

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT VAYESHEV

Scandal or Sacred?

In Parshas Vayeshev we read about Yosef being in Egypt, how he became a slave to Potiphar, and that he was so successful, that Potiphar put him in charge of his entire estate. The Torah tells us about Yosef, that he was "of beautiful build and beautiful appearance." Rashi explains, that this means that he started to curl his hair. In other words, once he became in charge of Potiphar's estate, he started to indulge in delicacies and pay attention to what he looked like. And because of this, Potiphar's wife began to take a particular interest in him. This led to him being thrown into prison. And even in prison, the Torah tells us about Yosef, that "whatever he did, Hashem made successful."

Every story in the Torah is meant to be a lesson to us, especially in our service to Hashem.

What are some of the lessons hidden in this story?

This article will focus on two details of the story. First, that Yosef was "of beautiful build and beautiful appearance." Second, that Potiphar's wife began to take an interest in him. And in both of these, how Hashem made him successful.

Yosef's Beauty

When Yosef was born, his mother, Rachel, named him Yosef, as if to say, "Yosef Hashem li ben acheir," which is translated, "Hashem should add to me another son." Alternatively, there is a Chasidic teaching that translates it, Yosef should make for Me (Hashem) a son out of an acheir (a foreigner). Meaning, that his main purpose was to bring people who didn't know Hashem, into a relationship with Him.

What was the key to his success in this area? That he was, "of beautiful build and beautiful appearance."

That he was beautiful in all areas, both in keeping the positive and negative commandments. It is explained, that "build" refers to the positive commandments, and "appearance" refers to the negative commandments.

His success with other people was because of his own character, that his own self was in order; he was "of beautiful build and beautiful appearance." He was perfect in all areas, positive and negative commandments.

The lesson to us from this point of the story of Yosef is that we are all obligated to have an effect on the people we come in contact with, having a positive influence on them, to come closer to Hashem. In order to do this, we first have to get ourselves in order. First work on correcting yourself and then have an influence on others.

This doesn't mean that you have to be perfect in order to have an influence on others. If that were the case, then very few people would be able to influence others, and it is certain that Hashem wants us to bring our brothers and sisters closer to Him.

However, one should at least be working on bettering himself, to become the way Hashem wants. If not, he will not be able to affect another positively because people are intuitive and they can sense when someone is not genuine. And this can have the opposite effect, G-d forbid, taking him or her further away from Hashem.

In other words, working on yourself is not only a personal endeavor, but it also has its effect on your surroundings and acquaintances. Therefore, working on yourself takes on a whole new significance; by working on yourself, you positively influence the world around you. And if you don't work on yourself, it is not just hurting you, but the world around you as well.

Potiphar's Wife

Our sages tell us that "Potiphar's wife's intentions

**GROWTH ROOTED IN
HUMILITY INSPIRES
AND UPLIFTS
EVERYONE AROUND
YOU.**



were for the sake of Heaven.” She saw through astrology that she was supposed to have children through him, but it was really meant to be with her daughter, Osnas, who Yosef later married.

We see from this story, that it is possible that something that is totally inappropriate -or even sinful to the extreme- is for the sake of Heaven.

The Alter Rebbe says in Tanya, that if a Jew is davening, and a heathen starts to bother him, not only should it not bother him, but it should motivate him and strengthen him to pray more intensely, and from the depths of his heart.

If the whole purpose was to get him to pray more intensely, then why send a person to bother him? Why not send someone who will inspire him?

The truth is that everything that is in the world has its source in G-dliness, so everything’s meant to add holiness, it is just that when it comes down here, in this lowly physical world, it comes through an unholy interface, and it gets transformed into a negative action. He senses because of his G-dly source that he has to add in holiness, so he wants to do something, but it comes out the wrong way. When you have this understanding, you will realize that he is really there to add in holiness.

This is true for anything that stands in the way of our service to Hashem. It might seem on the outside that it is in the way, but in its essence, it is there to help you.

And when you see the truth, that “nothing bad comes down from above,” then you are strengthened and nothing will be in the way of your service to Hashem.

When you ascribe to this truth with all of your heart, you will have the truth on your side, and nothing stands in the way of truth. Then, not only will they not be a hindrance to you, but they will become a help.

Now there are two approaches to this. First of all, when you are faced with one of these situations, you can fight it with all you have, with every fiber in your being. Or you can take this approach, which is more ghashmaak - you can see it for what it is; it is there to help you. And without any fight at all you will be lifted higher and higher in holiness.

My wife Dina is always wondering how I can be so positive having ALS, not being able to do anything, locked inside my body. “Maybe he just doesn’t get it.”

First of all, I too have my moments of frustration, not that often, but I have them. Second, I know with

all my heart that Hashem has a reason for putting me in this position, and it is a positive reason, so I try my best to make a difference. Third, my wife is always right, I don’t get it. That is my nature, and it has served me well. I think the best of people, and many times when someone was trying to stick it to me, my nature is that I let it go right over my head. It turns out that it is disarming, and they usually end up being friends, sometimes good friends.

If we work on ourselves, and we start to see the world as good and there to help us, we will surely be successful in our personal service to Hashem, and we will have a tremendous effect on the people and the world around us. We will uncover the G-dliness that is the essence of everything, and they will help us serve Hashem. And that by definition is the time of Moshiach, when the G-dly essence of every part of existence will be revealed, and therefore, “The world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem like the waters cover the sea.” May it happen soon.

“Dear Torah From My Eyes

I was reading an article on the chabad.org website about this week’s parashah. I read them every week but this time something sparked my interest to see who the author is.

I found out that it was written by Rabbi Yitzi and that he is fighting ALS disease. I decided to learn more and read about Rabbi’s story (I play d1 volleyball at Ball State and not too long ago we hosted an ALS awareness tournament).

Can you please tell Rabbi Yitzi that he is an inspiration and a true tzadik in every meaning of it!”

- Matuesz K, Indiana

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
(937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

Despite facing one of life’s most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe’s Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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