



Agudas Yisroel Anshei Kielce

ZMANIM FOR PARSHAS MIKEITZ

Hadlokas Neiros: 4:23
Mincha Erev Shabbos: 4:25
Friday Night Learning: 8:00

Shacharis: 8:45
Kids Program: 9:30
Mincha: 4:15

Shabbos Ends: 5:27
Shabbos Ends R"Y: 5:54
Sunday Shacharis: 8:00

Explaining the Rocky Road A Baal Teshuva Sometimes Encounters

Parshas Mikeitz

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

The great famine has already hit the Land of Canaan. Yaakov, tells his sons to go down to Egypt and procure food for the family. The Torah tells us, “So, Yosef’s brothers – ten of them – went down to buy grain from Egypt.” [Bereshis 42:3]. Rashi points out that until now, the Torah always referred to the brothers as “Yaakov’s sons” (*Bnei Yakov*). Here, for the first time, the Torah calls them “Yosef’s brothers”. Rashi elaborates: This teaches us that they regretted his sale and set their heart to act towards him with brotherhood and to ransom him for any price his captors might set.

They had sold him as a slave and they assumed he was still working as a slave. They were prepared to ransom him from slavery, no matter what the cost. They were beginning the first steps of *Teshuva*.

I saw an interesting question in a *sefer* called *Tiv HaTorah* from Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch. We are at the threshold of the greatest calamity that befalls Yosef’s brothers. From this point on, they have a horrible existence. We all know the story – Yosef recognizes them, but they do not recognize him. He accuses them of being spies. He makes them jump through hoops. He makes them bring Binyamin down. The remainder of this parsha and the beginning of Parshas Vayigash narrate Yosef putting his brother through “the seven levels of Gehenom”.

Is it not ironic, Rav Rabinovitch asks, that their troubles start after they are already doing *Teshuva*, deciding that they will redeem their brother regardless of what it costs, and regretting their earlier action? Is it not ironic that specifically now, Yosef is making them go through all the difficulties? If they were steadfast in their opinion that Yosef was a murderer and a pursuer – then making them suffer might be poetic justice. However, given the fact that they are already on the road to repentance, why does Yosef put them through the torture?

To answer this question, Rav Rabinovitch cites a very interesting observation of the Sefas Emes. The Sefas Emes points out a similar type of phenomenon. In last week’s parsha, Yosef faced a great temptation – that of the attempted seduction by Potiphar’s wife. Here you have a young man, separated from his family, alone, and the wife of Potiphar is trying to seduce him. Yosef withstood the test. For this spiritual accomplishment, Yosef earned the title “*Yosef HaTzadik*” [the righteous Yosef]. Chazal make this point on the *pasuk*, “the sea saw and it fled” [Tehillim 114:3, by the splitting of the Red Sea] that the sea saw the coffin of Yosef and fled in awe, just as he fled from the pursuit of his master’s wife.

What happened to Yosef immediately after he withstood this test? They threw him into the dungeon. “This is Torah and this is its reward”? For this act of piety for which we are still the beneficiaries thereof, Yosef’s immediate “reward” is to be thrown into a pit and kept there for years? Where is the justice here?

The Sefas Emes explains the matter: When a person does an act of *Tzidkus* [righteousness] and when a person initiates the process of repentance, then the *Ribono shel Olam* knows he is on the path to *teshuva* – and helps him do a complete *teshuva* by punishing him for his past deeds. Yosef had to do penance because he did speak *lashon harah* [slander] to his father about his brothers. Up until this point, Yosef was not ready to endure the punishment that the *Ribono shel Olam* felt that he needed to endure. Once he achieved this great spiritual level of righteousness – that he withstood this great temptation – then the Almighty said “You have already started the process of *Teshuva*, now I am going to help you do *Teshuva Gemura* [complete repentance]. How am I going to do that? I am going to throw you into the dungeon as a *kaparah* [atonement] for your sin of *lashon*

harah, so that when you come out of that dungeon, you will come out as pure as fresh snow.

That is why, specifically after the incident with Potiphar's wife, Yosef was thrown in the dungeon. Therefore, Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch says, the same logic and the same reasoning explain what happened with Yosef's brothers: Precisely because now they started the process of *Teshuva*, they are now fit to complete the process of *Teshuva* – by enduring the terrible travails through Yosef. This completed their *kaparah*.

Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch adds the following interesting idea. (I personally know many cases where I have seen this and it has always been something that is inexplicable to me.) Sometimes a person decides to become a *Baal Teshuva*. Slowly but surely, he becomes more and more religious. The fellow has a fantastic business and a wonderful family and he decides to do *teshuva*. He closes his business on Shabbos through great self-sacrifice.

Then what happens? The sky falls in. The business goes down the drain. He has family problems. Half the family does not want to have anything to do with him. They think he is off his

rocker. Here the fellow is a sincere *Baal Teshuva*; he was *moser nefesh*; he closed his business on Shabbos! What happened after all this? His life goes sour!

What is the theological meaning of this? I have seen this happen too many times for it to be considered a rare coincidence. We would think that since this fellow became a *Baal Teshuva*, the Almighty should shower him with all types of reward!

Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch says it is this same phenomenon. Until now, he was not up to withstanding these tests. Now, he has begun the *teshuva* process. He has reached a different level. The Almighty wants him to complete the *teshuva* process. In order to complete that process, perhaps he must endure *yisurim* [difficulties] to give penance for his former life. Therefore, rather than immediately reaping the benefits of being a *Baal Teshuva*, he sometimes must endure hardships. Certainly, the eventual goal of all this is that he will in fact emerge from this ordeal as a much purer person. He is ready to endure it because he has already shown that he has the mettle that it requires to become a *Baal Teshuva*.

<p>This Week's FNL is sponsored by: Dina and Yudi Hadari Leiluie nishmas קריינדל עטרה בת יצחק</p>
<p>This week's Kiddush is sponsored by: Avrom Lebovic in honor of the Macabees Elaine and Yisroel Tzvi Weinberg on the occasion of their eineklech's birthday's and Bat Mitzvha of Miri Diamond Yitzchak Bernstien on the Yartzheit of his mother Sarah Chana Tova bas Avraham Dov</p>
<p>Seudas Shlishis is sponsored by: Mr. Shragee Fishberg In honor of the Yartzheit of the the Tolner Rebbe, Rabbi Yochanan ben Dovid Mordechai Zt"l And his step-father Ephraim ben Moshe Myer</p> <p>The guest speaker for seudas shlishis is Yehudah Gestetner</p>
<p>The cholim list is being updated for Chodesh Kislev. If you would like to submit a name to the cholim list please email gabbai@agudahsouth.com or contact one of the gabbaim.</p>

Upcoming Weekday Schedule for Parshas Vayigash

<p>Shacharis Sunday: 8:00 am (Rosh Chodosh) Monday & Tuesday : 6:50 & 7:50 Wednesday: 6:50 & 7:50 Thursday: 7:00 & 7:55 Friday: 7:00 & 8:00</p>	<p>Mincha 12:40 & 4:30 pm Maariv 4:50 pm</p>
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To sponsor Kiddush/Seudas Shlishis contact Baruch Klein (kiddush@agudahsouth.com.)
To sign for the bulletin, submit announcements, add names to the cholim list or yearzeit calendar go to www.agudahsouth.com/mailling-lists, email mailings@agudahsouth.com or speak to one of the gabbaim.