

# GROWING IN EXILE

*by Shlomo Katz*

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Today's Learning:

Chullin 12:5 / Bechorot 1:1

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Sanhedrin 94

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Eruvin 51

In this parashah, Bnei Yisrael's long exile in Egypt begins. Near the parashah's beginning, Yosef reveals his true identity to his brothers, and he commands them: "Therefore, tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and all that you saw." (45:13) What did Yosef mean? Once his brothers told Yaakov of Yosef's glory in Egypt, what else was left to tell? R' Moshe Gruenwald z"l (1853- 1911; rabbi of Khust, Hungary) explains:

The Gemara (Megillah 29a) teaches that wherever the Jewish people were exiled, the Shechinah went with them. Says R' Gruenwald: Even when Yosef alone went down to Egypt, the Shechinah

went with him, as we read (Bereishit 39:2), "Hashem was with Yosef." When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers they saw the Shechinah with him and they realized that the exile was about to begin. (Previously, they had not looked closely at him for one is forbidden to gaze upon a rasha, which they presumed him to be.) Therefore Yosef told his brothers, "Tell my father of all my glory, and also tell him that you saw the Shechinah in Egypt."

In this light, we may also understand Yosef's message to his father (45:9), "Come down to me; do not stand still." Yaakov undoubtedly was afraid that moving to a land of impurity such as Egypt would mean the end of his spiritual growth. Yet man is forbidden to stop growing, as our Sages teach, "Angels are called, 'Those who stand still.' Humans are called, 'Those who walk'." Angels are already perfect; they cannot grow. Man, on the other hand, must never stand still. "Do not be afraid," Yosef said to Yaakov. "The Shechinah is here, so you will not 'stand still' if you come here."

This may explain also why Yaakov was comforted when he saw the gift of wagons that Yosef had sent (see verse 27). Wagons would later be used by the Levi'im to carry the Tabernacle - G-d's "home" - through the desert. The wagons that Yosef sent symbolized the fact that G-d goes into exile with His people. (Arugat Ha'bosem)

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*"Then Yehuda approached him and said, 'Bi adoni / If you please, my lord, may your servant speak davar / a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger flare up at your servant...'"* (44:18)

R' Yisroel Taub z"l (the Modzhitzer Rebbe) asks two questions about this verse. First, why does the pasuk include an apparently extra word - "davar" / "a word"? The pasuk could have said: "May your servant speak in my lord's ear?" Second, why did Yehuda have to speak directly into Yosef's ear? The pasuk seems to imply that Yehuda wanted to tell Yosef a secret - apparently a secret that would calm Yosef's anger!

R' Taub explains that when one person gets angry at another person, it is usually rooted in the fact that they have a disagreement. Each person feels that he is certainly right, and that his friend's claim is unjust. Each person's sense of propriety and justice is offended. However, if one would only entertain the thought that just maybe the other person is in fact correct, any anger that one feels will quickly disappear. One's own sense of justice will no longer be offended, and he will be able to accept the situation more rationally.

Yehuda personally had an experience that taught him this - the incident with Tamar. Yehuda was livid with anger when word reached him that Tamar was pregnant, and he ordered that she be put to death. But the moment that Yehuda was willing to hear Tamar's message, and recognized the signs that showed that he in fact was the father, his anger immediately subsided, and he declared (38:26), "She is more right than I am."

This very lesson is what Yehuda wanted to share with Yosef. This is the "word" that he wanted to

whisper. He approached him, wanted to speak nearby and quietly -- directly into his ear. His message is "Bi adoni." Literally, "bi" means "please," but it also means "in/from me." Yehuda said to Yosef, "Look at me, at what happened to me." Yehuda shares his personal story, seeking to create a crack within Yosef's wall of anger, as if to say, "If you will learn from my own mistake, you will see that there really is another side to this issue. Once you consider that, your anger will disappear." And, of course, the best way for Yehuda to accomplish this is to share a personal story, not a lecture. A personal story establishes a rapport, easing the listener into the acceptance process as well. (Divrei Yisrael)

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## Shabbat

We find in the Torah, in the Nevi'im / Prophets, and in the Ketuvim / Writings that Shabbat is equated to all the other mitzvot combined. In the Torah (Shmot 16:28): "How long will you refuse to obey My commandments and My teachings? See that Hashem has given you the Shabbat..."

In the Nevi'im (Yishayah 56:2): "Whoever guards the Shabbat against desecration and his hand against doing any evil..."

In the Ketuvim (Nechemiah 9:13): "You descended upon Mount Sinai and spoke to them from heaven; You gave them righteous laws and true teachings, and beneficial decrees and commandments. You made known Your sacred Shabbat to them..." (Midrash)

R' Shlomo Ephraim of Lunschitz z"l (author of the Torah commentary Kli Yakar and other works; died 1619) explains that Shabbat is equated to all of the other mitzvot combined because Shabbat alludes to the three pillars of our faith identified in Sefer Ha'ikkrim. These are: (1) that Hashem, the Creator, exists; (2) that the Torah is Divinely-given; and (3) man is rewarded in Olam Haba for his good deeds and punished for his bad deeds. [Sefer Ha'ikkrim writes that these principles contain all of Rambam's better known Thirteen Articles of Faith.]

R' Shlomo Ephraim explains further: Shabbat observance confirms our belief in the existence of a Creator because Shabbat commemorates the completion of Creation. Shabbat confirms our belief in a Divinely-given Torah because Shabbat is a time when we are free to devote ourselves to Torah study. Finally, Shabbat observance confirms our belief in Olam Haba because Shabbat is said to be a "taste" of Olam Haba.

Shabbat's special nature may be learned from the first time the day is mentioned in the Torah. Imagine a king who promulgated many laws for his subjects. The king is, of course, above the law. However, in order to impress upon his subjects the importance of one particular law, the king himself observed that law in public. So, too, the Torah tells us in Bereishit (chapter 2) that Hashem "rested" on Shabbat. Obviously, Hashem was not tired or worn out from His work. Why then did He rest after completing creation? Only to demonstrate to us the importance of Shabbat! (Olelot

Ephraim: Ma'amar 261)

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## **R' Binyamin Aharon Solnik z"l**

It is not known where or when R' Binyamin Aharon was born. He was a disciple of R' Shlomo ben Yehuda Leib (known in Poland as "R' Shlomo the Younger"), R' Moshe Isserles ("Rema"), R' Shlomo Luria ("Maharshal"; the "elder" R' Shlomo), and R' Nosson Nata Shapiro (the first). After serving as rabbi of various congregations in Krakow, R' Binyamin Aharon became rabbi of Podhajce (Podayetz), in eastern Galicia (now in Ukraine). As a posek / halachic authority, he was a staunch supporter of Rema's rulings in the latter's glosses to the Shulchan Aruch. Thus, R' Binyamin Aharon was among those who were instrumental in causing the widespread acceptance of the Shulchan Aruch as the authoritative source of halachah.

R' Binyamin Aharon's own work, Mas'at Binyamin - whose name is taken from last week's parashah (Bereishit 43:34) - also is considered an authoritative work and is quoted by later scholars. The author was blind and sick for at least the last ten years of his life, but this did not stop him from answering difficult halachic questions. One of the subjects that R' Binyamin Aharon discusses, citing numerous sources from memory, is whether a blind man may be called to the Torah. Throughout his work, R' Binyamin Aharon mentions the opinions of his contemporaries with great respect.

R' Binyamin Aharon also wrote a work in Yiddish, Mitzvat Hanashim, containing laws pertaining to women. This work was reprinted many times.

Two of R' Binyamin Aharon's sons were respected scholars - R' Avraham and R' Yaakov Yekl. The former was rabbi of Brisk and the latter wrote a commentary on Rashi's commentary to the Torah entitled Nachalat Yaakov.

R' Binyamin Aharon passed away in approximately 1620. (Source: The Early Acharonim)

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah"), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at [Project Genesis](#) start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page. Text archives from 1990 through the present may be retrieved from <http://www.acoast.com/~sehc/hamaayan/>. Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible.

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