

INSIGHTS from the SEDRA

Insights from the Sedra is a project of the Scholar's Kollel of Great Neck. It aims to provide several questions and answers about the Sedra, culled from various commentaries, including the following: Baal Haturim, Darash Moshe, Vedibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Torah Treasures by Dov Furer, Wellsprings of Torah by Alexander Friedman, and Kol Dodi by Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Great Torah Lights by Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman, Something To Say by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, The Vilna Gaon, Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin and The Call of the Torah.

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Ruvane & Stephanie Vilinsky in memory of Tzvi Ben Yakov & Shimon Ben Pinchus z"l**

וישנאו אותו

"And they hated him..." (37:4)

Ramban calls this book of *Bereshit*, *Sefer HaSimanim*, the book that foretells the future of the Jewish nation. Through its portrayal of the confrontation with *Eisav* and the angel, *Parshat Vayishlach* mirrors the historical conflict between Israel and *Eisav*, a relationship which has not improved over many centuries. *Parshat Vayeishev*, in turn, reflects civil strife, the conflict between Jew and Jew that unfortunately also punctuates our history. (Chumash Mesoret HaRav)

ויכירה ויאמר כתנת בי חיה רעה אכלתהו טרף טרף יוסף

"And he recognized it, and he said, "It is the coat of my son. A savage animal has eaten him. Yosef has been torn apart." (37:33)

The *Chasam Sofer* explains that *Yaakov* was being punished – measure for measure. He had deceived his own father *Yitzchak* by replacing the deer meat *Yitzchak* was expecting with a young goat slaughtered by him (the taste being similar (see *Rashi*, *Bereshit* 27:9). Now, *Yaakov's* sons deceived him, simulating an attack by a savage animal, by means of a young goat slaughtered by them. That is why "his father," meaning *Yitzchak*, "cried for him" (v. 35). Aware that he had a part in the cause of *Yaakov's* pain, he wept for him. (Torah Anthology)

ויבך אתו אביו

"And his father cried for him..." (37:35)

The *Talmud* teaches that *Yaakov* was punished for the twenty-two years that he spent away from his father by being separated from *Yosef* for twenty-two years (*Megillah* 16b-17a). We can therefore see the word *ויבך*, and he cried, as being a contraction of the two words *וי*, woe and *בך*, which has the numerical value of 22. When *Yaakov* became separated from his son, it reminded him of the years that he himself had been away from his father. Realizing then that he was being punished, he said, "Woe for the 22 years that I spent away from my father," for he understood that he would now have to pay the price for those years. (Kol Dodi)

“Hashem was with Yosef and he became a successful man.” (39:2)

The *Chafetz Chaim* explains that in the *tefillah* that we say on the *Shabbat* prior to *Rosh Chodesh* on *Shabbat Mevarchim*, we implore Hashem to grant us a life replete with *yiras shamayim*, fear of Heaven, and *yiras cheit*, fear of sin. Once again, at the end of the *tefillah*, we ask for *ahavas Torah v'yiras shamayim*, love of Torah and fear of Heaven. Why do we ask Hashem to grant us *yiras shamayim* twice?

The *Chafetz Chaim* relates that after our first request for *yiras shamayim*, we ask for a life of *osher v'kavod*, wealth and honor. Once a person has “tasted” a life of wealth and honor, he seldom retains the *yiras shamayim* he once developed. Consequently, it is necessary to request *yiras shamayim* a second time. (Peninim on the Torah)

וישב את שר המשקים אל משקהו...ואת שר האפים תלה כאשר פתר להם יוסף

“The butler was returned to his position, and the baker was hung in accordance with Yosef’s interpretation.” (40:22-23)

According to *Rashi*, the cupbearer was punished because he had served *Pharaoh* a cup of wine containing a dead fly, while the baker was punished because a pebble was found in *Pharaoh’s* bread. The cupbearer personally gave the cup to *Pharaoh*, while the bread was baked by the baker’s kitchen staff. It therefore seems strange that the baker was punished, while the cupbearer was pardoned. The sin of the baker was that he did not train his staff properly; shirking responsibility is worse than committing the sin itself. The concept of *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Lazeh*, that all Israel is responsible for one another, reflects this idea. (Chumash Mesoret HaRav)

ולא זכר שר המשקים את יוסף וישכחהו

“The butler did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him.” (40:23)

QUESTION: If he did not remember him, obviously he forgot him! Why the two expressions of forgetting: “*v’lo zachar*” and “*vayishkacheihu*”?

ANSWER: *Yosef* originally asked the butler to mention him to *Pharaoh*. The ungrateful butler, whose life was saved through *Yosef’s* interpretation, did not return the favor to *Yosef*. In addition, the torah tells us that *Yosef* immediately regretted asking the butler to do him a favor. He forgot about the butler entirely and put all his faith in Hashem. Thus, each one forgot about the other. (Vedebarta Bam)

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