

MUPIM, CHUPIM

Parshas Vayigash

By Rabbi Menachem Rokeach

The title of this essay may look strange, at first glance. Having delved into the Parsha it becomes clearly revealing. It even becomes relevant for Chanukah (offering insight on the juxtaposition of the two Reb Tanchums, one dealing with the בור into which Joseph was thrown, and Reb Tanchum's rule about the height of the Chanukah menorah (Shabbos 22a). The parsha speaks about the reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers and, finally, their journey with Jacob and his entire family to Egypt, recounting their names. The names of the ten sons of Benjamin, each related to the tragic disappearance of Joseph, are mighty instruction of the emotionally warm relations between brothers.

The Talmud (Sotah 36b) in discussing the names of Benjamin's sons, is indicative of the thoughts at the time when the names were given. Apparently under normal circumstances, Joseph would have participated at the Bris (circumcision) of his nephews. Each SIMCHA of one of the brothers becomes a family SIMCHA. Missing him at these precious moments is deeply distressing.

One philologist suggests the Hebrew word SIMCHA (joy) is related to the word סמיכה, closeness. The closeness of brothers and members of a family is mostly manifested by participating in each other's SIMCHA. To compensate for the brother's absence, Benjamin gave his sons names that reminded him of Joseph's attributes. Most dramatic are the names "Mupim v'Chupim". Those names are indicative of the painful absence at the time of each other's marriage. "Chupim", two chupas (canopies), Joseph missed my Chupa and I missed his (ibid). "Mupim", I missed his Torah words transmitting to us what he heard from Yaakov's mouth (peh) (Tanchuma Vayigash 7). Especially at Sheva Brochos it is appropriate to share with family memorable insights of ancestors.

When the brothers met, prior to Joseph's identifying himself, he asks Benjamin about his family. When Joseph heard their names, and the meaning of these names, his emotion overwhelmed him, rushing out to cry (43:30).

Chanukah and the rededication of the Beth Hamikdosh, Chanukas Hamizbaiach, are intrinsically connected to the love and harmony among brothers, and all Israel. At the conclusion of bringing the sacrifices, Aharon Kohain Godol blessed Israel with Sholom. The Ketores (incense mixture) included "Keshoit twelve maneh". Said Reb Yaakov Kaminetsky z.t.l., facetiously Keshoit is the Aramaic for truth. The truth is with all twelve tribes in harmony. Sholom in Israel, sholom among all brethren, is the key to the continuation of the Beth Hamikdosh.

At the meeting and identification of Joseph and Benjamin in profoundest love, "Joseph fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck" (45:14). The Midrash comments that they wept, seeing with Ruach Hakodesh, that in the future the sanctuaries that would be built in their respective territories will be destroyed because of SINAS CHINOM, bitter disharmony among Israeli brethren.

This may be the intent of Reb Tanchum's juxtaposition of the story of Joseph's disappearance in the middle of the discussion of Chanukah. Chanukah is the only holiday that comprises (part of) two months, beginning 25th of Kislev, and concluding the last days in Teves. The Sefer Hyetzerah teaches of a combination between the twelve months of the year, and the twelve tribes (see Bnei Yisoschor 1: page 161). Thus, combining two (partial) months in one holiday serves as incentive of ACHDUS, love, respect, and harmony among all the twelve tribes of Israel, thereby speeding the geulah and rebuilding of the Beth Hamikdosh.

