

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

Parshas Vayigash 5778 year 8 #319

פרשת ויגש תשע"ח

ולא עמד איש אתו בהתנדע יוסף אל-אחיו: (מה א)

Therefore there was no one with him when Yosef revealed himself to his brothers (45:1). The question is why did it bother Yosef if there were people in his presence that he ordered everyone out? The grandfather of the Chida Rav Avraham Azulai says a beautiful insight: Yosef was already anxious to reveal himself to his brothers. However by stating out of the blue "I am Yosef your brother!" would cause the brothers a shocking scenario and might harm their health. Therefore Yosef had an idea. He looked around and called out: "Yosef, where are you?" The brothers looked around and saw no one. Then Yosef calls again "Yosef the son of Yaakov, where are you?" The brothers again looked around and saw no one. Yosef repeated this many times until he finally revealed that he is Yosef! This is the meaning when Yosef called for Yosef "there was [really]no one with him, [it was only a ploy] when Yosef revealed himself to his brothers". (בעלי ברית אברהם ר' אברהם אזולאי.)

ויאמר יוסף אל-אחיו אני יוסף...ויאמר אני יוסף אחיכם: (מ"ה ג-ד)

"And Yosef told his brothers "I am Yosef, And Yosef said I am Yosef your brother!" (45:3-4) The Ksav Sofer asks: Why in the first Passuk (ג) does Yosef say אני יוסף but in the next passuk it says ...אני יוסף אחיכם... (ד), I am Yosef your brother. Why the change in self-identification? Yosef wanted to hint to his brothers that they had sinned by selling him, with Yosef knowing all along that he was blameless. Hence he wished to disassociate himself from his sinning brothers, and pronounced only his basic personal identity, and hence only said אני יוסף. Then Yosef considered the ample evidence he had developed (from his confrontations with the brothers) that the Shvatim sincerely regretted the sale. The Pasuk (45:3) state "נבהלו בפניו" they were agitated in his presence, which Rashi explains "they were embarrassed at what they did;" the Gemarah (Brachos 12b) states "כל העושה דבר עבירה ומתבייש בו מוחלין לו על כל עונותיו" "When one sins and is embarrassed at what he has done, is forgiven for all his sins." Once he sensed their regret, Yosef was able to present himself as, אני יוסף אחיכם, I am Yosef your brother -- linked in the bond of fraternal righteousness. (כתב סופר.)

הגדילין מוקדש לעני' זקנתי מרת יומא בת ר' יעקב נח -ואמתר מלכה- באכנער ע"ה אשת זקני הר"ח ר' אברהם יעקב הלוי ז"ל ה' סבת תשמ"ז

והנה עיניכם ראות ועיני אחי בנימין כפי המדבר אליכם: (מ"ה י"ב)

... your eyes see, as well as the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth speaking to you (45:12) Rashi comments that Yosef's speaking was "in Hebrew." This, the family's language, was a distinctive identifier of kinship. The Chamudei Tzvi raises the basic point as to how "their eyes saw" what Yosef was saying. Hearing spoken speech is accomplished by ears, and is not an act of vision. One would have expected "your ears are hearing," or words to that effect. In truth, however, there is ample evidence directly from Chumash of aural sounds being physically seen. And that took place at the Revelation on Sinai of *Kabolas HaTorah*, where the posuk states clearly **יכלי-הקום** (שמות כ ט"ו) *all the people saw the voices* (Shemos 20:15) Each and every Yid, lowly or high, was on a spiritual level so high, that he saw voices and sounds. If that were true of even ordinary people, how much more so did it pertain to the Tribal Patriarchs, the Shivtei Kah. They had no trouble visually perceiving Yosef's speech sounds, and for them, this served as an added indication that a tzaddik was speaking. Yosef was sending a subtle message that he had remained a tzaddik during his entire sojourn in Mitzrayim. (בן לאשרי - ר' יצחק הוברמן המקובל To add a perspective to this: There are many stories of Tzaddikim who were able to tell via the speech of a person at which level in holiness he was. It is known that the Baba Sali would be able to tell a person that he was lying or saying the truth. Yet one question can be raised: Why did the brother's perceive the speech just now and not all along? We see in Parshas Miketz (43:23) when the brother's met Yosef the first time they came to Egypt, the Torah states: *They did not know that Joseph understood, for the interpreter was between them.* This is indicative that Yosef didn't speak directly to the brother's. However here in our Parsha it states **ויגש אליו יהודה** Then Yehuda approached him [Yosef] and said "Please, my lord, let now your servant speak something into my lord's ears.. This was the first time that it was a face to face conversation, and the brother's were able to begin to notice that the lord in front of them is a holy person. Now Yosef was aware now that his brother's perceived who he is, hence **ולא יכל יוסף להתאפק לכל** Now Joseph could not bear all those standing beside him. (45:1) (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

*** Reb Nachum of Chernobyl sells his Olam Habah to a Mountain Jew ***

Reb Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, the founding Chernobeler Rebbe, was a *talmid* / disciple of Reb Ber the Maggid of Mezritch. He authored the famous sefer Meor Enayim and is popularly known by his sefer. Early on, the Mezritcher Maggid told Reb Nachum to become a maggid himself (preacher; someone who goes around rousing people to repentance), and travel to off

the-beaten-path communities to provide inspiration and hope to downtrodden Jews. During his travels, Reb Nachum happened upon a small community in an even smaller town. As was his custom, he would go to the town square, and announce himself. "I am a traveling salesman. I have needles, in case anyone needs prodding. I have perfumes if anyone needs to

be uplifted. And I have soothing balms for the soul." He would then tell the townsfolk to assemble in the shul at a particular time so that he could preach inspirational words. Next to this particular community stood a mountain. The townspeople informed Reb Nachum that there was a small community of Jews up top, just a few minyanim of Jews, but it was no easy feat getting up the mountain. They were a community of woodcutters and lumberjacks. There was also an elderly affluent man who lived atop the mountain, not because he particularly wanted to live there, but because he had a lung disease, and the fresh mountain air was good for his health.

Reb Nachum resolved to make his way up the fairly steep hill. Atop the mountain he found the local shul, pulled out a sefer, and waited until the people assembled for mincha. Nobody came for mincha, nor did anyone show up for maariv. He decided to go for a walk, and bumped into a Jew. Upon inquiring as to why nobody in the community davened mincha or maariv, he was told, "you know, it's tough for a Jew to make a living. Nobody really has the time to daven daily. And besides, when we do daven, we do so at the old man's house. He has trouble making his way to the shul, so we assemble in his house on particular days of the week." Reb Nachum, frustrated, began to walk around. Word got out to the community that this was Reb Nachum of Chernobyl who was gracing their town. Various people vied for the honor of having Reb Nachum spend the night at their home, and after some debate, a host was chosen.

It was arranged that Reb Nachum would daven with the minyan in the old man's house in the morning. He awoke early, and asked his host to direct him to the mikvah. "The mikvah...well...you know Rebbe" said his host sheepishly. "What's the problem?" asked Reb Nachum. "Well," said his host, now stammering, "we..we don't have a mikvah. You see, at one point we wanted to build a mikvah, so we got craftsmen from the next town to give us an estimate. It came out to 300 gold coins, and we can't afford anything near that price. You know how it is. They would have to dig very deep being that we're on top of a mountain." Reb Nachum was dumbfounded. After shacharis at the old man's house he stood up, and announced that the entire community should meet at the shul at such and such a time. "Everyone," said Reb Nachum. "That includes men, women and children."

When everyone was assembled later that day, Reb Nachum took the podium. A few minutes into his speech the small crowd was aghast. The Rebbe was extolling his own virtues. He delved into each period of his life; how when he was a child his father taught him how to daven, and how he cultivated his avodah (worship) to celestial heights over the years; how he began learning at a very young age, and how people were amazed at his precociousness; how well he excelled in the entire spectrum of Yiddishkeit... Why would

the Rebbe talk about himself with haughtiness, they wondered! When he was finished speaking, he said, "and all of the zechus (merit) that I have amassed up until this point, the entire bounty of my reward for all endeavors and successes I have just enumerated; my entire chelek in *Olam Habah* /portion in the world to come, I am willing to sell right now to the highest bidder. This means an actual kinyan, a sale, with a written contract. Somebody make me an offer." The old man stood up. "I am willing to buy all that you have acquired up until this point for 100 gold coins." Reb Nachum, like a seasoned salesman, said, "100 gold coins? I don't think so. You're going to have to do a lot better than that." "150...175...200 gold coins." "That's not good enough," said Reb Nachum. "225, 250 cold coins," said the old man. "And that's my final offer." Reb Nachum said that this would just not do. He would not sell his zechusim for under 300 gold coins. The old man stood up, once again. "Rebbe, as you know I am an affluent man. I have my share of wealth. But I don't have 300 gold coins." Reb Nachum stayed firm. "Take it or leave it." The old man stood with his head downcast contemplating just what this acquisition would mean: A life of mediocrity replaced by one of infinite virtue; a free pass on the Day of Judgment due to a lifetime of good deeds. And so he raised his head high. "OK Rebbe, I will pay 300 gold coins." The crowd assembled around the old man to wish him mazel tov, and to share in his new-found joy.

Later in the day, the two wrote up a contract, and counted out the gold coins. Reb Nachum left with the money, and went over to the community leaders. "Here, go call the craftsmen from the next town, and build yourself a mikvah. NO Jewish community should be without a mikvah."

Later, some of the men came up to Reb Nachum, and questioned how his countenance shined with joy at the completion of the sale in the shul. "Rebbe, you lost everything you've worked for up until now. You've lost all of your zechus. And you're still besimcha." And Reb Nachum answered, "you see, up until this point in my life I've always suspected that I've had an ulterior motive when performing a mitzvah. I've never been quite comfortable with myself. But now, for the first time, I know for sure that I did a mitzvah lishmah (for the sake of doing the mitzvah). The community was lacking a mikvah, and I am helping them get one. By giving away my zechus for the sake of the mitzvah there is no way that I could have had an ulterior motive this time. I have given away that which I would have wanted to gain from a mitzvah, namely zechus. And aside from performing this mitzvah, now I get to start over with a clean slate."

The chassidim used to tell that shortly after this incident took place he heard a voice: "Don't worry Nachum. You didn't lose anything." Not that the old man didn't get his share, but rather they both got Reb Nachum's complete share.

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