



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

From Darkness: Light

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

"But now do not be sad, and let it not trouble you that you sold me here, for it was to preserve life that G-d sent me before you... you did not send me here, but G-d, and He made me a leader to Pharaoh, a lord over all his household, and a ruler over the entire land of Egypt." (45:5,8)

After revealing his identity to his brothers, Yosef senses fear and trepidation in their demeanor and tries to reassure them that he bears no grudge. "You did not send me here," he tells them. "It was to preserve life that G-d sent me before you."

Rav Yerucham Levovitz notes the difficult journey that Yosef undertook before rising to his current position as viceroy of Egypt. He was sold as a slave, abused by his master's wife, falsely accused of promiscuous behavior, and finally thrown in a dark dungeon to suffer for years. Each of these experiences, however, were carefully orchestrated by G-d in order to position him to be the catalyst for the salvation of his entire family.

Rabbeinu Yonah writes in Shaarei Teshuva (2:5) that "one who trusts G-d should hold on... for the darkness will be the cause for the light." He derives this from the verse in Michah (7:8) which states, "Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy; since I have fallen, I rise again; since I sit in darkness, the Lord is my light." The Midrash explains that the prophet is saying, "Had I not fallen, I would not have risen and had I not sat in darkness, the Lord would not have been my light."

Rav Yitzchak Hutner would elaborate on this and explain that one who believes that "things will turn out well" has not yet achieved the level of *bitachon* (trust) referred to by Rabbeinu Yonah. A more complete level of *bitachon* is to believe that the difficulties and the darkness will actually be catalysts for the ultimate good.

We are living through a difficult and painful period as a nation and we don't understand why our people have to go through such tribulations. However, just as in Yosef's personal experiences, the dark times were ultimately for the preservation of our nation, so too, the darkness and pain that our people experience will ultimately be harbingers of light.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

And he sent off his brothers... he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way" (45:24).

Do not engage in a halachic discussion lest the way cause you to stray. (Rashi)

Rebbi Iloyei bar Berachya said, two Torah scholars who travel and do not discuss Torah are worthy of being burned, as the verse says... (Ta'anis 10b)

How could Yosef tell his brothers to do something improper?

Parsha Riddle

And now do not be distressed... (45:5) Why only now? When in the future will B'nei Yisrael be distressed about the sale of Yosef?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Where is there a hint to Yehoshua and Calev in this parsha?

Answer: When Yosef told his brothers "You are spies" hinting that only from you, but not from me, will there be a participant in the sin of the spies, since my descendant Yehoshua will not bring back bad news about Eretz Yisrael. Yehuda responded, "There will not be" meaning, my descendant "Calev" will not either bring back a bad report about Eretz Yisrael (Ba'al Haturim 42:9-11).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayigash*, after Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, he said to them:

And now, be not distressed, nor reproach yourselves for having sold me here, for it was to be a provider that G-d sent me ahead of you. (45:5)

He similarly reassures them at the end of *parashas Vayechi*:

Fear not, for am I instead of G-d? Although you intended me harm, G-d intended it for good: in order to accomplish – it is as clear as this day – that a vast people be kept alive. (50:19-20)

As we noted seven years ago in our column for this *parashah*, while the *Or ha-Chaim* comments (on the latter verses) that:

This is analogous to one who intends to give his fellow poison to drink but gave him wine, who has no liability. So, too, were [the brothers] exempt and innocent even in the judgment of Heaven.

Other thinkers disagree and maintain that Yosef's brothers did indeed require atonement and forgiveness for their malevolent intentions in selling him, in accordance with the Talmudic principle that "one who intended to eat pork and lamb came up in his hand" requires atonement and forgiveness (*Kiddushin* 81b).

Yosef's reassurance to his brothers in *parashas Vayechi* has been invoked in a *halachic* context as well. R. Chaim Segalowitz and R. Shlomo ha-Cohen of Vilna discuss the case of a liquor merchant who had in his possession a bottle of contraband liquor. Someone broke this bottle, but instead of **causing** the owner a financial loss, the breaking of the bottle turned out to have **saved** him from substantial financial loss since immediately after the breaking of the bottle, government agents suddenly arrived and inspected the establishment for contraband liquor, and had they found the bottle, they would have confiscated it and imposed a heavy fine upon the proprietor. R. Segalowitz argues that while the breaker of the bottle bears moral responsibility (*be-dinei shamayim*) to its owner, he does not have an obligation enforceable in court (*be-dinei adam*), and this is what Yosef meant by saying "for am I instead of G-d": one is answerable only to G-d and not to human beings for ill-intentioned actions that ultimately do not result in harm. R. Shlomo ha-Cohen, however, maintains that in general there is court enforceable liability for such actions, and he refutes R. Segalowitz's proof from Yosef's statement to his brothers (*Shut. Mekor Chaim* 33).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. My future destruction caused crying.
2. The neck is my reference.
3. The origin of my trees gives me my name.
4. I am for Yehuda and Binyomin.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am for the nations.
2. I could be an eye.
3. I was for those descending.
4. I am the faces of the Torah.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Seven (I was for the arms of the Menorah, I was for the cows, I am for Shmittah, I was for the wheat.)

#2 Yosef (I was given a 'hey', I was dreamy, I gathered embarrassment, I gathered food.)

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