

# PARSHA PRESS

VAYIESHEV

22 Kislev, 5779/November 30, 2018  
Candle Lighting 4:10PM

## THE POWER OF JEALOUSY

Emily Haller, Grade 11

This week's parsha tells the story of Yosef and his brothers. At the start of the Parsha, we learn of Yosef's brothers' plot to kill Yosef. With the persuasion of Reuven, the brother's are convinced otherwise and decide to throw Yosef into a nearby pit. Immediately after the brothers throw Yosef into the pit, the pasuk writes "וַיֵּשְׁבוּ לֵאכֹל-לֶחֶם" ("and they sat down to eat bread.") But this doesn't seem like a normal reaction to the crime the brothers just committed. Why would Yosef's brothers decide to eat a meal immediately after attempting to kill their very own brother?

The Sforno explains that the brothers' main goal in eating this meal was to emphasize that the incident wasn't a crime in their eyes. In their minds, they felt that throwing Yosef into the pit shouldn't impede their normal everyday lives. To prove this, they specifically had a feast as if it was any other normal day.

We see throughout the Torah that it is custom for tzadikim to fast after realizing they have accidentally sinned. This can teach us a valuable lesson about the actions of Yosef's brothers and the power of jealousy. After making this terrible mistake, we see that instead of admitting to their sins, they ate a feast and ignored their crime. The brothers' failure in this situation mainly stemmed from their jealousy of Yosef. Time and again we see how jealousy can cause a person's righteous behavior to change for the worse.

## OUTWARD-FOCUS: LESSONS FROM VAYESHEV & CHANUKA

Mrs. Kayla Bach

While Yosef sat in prison in מצרים, after being sold into slavery by his own brothers, it would have been understandable if he wallowed in his own bitterness and misery. Yosef, however, was so selfless that he was only focused on the anguish of his fellow jail mates (the personal baker and wine steward of Pharaoh) and asked them "היום היום, מדוע פנים רעים" literally, "Why are your faces sad today?"

Rav Yamin Goldsmith, a teacher of mine back in seminary, explained that these words proved to be pivotal not only for Yosef's personal life, but also for the fate of בני ישראל. Had Yosef not expressed concern for the butler and baker, he never would have been released from prison, nor elevated to the position of viceroy. He would not have prepared Egypt for the impending famine, nor would Yaakov and his children have survived without provisions purchased from Yosef's reserves. In short, בני ישראל might have ceased to exist.

The profound impact of Yosef's actions has always left a deep impression on me. It highlights the importance of noticing the people around us and how they are feeling. Aside from even offering assistance or advice, simply inquiring about your fellow's distress signals a strong care and concern for his or her wellbeing. We may never know the outcome of reaching out to others when they appear to be anguished, but the story of Yosef illustrates the enormous potential for extraordinary effects.

This coming week we will welcome in the holiday of Chanukah. On the last day of chag, we read



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Parshas Vayeishev discusses the story of the wine-bearer and the baker and their dreams. Yosef interpreted these dreams to mean that in three days Pharaoh will make a party and he will want the services of the wine-bearer so he will release him from jail. On that same day, Pharaoh will get mad and kill the baker. And behold, Yosef's interpretations came true.

There are two questions we can ask on this story:

1. How did Yosef have the power to interpret these dreams?
2. The Talmud Yerushalmi in Pesachim says that the four mentions of the cups of Pharaoh correspond to the four cups we drink by the Pesach Seder. What does one have to do with another?

To answer both of these questions, it is important to understand the concept of positivity. There is a quote that says "a positive attitude can make dreams come true." To attain a positive life a person must have positive thoughts and a positive perspective. If that person has positive thoughts it will lead him/her to have Emunah. If one has negative thoughts then that person can view his situation as negative even if it really is positive.

Yosef was able to take this concept of perspective and apply it to the dreams of the wine-bearer and the baker. Since the wine-bearers dream, about the growing and squeezing of grapes for wine, reflected a positive message that he was so eager to serve his master Pharaoh, Yosef said that in three days he would be serving him. However, the bakers dream, about how the birds ate all of his bread, was negative. All of his master's favorite foods were in a basket and birds were eating out of it. Yosef said that since the baker gave over his dream his dream negatively, the outcome will be negative.

The Gemara says that Jews can only survive in Galus with a positive attitude. The Jews were only able to be exiled out of Egypt because of their positive attitude and Emunah in Hashem. This is the reason that the Talmud Yerushalmi in Pesachim says that the four cups of pharaoh correspond to the four cups at the Pesach Seder. Both the wine bearer and the Jews in Egypt used their positive attitude to make the situation better. We also have the ability to view our life situation and its challenges in a positive way.

## RABBI RICE'S HALACHA CORNER

The laws of חנוכה are found in the גמרא שבת and the ירושלמי סוכה but neither of these places mention the recitation of the poem of הללו. The earliest source is from מסכת סופרים which says that after making the ברכה of חנוכה של הללו one should recite the paragraph of הללו. The implication is that הללו is before the actual lighting. This הלכה is not cited by the רמב"ם, רמב"ם, or רמב"ם. חכמי אשכנז or רמב"ם, רמב"ם, רמב"ם. The first ראשון to bring this מנהג is the מהר"ם מרוטנברג who says that הללו should be said after the lighting.

The טור סימן תרעו brings the הלכה of reciting הללו after the lighting. This is brought in the ערוך. Rabbi Soloveitchik felt (see נפש הרב עמי רכד) that הללו may be an integral part of fulfilling the מצוה since it from חז"ל and it is part of the מצוה of פרסומי ניסא, publicizing the miracle. Without a spoken statement it is not a proper פרסומי ניסא, like we find with the הגדה at the night of פסח or with the מגילה on פורים. A similar idea is noted by the ערוך השלחן.

The סדר היום says it is meant to be praise the כהנים who brought about the miracle, על ידי כהני הקדושים as we say

חנוכת המזבח זאת, "This is the dedication of the altar" which presents a summary, a "grand total," of all the gifts that נשיאים brought during the חנוכת המזבח, even after the Torah lists all of them individually. Though one could have done the math to find the totals very simply, the Torah repeats the gifts to teach a valuable lesson about the importance of being part of a ציבור. The individual contributions of the נשיאים were indeed very special, yet if they were not given as part of a larger group, there would be no opportunity to turn to somebody else and ask "מדוע פניכם רעים היום."

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