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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Vayigash ✍️ Rabbi Dovid Greenberg

Ahavas Yisroel

After Yosef's dramatic revelation to his brothers, the Torah relates (45:14) that Yosef cried on the "necks" of Binyomin, and Binyomin cried on Yosef's "neck". Rashi quotes the Gemora (Megillah 16b) that the plural term "necks" indicates that Yosef prophetically saw the destruction of two Batei Mikdash in Binyomin's portion of the land and cried over them. At the same time Binyomin foresaw the destruction of the Mishkan Shiloh (located in Yosef's portion of the land) and thus cried on Yosef's "neck" (singular). This whole incident begs a question: Why would these Tzadikim receive such morbid visions at a seemingly jubilant time of family reunion?

In true Jewish form, this riddle may be solved by asking yet another obvious question. How should we understand Yosef HaTzadik's motive in falsely accusing his brothers of spying and theft, thereby causing them much anguish? Surely the great Tzadik wasn't just indulging his desire for revenge.

Yosef understood the grave ramifications of the Shevatim's sin of selling him into slavery. Though the Tribes justified their deed with various explanations, the root cause was envy and a callousness in their relationship with their brother. The Bnei Yaacov were the foundation of Klal Yisroel and even a slight flaw in these areas could eventually lead to the destruction of the entire edifice.

So Yosef set out to cause his brothers to feel remorse over their lack of unity and to restore the brotherly love and caring that is necessary for the future of the Jewish people. After sitting in an Egyptian jail for three days, the Shevatim contemplated the reason for their suffering. "We are ashamed over our brother who we ignored when he begged us to have pity on him. Therefore this suffering has befallen us" (42:21). Later, when Binyomin was framed for the crime of stealing the

viceroy's goblet, brotherly feelings again came to the fore. Yehuda demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice everything for his fellow Jew by offering to be a slave instead of Binyomin. Yosef's plan was thus beginning to bear fruit.

However, the Pasuk tells us that Yosef wasn't able to hold onto his ploy any longer (45:1). Yehuda and the tribes were threatening to destroy all of Egypt and the pressure was too intense. Indeed, when Yosef revealed his true identity, he was informed from Above that his mission had ultimately failed. Progress had been made, but alas the seeds of brotherly discord had not been totally erased. The meaning of the visions regarding destruction of the Batei Mikdash and Mishkan was that, down the road, the terrible offshoots of murder and baseless hatred resulting from the brothers' actions would lead to these tragedies.

At that very moment, when Yosef envisioned the horrific outcome of hatred among brothers, he also taught us how to rectify it. Instead of crying over the Mishkan Shiloh, which was in his portion, he wept over the Batei Mikdash in Binyomin's lot. This act of feeling his brother's pain even more than his own exemplified the proper Ahavas Yisroel necessary to rectify the fragmentation that affects the Jewish people.

In this day and age, we unfortunately have ample opportunities to help bear our neighbors' burdens and ease their pain. May we grasp these chances and be zoche to the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash in our days.

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HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

Carrying on Shabbos

Rabbi Dovid Greenberg

Winter can be a very cold and wet experience, causing all of us to try to protect ourselves and our clothing. In this article we will discuss some seasonal Shabbos halachos pertaining to these frigid or drenching situations.

Hat Covers

Wearing clothing is not considered carrying on Shabbos because the clothes serve the wearer and are therefore considered as one with the body. However, to be defined as clothing, at least one of the following conditions must be fulfilled: 1) the material must bring dignity or honor to the wearer; and 2) it must provide warmth or protection from the elements (MB 301:51). The material must also be perceived as being worn rather than carried. For example, wearing a box over ones head as protection from the rain is prohibited since it is looked upon as being carried. (O.C 301:21)

Regarding plastic hat covers, HaGoan Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l paskened (IGM OC vol 1 s.108-10) that one is forbidden to wear them on Shabbos. Since most hats are sufficient to protect the wearer from the rain, adding the plastic does not provide any additional warmth or protection. It surely doesn't dignify the wearer, as it is typically quite an eyesore. Therefore it must be classified as merely a protection for the hat and not for the person, which renders it a separate entity that cannot be carried. On the other hand, rubbers (goulashes) are permitted to be worn on Shabbos. They protect one's feet from the cold and wetness that seeps through the shoes and are therefore considered to be a garment. Accordingly, if one wears a hat during a severe storm, when the hat itself cannot protect its wearer, a plastic cover may be used. This is also the opinion of the Chazon Ish (Krina D'Igrisa 1:183) However, see Shmiras Shabbos Kihilchoso (18:10) for a dissenting view.

Plastic Bags

The Shulchan Aruch states that any pliant material that is

worn in a way that covers at least part of the body can be considered a garment (301:14,21). This ruling implies that walking outside while covered with a plastic bag, *i.e.* such as one from the cleaners, would be permitted. Therefore covering one's hat with a shopping bag in a manner where ones body (*i.e.* neck or forehead) is also protected would give the bag the status of a garment. In fact, many of the "shtreimel covers" presently available have an added flap in the back to cover ones neck for this very reason. Additionally, wearing a plastic bag on one's feet to facilitate easier boot fitting would also not be considered carrying. (Rabbi Dovid Zucker shlita)

Gloves

It would seem obvious that gloves are considered a full fledged garment. However, the Shulchan Aruch (301:37) quotes an opinion that one shouldn't wear them outside. The rationale behind this is that one might remove the gloves while outdoors, for example, to greet a friend with a handshake, and might then continue carrying them. The Mishna Berurah (ibid s.k.141) states that nowadays the custom is to be lenient. However, a scrupulous individual should be strict in this matter. If the weather is extremely frigid and there is no chance of gloves removal, then there is no reason for stringency (Rabbi Dovid Zucker shlita).

If the gloves are attached to the coat, one need not be concerned that the gloves will be removed and carried. In this instance, even if one inadvertently carries the gloves, it would be in an irregular manner and is only Rabbinically forbidden. Chazal didn't make safeguards when the worst possible outcome would be an infringement of a Rabbinic decree. (see ibid Biur Halacha)

Indeed, there are some Poskim who permit one to walk around with gloves that are permanently attached to one's coat even when the gloves are not worn. Their reasoning is that the attached gloves are considered an extension of one's sleeve (ibid Biur Halacha). Alternatively, some say that any accessory that is never removed from the garment is considered part of that garment. (Biur Hagoan on OC 301:23). Harav Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg is cited as ruling like this lenient opinion. (Shabbos Home vol. one pg 125)