing to fight for his sibling, Binyamin, in order to verify this changeover. When Yosef saw that they had indeed changed and were ready, he could no longer control himself and he revealed himself to his brothers.

The Rav asked what was the reason for the Jews having to undergo an exile of 400 years? Why was such a difficult price exacted in order to get the ultimate rewards of the Torah and Eretz Yisrael? The Rav explained that the Zohar comments on the verse of Arami Oved Avi... Vayhi Sham L'Goy Gadol. Had the Jews not undergone the exile in Egypt, they might have become a nation, but would never have become a great nation. After all, there were 70 nations already that Hashem could have selected from if all He desired was a regular nation. The Zohar brings the verse of Shoshana Bayn Hachochim, a rose among the thorns as being representative of Bnay Yisrael and their exile in Egypt. The beauty of the rose is magnified by the fact that it is surrounded by such a harsh environment. Bnay Yisrael had to be among the trees and wilderness of Egypt in order to reach fulfillment as the great nation.

The Rav cited the attribute of Chesed as an example. There are many details to the Mitzva of charity that must be followed in order to fulfill the Mitzvah correctly. The importance of Chesed is underscored in Masechet Kallah where we find that when Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai passed by the ruins of the Beis Hamikdash area his students began to cry over the desolation. Rabban Yochanan consoled them saying that while the Bays Hamikdash stood, the Avoda took precedence over acts of kindness. Times of destruction and holocaust present many more opportunities to perform acts of charity and chesed. In a way, acts of Chesed are more important than Binyan Hamikdash. This fundamental tenet of Judaism has remained with us throughout the ages and can be seen even today as Jews donate in disproportionate numbers and amounts relative to the rest of the population, to charitable causes of all kinds.

When the Jews left Egypt, Hashem commanded them to refrain from actions they might have seen or learned of Egypt. It was important for the Jew to be in Egypt in order to learn useful things and modes of conduct that would serve them well as the Chosen Nation. Yosef recognized this and set the stage for the exile period and the redemption that followed it.

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