MIQETZ: Having God In Mind

"Emuna" is generally translated as *faith*, and is understood as "believing in the existence of God". But the Emuna / faith of Yosef went far beyond a passive faith/belief type. Yosef's Emuna consisted of focusing his mind in God in bad times and in good times . His active faith guided his steps: stopping him before doing something morally wrong and motivating him to do what is right. There is a fundamental difference between Yosef and his ancestors. HaShem spoke and communicated directly with Abraham, Itshaq and Ya'aqob. But HaShem never spoke directly with Yosef. In that sense, Yosef is similar to us: we do not have the privilege of a "direct" prophetic revelation from God. Like Yosef, we also have to actively seek HaShem, think about Him, feel His presence and mainly, allow Him to guide our steps.

LIVING UNDER GOD'S SIGHT

When harassed by Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39: 9) Yosef had HaShem in his mind. At the time of that particular event, Yosef saw in his mind the image of his father Jacob, who reminded Yosef that what was about to happen with Potiphar's wife was not be right in the eyes of HaShem. It is not rare or unusual than God's memory appears by remembering our parents, especially what THEY taught us about God. The most important manifestation of Emuna should take place on the moral sphere. Emuna means: feeling that HaShem is watching us. This aspect of Emuna will prevent us from doing what is wrong in His eyes.

BAD BEGINNING. GOOD ENDING.

Later on, we see that Yosef's Emuna also helped him to forgive his brothers. Yosef told them that when they sold him to slavery (Bereshit 50:19): *"It is possible that you thought to do me wrong, but HaShem transformed that evil into a great*

good, to achieve what we are seeing today: saving the lives of many people". Yosef's Emuna made him realize that, many times, what today seems like a big problem, tomorrow turns out to be a great solution.

FAITH IN BAD TIMES

When Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of sexual harassment, Yosef was taken to jail. He was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. Apart from being a slave, Yosef was now a criminal. Nothing lower than that position in Ancient Egypt. Yosef had no hope of getting out of jail. He had no family to be looking for him and no one who knew him or cared about him. And yet, in this unjust and desperate situation, Yosef did not abandon HaShem. Many people in those circumstances would have lost their faith thinking: "If HaShem does not help me, why should I continue to believe in Him and be guided by His laws?". Or "If this is happening to me, maybe God does not exist… ". When one is the victim of a great injustice, it is very possible that he would feel that HaShem abandoned him, or that "" God does not exist. But Yosef persevered. He had HaShem present even in jail and never stopped believing in Him (40: 8).

FAITH AND HUMILITY

We read in this week's Parasha, that Pharaoh suddenly needed the services of Yosef. The Egyptian monarch takes Yosef out of jail and tells him his dream. Yosef listens to Pharaoh's dream and realizes what it means. The Tora does not say that HaShem revealed to Yosef the meaning of Pharaoh's dream, as it happened with Daniel and Emperor Nebukhadnetsar a thousand years later. Yosef interprets the royal dream, apparently, on his own. Any average individual would have boasted of possessing a great wisdom or superpowers to interpret dreams. Yosef, however, did not attribute to himself the

interpretation of the dream. *“God [and not me!] is the one who will reveal the [meaning of] Pharaoh’s dream,”* said Yosef (Bereshit 41:16). This too seems to be the reason Yosef did not ask anything in return for his service. When an opportunity of this kind arises, when, for example, the authorities take an inmate out of jail to ask for some type of information or to use some of his talents, the prisoner realizes that he has the possibility of getting out of jail, and he tries to make a “deal” with the authorities to go out. Yosef did not ask anything in exchange for interpreting Pharaoh’s dream. Because he attributed the interpretation to God, not to himself.

FAITH IN GOOD TIMES

It is important to have Emuna, faith in HaShem in bad times. But the most significant achievement in regard to a person’s Emuna is to keep HaShem in mind when he or she is in good health, happy and financially well. The faith of many people fails when facing the challenge of affluence, wealth and well-being. Then, a person might forget HaShem because he feels he does not need him any more □”□. Our Hakhamim warned us about this phenomenon when they told us □□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ that “the challenge of wealth” , having HaShem present when I’m well, “is more difficult than the challenge of poverty”, having God in mind when we require His help.