ani yosef -i am yosef

# shiur 15- rabbi gavriel sassoon gimel teves 5776 12/15/15

Rabbi Sassoon went through the narrative of Yosef and his brothers and explained what happened. He said, this is a typical case of sibling rivalry, but here we are speaking of giants in Torah who wanted to kill Yosef. What were they fighting about? Yosef and Yehuda, Rabbi Sassoon explained, had different approaches to life, different approaches in serving Hashem. Yosef was a dreamer, he was spontaneous, he was worldly, and he was very individualistic. The brothers, Yehuda being the head of them were conservative, disciplined, they had rigid rules, and they were always together. They made a bais din of 10 people, into which they included Hashem to judge Yosef. This is the total opposite of what Yosef would have done in a similar situation.

In life, we need to combine both of the aspects of Yosef and his brothers-spontaneity and discipline. Yosef was worldly, into relationships-that is what his whole life was about. He came to Mitzraim and wanted to change them for the better, he had them all perform bris milah. The brothers killed out Shecham-they are bad, there is no hope for them, let’s get rid of them. Yosef came down to Mitzraim and was also a doer-in the house of Potiphar-he worked hard, rose in stature. In jail, also, he didn’t sit and sulk, he was a doer. The brothers saw this characteristic of Yosef and they didn’t like it, they were afraid of it. Yosef’s way of being ‘out there in the world’ could lead someone down the wrong path. Someone who is into relationships, could become promiscuous, could start serving avoda zora etc. The brothers knew that both Yehuda and Yosef were destined to be Kings. But they were afraid of Yosef’s way of life and therefore were afraid if he were to be King, so they wanted to kill him. They were so convinced that they were correct that they establish a din Torah, included Hashem as one of the judges and judged him to death.

Rabbi Sassoon explained that if we look at the above story, if we look at history, we will see that ‘religion destroys the world.’ The brothers wanted Yosef killed because they felt there way of religion was the right way. The Yidden have suffered terribly throughout the ages at the hands of religious zealots i.e. the Crusades. Now the world is suffering under Islam. These so called ‘religious people’ have preconceived notions of what is right and what is wrong. They take on the role of being the ‘world’s police.’

Yosef was buried in Mitzraim. When it was time to leave, Moshe Rabbeinu threw a piece of molten gold into the Nile that said on it ‘alay shor’. This caused Yosef’s bones to rise and Moshe was thus able to bring Yosef out of Mitzraim and eventually to burial in Eretz Yisroel. But this piece of gold became the ‘egel hazahave’ the golden calf. So we see how something pure and holy could turn to avoda zora.

The brother’s attitude of only their way of serving Hashem was right, led them to loshon hora and ultimately led them to selling Yosef. They had absolutely no regard for individual differences. What we see from the Torah is, that even after Yosef was sold, he did not lose his love for life. He took charge wherever he was. He was loved wherever he went and by whom ever he met. He did not give up on life. He understood life is about relationships. He always had bitochon. Even in jail he rose up in rank. It is interesting to note that the Torah does not give us any small talk, but when Yosef was in jail, the Torah tells us, how he spoke to the other prisoners, to show us about ‘relationships’.

When he encounters the brothers, why does he go through this whole act of asking them about their family, making Binyomin come down to Mitzraim? The Ramban explains that he wanted to give them an opportunity to make teshuva for what they had done to him. He wanted to teach the brothers the importance of ‘relationships’. How does he do this? First he calls them ‘spies’. Why? Because spies have no relationships with others. They only act nice to you, befriend you but for their own purposes, not because they want to develop any true friendship with you.

When the brothers come back to Yaakov and tell him that they have to bring down Binyomin, Yaakov was upset. He asks them, why you even told the Viceroy about Binyomin. They didn’t even know why they told him, but the brothers answered Yaakov, that he asks us so many questions, he seemed to already know so much about our family. When they found money in their bags, Yaakov understood that this Viceroy wants to make a connection with them, to have a relationship with them, so he suggested that they bring the Viceroy beautiful fruit from Eretz Yisroel to develop this relationship.

They come down and the story continues, and the goblet is found in their bag and they are returned to the Viceroy. And he asks, how could you have stolen? How could you repay all the good I am doing for you with bad? He is trying to talk to them about relationships.

But now the brothers feel trapped and see no way out. Yosef threatens to keep Binyomin with him and they can return to their father. They explain how that will never work, their father will be so upset. And Yehuda now stands up for his brother. Yehuda and the brothers are willing to destroy the whole Mitzraim if Yosef does not let them return Binyomin to their father. This is what Yosef wanted to see-relationship-do you feel for your brother, for your father?

Yosef tells his brothers’ Ani Yosef, Yod Avi Chai” I am Yosef your brother, is our father still alive? He is saying, ‘did you care about me, when you sold me, did you care about our father when you sold me? I am Yosef your brother, is our father still alive, or did you kill him also?

Yosef and Binyomin cried on each other’s shoulders? What does this signify? The other brothers didn’t cry because they were in such shock. Rashi explains that they saw that the Bais HaMikdtach in Binyomin’s section and the Mishkan in Yosef’s section would be destroyed. What does the destruction of Hashem’s houses of worship have to do with this whole story line? Because they were destroyed due to ‘sinsas chinam’ baseless hate. And this stems from lack of ‘relationship’ which is the whole basis of Yosef being sold.

Rabbi Sassoon explained that all of us, combine within us, the characteristics of both Yosef-spontaneous, worldliness and discipline and protectiveness. We need to realize that some of us have more of Yosef, some of us have more of Yehuda, but together we make up Klal Yisroel. We need to love each other, ‘yish achad b’lave achad’-as one man with one heart.

In the times of Moshiach (and may he come soon) Moshe Rabbeinu will bring both Moshiach ben Yosef and Moshiach ben Yehuda. We need both of them. Rabbi Sassoon explained that the Sefardim go more in the way of Yosef HaTzaddik and the Ashkanazim go more in the way of Yehuda and the brothers.

Rabbi Sassoon explained that end of days the Yidden must come together. Moshiach will not come until there is achdus between all of us-between sefardim and ashkanizim. Yosef will teach us about ‘ahavas chinom’ and if we have achdus we will be complete and Moshiach will be able to come.

Rabbi Sassoon explained that the sole purpose of ‘chaveli moshiach’ is to bring us together, to cause us to have achdus and thus bring Moshiach. But he said, if we figure it out on our own, there is then no purpose for ‘chaveli moshiach’ and we need not suffer under ’chaveli moshaich’.