

I WILL TAKE THAT COAT. THANK YOU!

PARSHAS VAYIGASH

After Yosef revealed his identity to his brothers, he gave them gifts. "To all of them he gave each man, changes of clothing, but to Binyamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothing." (Bereishis 45:22) The Talmud (Megillah 16A-16B) questions why Yosef gave his brother, Binyamin, more than the other brothers. Yosef knew, only too well, the jealousy that had been caused when his father, Yaakov, showed him favoritism by giving him a beautiful, multi-colored coat. That jealousy led to Yosef's suffering and becoming a slave in Egypt. How could Yosef make the same mistake by showing favoritism to Binyamin?, about the war against Amalek, grants us the power to battle the modern-day manifestation of Amalek

The **Talmud** quotes Rabbi Binyamin bar Yefes who answers that Yosef was not showing favoritism. Rather, his gift of the 5 sets of clothing hinted to Binyamin that he would have a descendent who would wear five royal garments, as it is stated: "And Mordechai went forth from the presence of the king in royal apparel of sky blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a wrap of fine linen and purple" (Megillas Esther 8:15).

The **Vilna Gaon** zt"l says that Rabbi Binyamin bar Yefes does not answer the question. The brothers did not know that Yosef's intention in giving Binyamin extra clothes was to hint to a future event. Thus, it could have caused jealousy. How could Yosef have given it? The **Vilna Gaon** zt"l answers that Binyamin's 5 sets of clothing were of inferior quality than the 1 set that the other brothers had received. Binyamin's 5 sets had the same value as the 1 set of the other brothers. The brothers realized that if the value was the same, yet Binyamin received 5 garments, then the reason that it was done must have been as a hint for a future event. Thus, there was no cause for jealousy. A possible proof for this can be found in the words of the Torah. (Vilna Gaon in sefer Shnos Eliyahu, quoted in the Torah Temima) When the Torah says that the brothers

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received 5 sets of clothing it says, "תַּלְפוּת". When the Torah says that Binyamin received clothes it says, "תַּלְפֹּת", leaving out the Hebrew letter "vav". That shows that there was something lacking in what Binyamin had received, indicating that the value was less. A reason is also given

as to why there was no jealousy for the extra 300 pieces of silver that Binyamin had received.

However, there still is a question as to why Yosef gave his brothers clothing in the first place.

The **Midrash** (Bereishis Rabba 30) gives a beautiful answer. Yosef's action showed thoughtfulness and sensitivity. Before his brothers had sold him, they had removed his outer garment. Yosef purposely gave them beautiful garments to show them that he harbored no ill-will towards them for removing his outer garment before selling him.

Why was Yosef's action necessary? He had already reached-out to his brothers. He cried when he revealed himself as their long-lost brother. He told them not to blame each other for selling him, as their actions were guided by Hashem. It was Hashem who wanted Yosef to be sent to Egypt where he eventually rose to power, to be able to sustain his family during

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the years of famine. **Rashi** says that Yosef equated his brothers to Binyamin to show that he harbored no ill-will towards them (45:12). He kissed all his brothers and cried. Seemingly, Yosef had done so much already to show that he harbored no ill-will. Yet Yosef, in his great sensitivity towards others, felt that he had to do more. He had to actively show that he harbored no ill-will with their specific action of removing his outer garment. Thus, he gave them clothes.

Before Yosef had revealed himself to his brothers, they had purchased grain in Egypt and were on their way home. Yosef had his goblet placed in Binyamin's sack to make it appear as if Binyamin was a thief [Yosef had

hidden reasons for his actions]. Yosef's servants caught up to the brothers. Discovering the goblet, they were going to take Binyamin back to Egypt to become a slave to Yosef. Yosef's brothers tore their clothes in mourning and accompanied Binyamin back to Egypt. The **Chizkuni** (45:22:2) says that Yosef felt that he was responsible for their tearing their clothing. The brothers had been deeply embarrassed to be walking around in torn garments, so Yosef replaced them.

Yosef did not tear their clothing and did not tell them to do so. He did not even know that they would. Despite that, he felt a sense of obligation to replace them since his action had led to them tearing their garments.

Yosef's sensitivity is a lesson for us. We, too, should act with sensitivity towards others. We, too, can think twice to determine if we can show extra awareness and kindness to others. We, too, can reach-out to others to fully make amends, regardless of whose "fault it was". We can bring more shalom into the world!

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