

“Communication”

Just as the three most important words in Real-Estate are “location, location, location”, so too the three most important words in family relationships are: “communication, communication, communication”.

In a recent survey on family relationships it was revealed that the two leading stress factors which “trigger” conflict in marriages and families are: 1- Financial issues, 2-Lack of Communication. Not surprising, but very interesting.

In this week’s Parasha, describing the brother’s feelings after the death of their father Ya’akov, the Torah states, “*VA’YIR’U ACHEI YOSEF KI MEIT AVIHEM*” “Yosef’s brothers saw that their father Ya’akov had died, and he said, ‘perhaps Yosef will hate us and return to us all the evil that we did to him’ (50:15)

We could of course, understand their concern, as it was well founded. While Ya’akov was alive, the brother figured that their father would protect them from any acts of revenge on the part of Yosef. Once Ya’akov died, the brothers felt vulnerable.

The Midrash [Bereishit Rabba 50:15] offers a deeper level of interpretation. Commenting on the words “*Now Yosef’s brothers SAW*”, the Midrash suggests that the brothers actually “SAW” as they returned from burying Ya’akov that Yosef stopped at the very pit into which he was thrown. Undoubtedly, they PRESUMED, he did so to plan an action against them in the very place that his life was endangered. Rashi adds, that the brothers SAW that Yosef no longer invited them to dine with him. Again, they PRESUMED that Yosef was still incensed at the way he had been mistreated.

In both cases, however, the brothers misunderstood Yosef’s actions. In the first, the Midrash notes that Yosef returned to the pit to thank HaShem for having saved him IN THIS VERY PLACE . In the second, Yosef may no longer have eaten with his brothers, since he realized that after Ya’akov’s death, the Egyptian persecution was soon to begin. He therefore feared, that dining with his brothers could provoke the Egyptians to suspect that he was allying himself, with his brothers, to rebel against Egypt.[See Gur Aryeh]

This feeling of apprehension and suspicion could have been avoided, had they been more open and communicative. Yosef would have assured them that his intent was not to harm them. On the other hand, Yosef can be faulted for leaving false impressions rather than communicating and explaining his actions to his brothers.

Whether there has been a traumatic separation or not, often it is the case that disagreements arise because people don’t express what is in their hearts. A simple “thank You” communicates an expression of gratitude which is often overlooked and taken for granted. How many parents say “I love you” to their spouse or grown children?

If we would only speak openly and honestly, we would find that on many occasions, our concerns are based upon misunderstandings. Although it exposes us to the risk of pain, openness is the path to healing and growth.

Shabbat Shalom from YERUSHALAYIM

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

A cheer up question-----IF A DEAF PERSON GOES TO COURT, IS IT STILL CALLED A "HEARING"??

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT VAYECHI

1-Yaakov Avinu lived 147 years. Out of these only 34 of them were peaceful and tranquil. Where is this alluded to in the first pasuk of our parasha?

2-Gemara Sanhedrin [22b] states, "Ein Isha Meita Ela L'baala" [A woman who dies it's the husband who is mostly effected]. Where in pasuk 48:7 is this derived from?

3-Which ancient city and which modern Israeli city is mentioned in our parasha? [both are in the Gush area]

4-Yosef was a B'chor –[first born], from Rachel his mother. A B'chor is entitled to a double portion of inheritance, What double share did Yaakov give to Yosef?

5 In perek 48, pasuk 22, Yaakov declares, "The land that I took from the hands of the Emorite with my "charbi U'vikashety"[my sword and bow] How does Targum Onkelos interpret these two words, and what is the significance of the change?

6-the Gemara Bava Metzi'a [47a], states that until the days of Yaakov Avinu people were not exposed to any illness. Where in our parasha is this derived from?