

RABBI AHARON ZIEGLER - PARASHAT MIKETZ and 5782 *שבת הנוכה*

We Jews are referred to as “*Yehudim*”, because most of us come from Shevet (tribe of) Yehudah. This is the most common reason given for our name, even though there are numerous other names that our people and religion could go by. Yet, there is glaring reason for that choice of our name, which I heard from Rabbi Weiss based on our parasha.

In the narrative, Yosef takes Shimon as hostage and demands that the brothers bring Binyamin to Mitzrayim (Egypt), as a precondition for both Shimon’s release and then he will provide more food for Ya’akov’s family. Ya’akov Avinu is understandably hesitant. Having already lost Yosef, his favorite, he fears losing Binyamin his only remaining son from his beloved wife Rachel. It is here that Yehudah bravely rises to the occasion to declare that he would act as an “**OREV**”, a surety, a guarantor for Binyamin. “If I don’t return him”, he says to his father Ya’akov, “I will bear the sin forever” (Bereishit 43:9). Yehudah’s pledge is highly unusual. Normally when a debtor guarantees collateral, the collateral comes from a third party, other than the debtor himself. Here, Yehudah takes his obligation to a higher level. Yehudah himself is both the one who makes the commitment as well as is the guarantor. This indicates how seriously Yehudah takes the pledge or the **AREIVUT** he is offering.

According to Rav Soloveitchik, **AREIVUT** means more than just another concern for a fellow Jew. It means that I am a surety - each and every Jew is a surety for every other Jew. Just as a surety is held responsible as if he had been the debtor, so also, every Jew is a surety for all the spiritual obligations of every other Jew. The Mishnah in Shabbat (54b) states that a Jew is not permitted to have his animal work or carry things on Shabbat. However, the cow of Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya did go out in public carrying a ribbon on its horns, (which the other Rabbis disapproved). Then the Gemara asks, “what do you mean by the “cow of Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya, did he have only one cow that you identify it with him”? “He had over 120,000 animals!”. So Gemara responds, no! We are not referring to an animal of his. We refer to an animal in “*his community*” but since Rabbi Elazar did not object, we hold *him responsible!*

Our obligation to our fellow Jew is unique. As we are more connected to our inner family with whom we share a common tradition, history and destiny, so too concerning our larger family - the people of Israel-hence, we are called Yehudim, as we are named after the person who so intensely exemplified *Ahavat Yisrael*.

Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi (1075-1141) noted that all Israel can be compared to a human body. When one limb hurts, the entire body is affected. All Jews are one body. When one Jew is in pain, Jews everywhere feel that pain. And when a Jew dances and experiences joy, we all dance and feel the joy. We pray that our community will be full of joy and S’machot.

Shabbat Shalom and Chanukah Sa’mei’ach, from Yerushalayim.

Rabbi Aharon and Libby Ziegler

QUESTIONS ON PARSHAT MIKETZ:

1-There are many differences in narrative of the Torah and the way Par'oh repeats it to Yosef. One glaring difference is regarding Par'oh position by the river. Can you find this difference?

2-Psalm 81, which we recite on Thursdays has a reference to Yosef in Mitzrayim. And this Psalm we recite on Rosh HaShana regardless of what day of week it falls on. What is the connection to Rosh HaShana?

3-Where is there a reference in our parasha that we must show kavod, respect for a king, even a non-Jewish King?

4-Where in our parasha, do we see that marital relations between husband and wife are prohibited during a time of famine?

5-Bread in those days was not cut into pieces with a knife, but rather “broken [by hand] into pieces. “ Where in this parasha is it found? –

6-After what happened to Yosef, Yaakov refused to allow Binyamin to go down to Mitzrayim. But then, Yehuda convinces Yaakov to allow Binyamin to go. What did Yehuda say that made Yaakov relent?

7-In Israel, when one greets with “boker tov” the other responds with “boker ohr”. Where does that expression come from.