

A fascinating parasha, in which we are introduced to CHIRA. You undoubtedly will ask me “Who is Chira???” The parasha begins (38:1) by informing us that “About the time that Yehuda left his brothers and camped near a certain Adullamite, whose name was Chira”. It is Chira who accompanies Yehuda after the death of Yehuda’s wife. And it is Chira who is sent by Yehuda to pay the woman her fee, “a kid of the goats from his stock”(38:20). The repeated mention of Chira’s name raises the question, why is Chira so significant to the story?

I heard BEAUTIFUL explanation to all this from my friend and colleague, Rabbi Bienenfel. He sated the following:

The Midrash (Bereishit Rabba 85:4) states that our Sages are teaching us that Chira is the same as Chirom, who was King David’s close friend (Melachim Alef 5:15). What message is the midrash attempting to teach us by connecting the two names together?

Rav Simcha Bunim emphasizes that, based on this midrash, that every human being needs to have a cherished, trustworthy, friend to whom he can confide all that is in his heart, even his misdeeds. In the same way Yehuda had Chira, his friend. It was through Chira that Yehuda sent his kid goat payment to Tamar.

The fact that Yehuda entrusted Chira as his messenger is testimony to the deep-seated bond that existed between them. It also seems logical to conclude that Chira was fully aware of Yehuda’s misdeeds. Yet, despite the shame endured, he felt he could share his frailties with Chira, and Chira, for his part was able to accept Yehuda for who he was and remain at his side. Perhaps without Chira’s acceptance, Yehuda may not have had the courage to publicly admit his shame with Tamar. Chira’s friendship was not only critical for Yehuda on a personal level enabling him to move forward, but also, because of Yehuda’s willingness to face the truth, Tamar’s life was saved, and the seeds of Mashi’ach were born.

In Pirkei Avot (1:6) we read the following, “Aseh Lecha Rav, U’knei Lecha Chaver”- noting that a Rav is important in our lives, but a Chaver (a good friend is even more crucial..Knei means buying –with money, if necessary,- even if we have to lay out money- it pays to do it if it means holding on to a good friend). Beyond the obvious practical advantages of having another set of hands to help, a good friend is one with whom you can share your deepest worries and anxieties, upon whose shoulder you can lean and cry, and together with whom you can fulfill a shared mission in life.

A Chaver, a friend, in Halacha, always refers to a loyal comrade, one who has total credibility and could be trusted in religious and personal matters, or, “A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out”. Who is that friend whom we seek?? It can be a loving spouse, a caring sibling. Of course, we must never forget that in the absence of any of the above, we all have HaShem as our ultimate confidant who remains steadfast by our side. And even when we go astray, HaShem never abandons us and is always willing to forgive when we genuinely repent.

With this insight, it is quite clear why our parasha always coincides with Chanuka. The contrast between the rivalry between Yosef and his brothers and the united brotherhood of the sons of Matisyahu could not be more clear. The miraculous victory of the CHASHMONAIM over their enemies was largely due to the powerful bond of solidarity of the five brothers. If we, as representatives of the religious community, would be able to engender a sense of understanding and tolerance when confronted by religious wrong doings- not to condemn and reject, but to reach and outreach—such an approach, B'Ezrat HaShem, can help bring about a hastened return to our mesorah and accelerate the ultimate ge'ulah.

SHABBAT SHALOM AND CHANUKA SAMEI'ACH.- FROM YERUSHALAYIM

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS-:

There are many differences in the way the Torah narrates the dream of Par'oh and the way Par'oh repeats it to Yosef. One glaring discrepancy is regarding Par'oh position by the river.

- A- Can you find this difference?
- B- What do you think is the significance of this difference?
- C- Psalm 81, which is the Psalm we recite on Thursdays has a reference to Yosef in Mitzrayim. And this Psalm is what we recite on Rosh HaShana, regardless of What day of week it falls on. What is the connection to Rosh HaShana?

D- From where in our parasha do we learn that we must show respect and honor a king or any person of royalty even if he is not Jewish?

E- It is forbidden to shave on Shabbat and on Yom Tov, so how did Yosef do so? See 41 :14

F- How many dreams did Yosef actually have? If you found the third dream , what was it about?

G- What did Par'oh mean when he declared that without you no one may lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Mitzrayim??41:44

Note-this is the last dvar Torah for year 2019

The next issue for parashat VAYIGASH- WILL BE IN 2020