



תורת חיים Torat Chayim

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בס"ד

Vayigash

4 Tevet, 5785 / January 4, 2025

Vol. 2 Num. 10

This issue of Torat Chayim is dedicated to the soldiers of the IDF, the hostages, and the wounded.

Netziv on Our Parshah: No Regrets

Yosef sends his brothers home with gifts, and with an instruction for the family to descend to Egypt. As they depart he gives one last instruction: "Don't engage in **rogez** en route." (Bereishit 45:24) The word **rogez** usually indicates agitation, particularly in fear or anger (see Shemot 15:12 and Shemuel I 28:15). What was Yosef telling his brothers here?

Ramban contends that Yosef thought his brothers would **fear** to travel with their loaded wagons, lest they be attacked. That caution could postpone or slow their journey, delaying the family reunion. [See Rashbam, too.] Yosef told them not to fear; his power and reputation would protect them during the trip.

Other commentators, including Rashi and Ibn Ezra, explain that Yosef feared his brothers would trade **recriminations** over his sale. Seeing Yosef's dreams realized and their former victim elevated over them, the brothers might seek scapegoats in each other, causing more division and acrimony in a family that had already experienced enough.

The Netziv likewise explained that Yosef warned them about anger, but not only against each other. He wrote that Yosef also feared lest the brothers be angry **at themselves**.

On first read the Netziv's idea is surprising; surely the brothers would benefit from some self-doubt and introspection! But the Netziv provides three reasons why Yosef didn't want the brothers to be angry at themselves:

- 1) Yosef worried that they would debate their mistakes in front of Yaakov; he wanted to protect Yaakov from knowledge of their guilt.

- 2) Devarim 28:65 warns that when Hashem sends the Jews into exile, they will experience "a heart of **rogez**." Based on this, Nedarim 22a-b says that we will not experience **rogez** in Israel. On a simple level this is a blessing that Hashem will protect us from angry agitation when we are in Israel, but according to the Netziv it is also an imperative: don't pursue anger in Israel.

- 3) Wise people are not upset about that which has already happened; such anger reflects an angry heart, not a wise heart.

All three reasons offer valuable lessons for us. First, even though Yosef could have found satisfaction in his father learning about the brothers' crime, he wished to protect Yaakov. Second, for Jews to be worthy of living in Israel, we must strive to avoid anger there, even at ourselves. And third, introspection and teshuvah should come from a place of warmth and positivity toward ourselves. Self-directed anger is not the way of the wise.

Parshah Riddles for Kids (answers on the back)

Age 4-8: Which of Binyamin's brothers offered to be a prisoner in Egypt instead of him, in Bereishit 44:33?

Age 8-12: Who cried when Yosef said who he was in Bereishit 45? A) Yosef and Binyamin B) Binyamin C) Yehudah

Age 12+: According to Rashi on Bereishit 46:3, why did Hashem tell Yaakov not to be afraid to go to Egypt?

Journey Through Tanach: Shoftim 15:18-19 - Betrayal and Loyalty

Last week we saw 3,000 men from the tribe of Yehudah arrest Shimshon at the demand of the Philistines. Shimshon then fought off 1,000 Philistines with a donkey's jawbone, but he was left exhausted and thirsty. Shimshon cries out to Hashem for help, lest he "die of thirst and fall into the hands" of the Philistines. He calls himself a servant of Hashem, although a midrash notes that Hashem did not reciprocate by using this title for him (Sifri Devarim 27).

Hashem provides a spring of fresh water; commentators debate whether this was **in** the donkey's jawbone (Rashi), **under** the jawbone (Targum), in the place where Shimshon threw down the jawbone (Abarbanel), or just in the general vicinity (Ralbag). [And see Bereishit Rabbah 98:13.] (15:18-19)

The Jews' attempt to arrest Shimshon, and Hashem's rescue of Shimshon, are part of a broader theme in Shimshon's arc: human betrayal and Divine loyalty.

- In each of Shimshon's relationships with Philistine

women, the women betray him;

- Philistines continually betray Jews; Shimshon's Philistine women do it, as do the thirty wedding guests, as did Shimshon's father-in-law in marrying off his wife to another man;
- Jews betray other Jews, too; Shimshon takes a Philistine wife, and the Jews turn over Shimshon to the Philistines;
- The Jews in this story betray Hashem. We don't see the larger population, but Shimshon the *shofeit* takes a Philistine wife, and then tells Delilah the secret of his strength in Chapter 16.

The only party who does not betray others is Hashem. For all of Shimshon's problematic behavior, Hashem still supports him with miraculous strength. When Shimshon pleads for water, Hashem sends it miraculously. And when Shimshon will be held by the Philistines in Chapter 16, Hashem will respond once more.

The 613 Mitzvot: #61: Pitui

Shemot 22:15-16 records the punishment for a man who seduces a single *betulah*; the act of seduction is called *pitui*, and the relevant laws are codified in Mitzvah #61. Even though the woman's participation is not coerced, the man is punished with three payments: 1) a flat fine, 2) restitution for physical harm, and 3) restitution for embarrassment.

What is the definition of *pitui*? Is a man liable for making any proposition that a woman accepts? Rashi (Shemot 22:15) indeed interprets *pitui* very broadly, to include any type of persuasion. However, Ramban (ad loc.) argues that the law of *pitui* applies specifically where he persuades her with lies.

Because Ramban defines *pitui* as persuasive lying, the Taz (Orach Chaim 127:4) argued against an edition of Tachanun which describes Hashem as "*mitpateh b'tachanunim*," "seduced by pleading." When we beseech Hashem for mercy, however desperate we may be, it is not on the basis of falsehood.

Torah of Zion: Rav Shraga Fruchter, Planning Ahead

Pharaoh instructed Yosef to send wagons for his family, to expedite their trip to Egypt. (Bereishit 45:19) The Torah says explicitly that Yosef sent wagons "at Pharaoh's word. (ibid. 45:21)" But just a few sentences later, the Torah says, "And the brothers told Yaakov all that Yosef had told them, and he saw **the wagons that Yosef sent** to transport him, and the spirit of their father Yaakov was restored to life. (ibid. 45:27)" This leads to two questions:

- 1) The reader would have assumed that Yosef's words were more meaningful than wagons; why are the wagons inserted in the middle of the sentence?
- 2) And why mis-identify the wagons as Yosef's initiative?

These questions lead to a classic midrash, quoted by Rashi, teaching that the wagons were more than transportation; they were also a message from Yosef. A wagon is an *agalah* in Hebrew, so the wagons hinted at the mitzvah of *eglah arufah* which Yosef had been learning right before his sale. As Rashi explains, this was a reference that only Yaakov and Yosef would know, and so it would convince Yaakov that Yosef truly lived. But Rabbi Shraga Fruchter, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Bnei Akiva Givat Shmuel (writing in *Shabbat MiTzion*), homiletically suggests that Yosef was sending a deeper message.

The ritual of *eglah arufah* is performed when a murdered person is found outside of town. As part of the mitzvah, the elders of the town declare, "Our hands did not spill this blood, and our eyes did not see. (Devarim 21:7)" A gemara (Sotah 46b) clarifies that no one suspected the elders of committing murder, but perhaps they might have failed to provide travelers with food and an escort. Their failure to

anticipate the consequences of their inaction could lead to harm.

Rabbi Fruchter suggests that *eglah arufah* was not simply what Yaakov happened to teach Yosef when sending him to Shechem to check the welfare of his brothers. Rather, Yaakov sensed that Shechem was a place of vulnerability to spiritual weakness. Shechem is where Dinah was raped; where the tribes would sell Yosef; and where the Jewish people would split into the kingdoms of Yehudah and Yisrael in the future. Yaakov therefore imparted to Yosef, on his way to a place of corruption, the lesson of *eglah arufah* - that we must think through the potential impact of our actions, and our inaction. Thus he provided Yosef with spiritual protection, via a message about protecting travelers from a dangerous environment.

Yosef wanted to convey to his father that he was alive, and also that he was spiritually intact. For this he chose *eglah arufah*, with its message of conscientiousness and foresight, to report to Yaakov that he had applied those traits and thereby he had remained pure in the midst of Egypt. **Yaakov sent Yosef the traveler on his journey with protection, and Yosef used that protection in Egypt.** Yaakov saw the wagons and understood their import, and so he was restored to life.

As Rabbi Fruchter wrote, this is not only a historical lesson; it is crucial for the way we educate the next generation. May we succeed in inspiring and educating our children to anticipate the needs of others, with generosity and foresight.

Upcoming Learning!

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Answers to Parshah Riddles

Age 4-8 Yehudah
Age 8-12 A: Yosef and Binjamin
Age 12+ Yaakov was upset about leaving Israel

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