

## VAYEISHEV - 5774

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

This week I would like to focus on the Haftara. The Navi Amos (2:6) begins his prophesy by saying: “Al shelosha pish’ei Yisrael v’al arba’a lo ashivenu, al mich’rom bakesef Tzaddik v’evyon ba’avur na’alayim” that three major sins HaShem was willing to overlook, but then there was a fourth, which went beyond His willingness to delay the full extent of judgment. That fourth sin was “for their having sold a righteous man for silver, and a destitute one for the sake of a pair of shoes”

The Pirkei D’Reb Eliezer (perek 38) sees the above passage as referring to the sale of Yosef HaTazddik by his brothers (parashat Vayeishev 37:28). Chazal explain (Yerushalmi Shekalim 2:3) that the brothers sold Yosef for the equivalent of twenty silver coins and that each of the ten brothers got two silver coins which enabled each brother to purchase a pair of shoes. The Navi tells us that this sin was unforgivable and was viewed with greater severity than every cardinal offense.

With this statement the Navi alludes to the fact that the greatest Talmidei Chachamim of Israel, the Asarah Harugei Malchut would be brutally murdered in atonement for this sin. HaShem said that the sale of Yosef, unlike all other sins, could never be overlooked and that one day the greatest Tannaim would suffer inhuman torture. No offense of the Jewish people ever evoked so harsh a response as this one. As we glean from the words of Amos it was not the actual sale that aroused HaShem’s wrath, rather the condition of the sale. The Navi refers to the indignity shown to Yosef and the insensitivity towards his feelings, being sold for an inexpensive pair of shoes. The bothers are quoted to have reflected on their decision and said, ”But we are guilty for observing his pain when he pleaded with us and we turned a deaf ear to it” (42:41). Even they faulted themselves for their insensitivity towards their brother. When he pleaded for his life they should have reconsidered their harsh decision.

HaShem chose the illustrious era of the Tannaim to respond to this offense. Among this elite group was the Rabbi Akiva who authored the statement of “Ve’a’havta Le’rei’acha

Ka’mocha- **ZEH KLAL GADOL BA’TORAH**”. Based on this our Rabbis taught that even a Jewish condemned murderer who is about to be executed to Beit Din must be shown sensitivity “Barur Lo Mita Yafa” (Ketuvot 37b), to make it as painless as possible.

And this Amos teaches, this insensitivity of one Jew to another is what brought about the downfall of the kingdoms, the churban HaBayit and the exile.

The lesson for us is that we may disagree with each other, we may argue with one another but at all costs, we dare not be insensitive and disrespectful towards one Jew

and another. That, the Navi is telling us could be dangerous and Chas VeShalom-even fatal.