



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
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Thoughts on VAYIGASH Year 24

by Dayan Abraham David

When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers 'Ani Yosef' his brothers became ashamed and confused and could not say anything. Yosef draws them near to him 'Geshu na Elai' and then repeats 'Ani Yosef' 'Asher Mechartem oti Mitzraimah,' "I am Yosef you sold to Egypt, do not be afraid for G-d has sent me to bring sustenance for you."

Rashi brings the Midrash he drew them near to him with sympathy when he saw them ashamed and showed them that he was circumcised. Rashi seems to connect his showing that he was circumcised to sympathising and consoling them, not to proving that he was Yosef. We could explain that Yosef was showing his brothers that this was in the divine plan that he should become the ruler in Egypt, to prepare for their coming to Egypt. The Zohar explains that Yosef showed them not just the physical 'Brit' but that he had kept the 'Brit' Holy and not indulged in forbidden temptation, because of this he merited to become ruler in Egypt for one who is *Shomer Brit* merits Malchut, Kingship. As it was with Boaz who held himself from temptation with Ruth and was Zochai that his descendants became great kings and the Mashiah who would bring the world to its 'Tikun' would

descend from him. His brothers interpreted his dreams as wishful thinking to rule over them, 'Hamolech timloch Alenu ve Yimshol Timshol banu' is it by force that you wish to rule over us? Here, Yosef explained to them it was from Heaven that he was given 'Malchut' as indicated by the Zohar because of his 'Shemirat HaBrit' in order to prepare the land for their exile as promised to Abraham, his dreams were to inform them of His responsibility for them. The Kli Yakar explains that Yosef was indicating to them the 4 things needed to protect them in the 'Galut of Tumat Mitzraim'. The Midrash in Tehillim says that the Bnei Yisrael were redeemed from Egypt because of 4 merits, they did not change their names, or their language and protected themselves from 'Arayot', sexual transgressions and that they kept away from 'Lashon Harah'. Yosef had not changed his name 'Ani Yosef' my name is still Yosef, the name my parents gave me, I have not tried to blend in with the Egyptians, even though Pharaoh gave me the name 'Zafanat Panea'. 'Ki pi Hamedabar Alechem' as the 'Targum' says in your language 'Lashon Hakodesh'. My tongue will speak with holiness and not the crude language of the people. He showed them with the Brit that he had fought temptation and kept his 'Kedushah'. When he called them near it was so Benyamin should not hear about his being sold by his brothers, Yosef in fact never revealed to his father the whole story, he

indicated the necessity of not speaking '*Lashon Harah*' through example. These were the merits that saved him in his *Galut*' in Egypt and gave him success. This was the advice he gave them to fight '*Tumat Mitzraim*'.

With the above mentioned Zohar we can understand why Yosef stressed in his message to Yaacov, '*Va amartem Elav Ko Amar Bincha Yosef samene Elokim le Adon le Kol Mitzraim*' G-d has made me master over all Egypt, because I have been '*Shomer Brit*' kept the '*Kedusha of Brit Milah*' I have merited '*Malchut*'. He then gave them the second sign of the '*Agalot*' that he had not forgotten his learning and was still Osek in Torah. His brothers gave over the message '*Vayagido lo Lemor Od Yosef Hai ve che hu Moshel be Kol Eretz Mitzraim*' Yosef still lives and he is the ruler in all Egypt, i.e. that he is still alive in his purity, he has kept the '*Kedushat HaBrit*', that is why he is ruler '*Vayefag libo ki lo He emen Lahem*' he did not accept it completely in his heart that Yosef was able to keep his '*Kedushah*' completely but when they gave over his message of the '*Agalot*', that he had not forgotten the Torah he had learnt with his father and was still Osek in it, now Yaacov believed for Torah had the power to protect him and the '*Brit*', '*Va Teche Ruach Yaacov Abehem*' And the spirit of Yaacov was revived for his beloved son Yosef was truly alive both physically and spiritually.

TORAH GEMS

'*Vaybarech Yaacov et Pharaoh Vayeze milefne Pharaoh*', And Yaacov blessed Pharaoh and left Pharaoh.

Rashi brings the Midrash that Yaacov blessed Pharaoh that the Nile should rise to his feet, that from Yaacov's blessing onward whenever Pharaoh came to the

Nile, the Nile rose to his feet and watered the Land of Egypt, since Egypt has no rain and the fields are irrigated through channels connected to the Nile. Maybe this Midrash wishes to explain how the famine came to end after two years. Because of the Beracha of Yaacov, every time Pharaoh went down to the Nile the waters rose and alleviated the famine, but the famine did not just stop. The waters of the Nile remained low and occasionally rose for Pharaoh and watered the fields. This would reconcile the dream of Pharaoh which promised 7 years of famine and the fact that after 2 years the people were able to plant and sow, for there was some water for this. The Tosefta in Sota says differently. The Beracha came with Yaacov Avinu, as Tzaddikim bring the Beracha, the famine ended after two years, but after Yaacov died the famine came back for five years. That is why Yosef needed to assure his brothers after Yaacov's funeral that he would feed and look after them because this famine returned.

Anyway we may ask: "Why did Yaacov give Pharaoh such a Beracha that the Nile would rise to his feet for soon Pharaoh forgot Yaacov's Beracha and began to think he really controlled the Nile and even pretended he was G-d of the Nile. We find later on Pharaoh called himself '*tanin*' which was the giant serpent or crocodile that lived in the Nile, as King of the Nile. Hashem created the stars and zodiac which have an influence on our physical world and He has given an opening to the nations of

the world to follow and serve them, if they so wished, *'makom litot'*; Yaacov too gave Pharaoh the opportunity to make such a mistake if he forgot to recognise the good Yaacov did for him with this Beracha. When Pharaoh became ungrateful of the good Yaacov and Yosef did for him and oppressed the Bnei Yisrael, his arrogance would mislead him into thinking he was G-d of the Nile until his downfall with the 10 plagues.

In Shemot we find a seeming contradiction when Moshe doubts about the Bnei Yisrael believing him. Hashem tells him to throw down his staff, *'Vayhe Le nachash'*, and it became a snake. This was one of three signs Hashem gave Moshe so the Bnei Yisrael should believe in him. In Vaera G-d gives Moshe a sign for Pharaoh. He tells Aaron to take his staff and throw it before Pharaoh and it would become a *'tanin'*. *'Vayashlek Aaron et Matehu lefne Pharaoh vu lefne avadav vayhe letanin;'* And Aaron threw his staff and it became a *'tanin'* before Pharaoh and his servants. Here the serpent is called a *'tanin'* not a *'nachash'*, why? Rashi says *'tanin'* was a *'nachash'*, a snake, the same as before. But why the change of name? The Kli Yakar explains that there are some who explain *'tanin'* as a big fish as in Bereshit *'Hataninim Hagedolim'*, the great fish and not a snake. Maybe it was an alligator which was big and dangerous and was considered like the King of the Nile, feared and respected by the people. We could now explain why

they were different, when Moshe Rabenu mistakenly doubted the fact of the Bnei Yisrael, that they would not believe in him, his staff turned into a snake; As the *'nachash'* that spoke to Adam and Havah against Hashem, symbolic of *'lashon hara'*, to warn Moshe not to speak against the Bnei Yisrael. When he came before Pharaoh the staff turned into a *'tanin'* King of the Nile, to show him that he and his were under G-d's control.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai had a dream on erev Rosh Hashanah that his nephews were to suffer great financial loss as the Roman Emperor would fine them six hundred dinarim. He called them and told them to become Gabayim of Tzedakah, they told him we would need a lot of money for this and we are not so rich to afford it. He told them do not worry and if by the end of the year you are short, I will make it up to you. Towards the end of the year, someone gave a bad report about them to the Emperor who arrested them and placed a fine of 600 dinarim on them. Rabbi Shimon went to them and asked them how much they had paid out for Tzedakah. They took out their books and added up, it came to 600 dinarim less six. Rabbi Shimon asked them for the six dinarim and went to the person who had spoken bad about them to the Emperor and gave the six dinarim to him. He withdrew his complaint and they were freed. They asked him if he knew about

the six hundred dinarim they were to be fined. He answered yes and that is why I told you to give it for Tzedakah instead of having to pay it out as a fine. So why did you not tell us? He answered so that you should pay it le Shem Shamayim to Tzedakah of your own free will and not just to pay instead, for a fine.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

- 1) The Fast of Asarah BeTevet on Tuesday the 18th December, commemorates the beginning of the destruction of Jerusalem for on this day Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of the city.
- 2) The idea behind a Taanit Tzibbur like the 10th of Tevat is not only to remember the tragedy that happened but also to awaken us to correct our ways.
- 3) Every adult is obliged to fast on these Taanot i.e. 10th of Tevat, 17th of Tammuz and Som Gedalia with the exception of pregnant women or nursing mothers or a person who is ill in bed even though it is not life threatening.
- 4) A Chatan during his 7 days of Sheva Berachot also fasts.
- 5) One should not wash his mouth unless he needs to medically or has a bad smell which disturbs his prayers etc. – on a Tanit Yahid i.e. a private fast, he accepts upon himself he may wash his mouth.

**We have a regular Youth
Minyan organised by
David Douer followed by a
kiddush**

***Avot vu banim is one and a half
hours after Shabbat
Please try to attend***

***If you wish to sponsor a
Kiddush
Please contact
Nathaniel Bendayan 07825
871749
For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha
Please contact
Yanky David 07725 408724***

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	3:35 pm
Shabbat terminates	4:50 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	3:20 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 am
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	3:20 pm
Shacharit Weekdays with netz	7:15 am
Shacharit Sundays with netz	7:15 am
Mincha	1:30 pm
Arbit	7:30 pm

Taanit Asarah Be Tevet Tuesday 18th December

Taanit Commences	6:45 am
Mincha followed by Arbit	3:25pm
Taanit Terminates	4:51pm