

Candle Lighting

5:11

S”Z Kriat Shema

9:34

Sunset

5:29

Motzei
Shabbat

6:07



Parshat HaShavuah

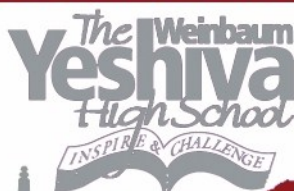
וישב

VAYESHEV

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חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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PARENTING: 101 RABBI JOSH GRAJOWER

This week's פרשה begins "וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִגְדַּר יִצְחָק" —"Yaakov settles in the land of his father's sojourning." רש"י expounds on the words "Yaakov settles" and explains that יעקב sought to dwell in tranquility, and this desire angers Hashem.

As a result, Hashem immediately brings the difficulty of losing יוסף for twenty-two years as a punishment. After all the difficulties and troubles יעקב has gone through in his life, what is so terrible about him now wanting to live in peace and quiet? More so, why is losing יוסף for twenty-two years a fitting punishment for יעקב?

R' Moshe Feinstein, one of the eminent Torah giants of the 20th century, suggests that the specific tranquility that יעקב is searching for is in the area of child-rearing. יעקב feels that he has already done his share to raise righteous children and therefore can now relax and let nature take its course. This very attitude is what angers Hashem. Hashem is teaching us through יעקב that one can never assume that his responsibility to raise his children is finished. Parenting is a lifelong challenge and obligation. Therefore, explains R' Feinstein, Hashem specifically punishes יעקב as a parent by having his favorite son יוסף taken away from him for twenty-two years.

Despite יעקב's momentary exhaustion as a parent, he still manages to raise the great leaders of the Jewish people. Like יעקב, whose hard work merits many righteous children, our tireless devotion to our children will hopefully yield similarly righteous and moral children.





ALWAYS ON YOUR MIND

JARED SAMILOW ('14)

Midway through פרשת וישב the Torah dedicates several verses to describing Yosef's success in Mitzrayim. Among them: "And his master [Potiphar] saw that the Lord was with him, and whatever he did the Lord made prosper in his hand" (Bereishit 39:3).

There are two facets of this pasuk which are of interest. The first takes shape as a rather simple question: How does Potiphar "see" that Hashem is with Yosef? The second is the connection between the fact that Potiphar sees that Hashem is with Yosef and the fact that Yosef enjoys prosperity and success. Both מדרש תנחומא and רש"י take notice of and address our question.

The מדרש תנחומא explains that whenever Potiphar sees Yosef, Yosef is always mumbling and muttering to himself; Potiphar wonders whether his servant is attempting to invoke a plague against his master. However, when he confronts Yosef, Yosef explains that he was davening to Hashem for Potiphar's favor—this is how "his master sees that the Lord is with him."

Yosef's success stems from his dedication to Hashem—as רש"י puts it, "שם שמים שגור בפיו"—Yosef is "fluent" in the name of Hashem. After discussing Yosef's constant devotion to Hashem, the Torah then states "And Yosef found favor in his eyes, and he served him, and he [Potiphar] appointed him over his house, and all he had he gave into his hand"—thus linking Yosef's love of Hashem with his own success.

One can glean a valuable lesson from these verses. Despite the many talents that each person possesses, success is inevitably dependent on Hashem—by following Yosef's example, and striving to integrate Hashem into every aspect of our lives, one can aspire to be as fortunate and prosperous as he was.


NO PAIN NO GAIN

AVI SCHNEIDER ('14)

The focus of this week's parsha is the selling of Yosef and the many hardships that he endures. Yosef is thrown into a pit full of snakes and scorpions by his own brothers. He is then sold into slavery multiple times and is finally sold for the last time as a slave in Mitzrayim. In Mitzrayim he is bought by a family where he rises to prominence, but is then imprisoned upon false accusations.

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Schneider continued

We can only imagine the emotional pain Yosef must have endured. However, the pasuk teaches us that the journey down to Mitzrayim is not as bad as it could have been because the “caravan of Yishmaelites were coming from Gilaad and their camels were carrying spices, balm, and ladanum (a grass root) down to Mitzrayim” (37:25).

Why is it necessary for the pasuk to mention that Yosef is in a caravan filled with spices?

Rashi explains that Yishmaelite caravans usually carry bad-smelling items; however, Hashem makes sure that this specific caravan is carrying good-smelling spices in order to not harm or bother a tzadik like Yosef.

Why is it relevant that Yosef is being transported in a fragranced caravan? He is still being brought into a foreign country to become a slave! The Zichron Meir points out that we learn from here the way that Hashem runs His world.

Any pain and suffering that a person endures is precisely measured. Once the measure has been filled, that line isn't crossed even by a hairsbreadth. Yosef needs to endure the humiliation and anguish of slavery, but does not need to endure the bad smell. Therefore, Hashem summons a special caravan to ensure that he will not suffer any more than he needs.

Nevertheless, the question remains: Why does there need to be any type of suffering? The Maggid of Dubno writes that we find two methods with which Hashem deals with the world. At times Hashem showers us with good in the guise of wealth, honor, and property. At other times, the blessings come filtered through situations which appear to be for our detriment—difficulties, poverty, and pain.

Through the difficulties and mourning that Yaakov endures, Hashem is laying the foundations for the “construction” of the children of Israel. An enormous gift and merit is being granted to Yaakov in that the foundation is being laid through him.

In order to receive the Torah, enter Eretz Yisrael, and have the *Shechinah* rest among us, we first need to endure the pain of enslavement. Yosef's presence in Mitzrayim brings Yaakov and his family there, allowing the enslavement to begin. The exodus from Mitzrayim is a step along the way to the ultimate redemption that will come with Mashiach.



GO GETTA REBECCA LINKER ('13)

In this week's parsha Yosef's brothers throw him into a pit and later sell him to Mitzrayim. Yosef immediately attains a prominent position, but is soon accused of having relations with Potiphar's wife. Yosef is thrown into jail where he meets the butler and the baker, both of whom have dreams that Yosef interprets for them.

Rabbi Avi Weiss explains that the butler's and baker's dreams are very similar because both of them contain food. The butler's dream revolves around grapes that will be crushed into wine and given to Paroah to drink, while the baker's dream concerns birds eating bread. Rabbi Weiss mentions that both of the dreams have to do with giving food away as well as the number three, as the dreams involve three branches and three baskets.

Rabbi Weiss asks the following question: If so many aspects of the dreams are alike, what prompted Yosef to offer such different interpretations?

Yosef tells the butler that he is to return to his job while the baker is to be hanged. Some say that Yosef is very aware of how politics work in Paroah's kingdom and therefore he knows whether the butler and baker were worthy of life. Others state that Yosef received *ruach hakodesh*.

The commentator Benno Yaakov says there is a big difference in the text when it comes to the dreams of the butler and baker. He says that the butler's role is active in that he physically squeezes grapes into Paroah's cup. But the baker's role is more passive, as he only mentions the three baskets and birds eating the food. There are no verbs describing his actions like those of the butler.

Dreams can reveal a great deal about a person and they express our deepest feelings. Yosef comes to the conclusion that the butler is worthy of going back to his job because he is a doer, a person of action, unlike the baker who is just sitting back and doing nothing. The butler merits his life because of his own initiative for taking the first step and having an active role in his service of Paroah.

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