



YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vayeishev

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Sublimating the Physical for the Sake of the Spiritual

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Sanctification by 100 to Cleave to G-d

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Yaakov Contends With His Spiritual Dimension & Legacy

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**Yaakov's Level of Clarity of Spirituality
Determines the Future of the Jewish People**

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Yosef Focused On His Beauty & Genius To Serve Hashem

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Appreciating Avraham: The Founding Patriarch of the Jewish People

Ramchal: The Knowing Heart



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A Calculation Indicative of Rational Thinking

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1. Yosef was the most beloved son of Yaakov because he was most similar to him.
2. He was acknowledged by his father to be most special by giving him a special tunic.
3. Yosef, due to his immaturity, shared with his father what he believed to be negative about his brothers.
4. This caused great strife and animosity between Yosef and his brothers.
5. Yosef dreamed two dreams he believed to be prophetic & therefore shared them with his brothers.
6. This only intensified the hate and strained the relationship to a greater degree.
7. In the second dream he dreamed the sun, moon and 11 stars bowed to him.
8. The sun being his father, the moon his mother, and the 11 stars his brothers.
9. Yaakov scolded Yosef for sharing this because it was obviously nonsense since his mother had passed away.
10. Midrash: The moon was Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, who raised him as a mother.
11. When Rachel passed away, Yaakov put his bed in the tent of Bilhah, rather than the tent of Leah, who was a Matriarch.
12. Yaakov loved Yosef more than all his sons – he saw Yosef as his equivalent with similar abilities.
13. Bilhah, as Rachel's maidservant, was mentored by Rachel, understanding how to raise Yosef.

The Worthiness of Achieving Clarity

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1. Midrash: Because Yaakov wanted to be in a state of tranquility the strife of Yosef was ignited.
2. Why the claim against Yaakov for wanting a respite from his sufferings and have a tranquil moment?
3. Rashi: It is not enough what the righteous have awaiting them for them in the world to come they also want tranquility in this world.
4. Although one's contribution to a mitzvah is only initiative, despite this, one receives full credit for the mitzvah.
5. Mishna: One's reward is determined by one's pain and degree of effort.
6. If not for the struggle aspect of a mitzvah, the mitzvah is not commensurate with the reward: the return is endlessly greater than the effort.
7. Since it appears that reward for a mitzvah is basically a gift, G-d creates a context of difficulty.
8. Yaakov's merit did not protect his children from struggles among themselves.
9. Yosef: The most beautiful person to ever subjugate the physical to the spiritual.
10. Yosef functioned as a spiritual being regardless of the setting and dictates of the material.



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The Exactness Of Justice Nullifies Mercy

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1. Yosef was sold as a slave to Potiphar, a Minister in the court of Pharaoh.
2. Because of his unusual ability, he rose to oversee all the financial affairs of his master.
3. After being acknowledged for his success he focused on being physically attractive.
4. Rashi: G-d said, "Yaakov is grieving over your loss & you're coiffing your hair; I will set the bear upon you."
5. Potiphar's wife took notice & attempted to seduce him.
6. If not for Yosef's insensitivity to his father he would not have been subject to this challenge.
7. It was necessary for him, as the son of Rachel, to subordinate his physicality for the sake of G-d.
8. Yosef tale-bared against his brothers.
9. One of the things he said was that they had illicit relations with women.
10. G-d said: "Because you slandered your brothers your master's wife will attempt to seduce you."
11. Yosef definitely repented for his slander after being sold into slavery.
12. Based on the Attribute of Mercy, Repentance is sufficient to absolve one of sin.
13. However, if the Attribute of Justice should be activated, there is still a level of liability.
14. Not being sensitive to his father's mourning, activated the Attribute of Justice.

An Embodiment Of Clarity To Dispel Distortion

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1. Yosef the son of Rachel is the most beloved child of Yaakov because he is his Ben Zekunim.
2. Ben Zekunim has 3 interpretations: A. born to him in his old age B. wisest son C. his facial features were identical to his father.
3. One would think he was most beloved because he was the eldest son of Rachel.
4. Gemara: The progeny of Esav will only fall into the hands of Rachel.
5. Yosef was the flame that reaches out to consume the house of Esav.
6. Yosef, the wisest of his sons, was taught all the Torah that Yaakov had learned in Yeshiva Shem V'Eiver.
7. Yaakov enacted Arvis, the evening service.
8. Evening is a representation of exile; ominous and lacking in clarity.
9. Yaakov is the Patriarch who represents exile.
10. Despite the overwhelming challenges of exile, Yaakov is able to retain his spiritual persona to its fullest.
11. Yosef was endowed with the capacity of Yaakov to contend with the negative issues of Egypt as Yosef Hatzadik.
12. Yosef as Viceroy of Egypt was therefore able to create a setting for his family to survive the Egyptian exile.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vayeishev

Launching The Destiny Of The Jewish People



Hashem is the True Judge

Torah: “Yaakov settled (*vayeishev*) in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Canaan.”

Rashi: One interpretation of the word *vayeishev*, “settle,” is that Yaakov wanted to live in peace and tranquility. Yaakov, at this point in his life, had already experienced many difficulties and hardships such as working for *Lavan* for 20 years under the most trying conditions. Yaakov also had to confront his evil brother *Esav*, his daughter *Dinah* was raped, and his sons, *Shimon* and *Levi*, destroyed a community. In addition, his young wife *Rachel* passed away during childbirth.

After experiencing these multiple hardships, Yaakov felt that he wanted to live in tranquility and not be distracted. Yaakov wished to utilize the peace and tranquility to focus completely on his personal spiritual growth without any disturbances or interruption. He believed that he had experienced enough suffering and that he had been sufficiently purged through his

difficult experiences. Since Yaakov believed that he had suffered enough and wished to retire into this state of tranquility, he was confronted with yet another major tragedy – the conflict between Yosef and his brothers! Ultimately, Yaakov was led to believe that a beast had devoured Yosef, his most beloved child, and he had to suffer for twenty-two years with this belief.

Rashi: “Yaakov sought to dwell in tranquility. But then the ordeal of Yosef was sprung upon him. The righteous seek to dwell in tranquility. But the *Holy One*, Blessed be He, said ‘The righteous do not consider that which is prepared for them in the World to Come to be enough for them, but they seek to dwell in tranquility in this world as well.’”

Hashem says that tranquility and peace exist in the World to Come; this world is defined by having distractions and difficulties – that is its nature. Since Yaakov wanted to have peace in this world, the tragedy of Yosef was sprung on him. What was the source of

conflict between Yosef and his brothers? It was due to a lack of clarity. His brothers truly believed that Yosef attempted to undermine their relationship with Yaakov. Because of this mistaken belief, they perceived Yosef as a *rodeif* (a deadly pursuer). They thought that if Yosef were to discredit them in the eyes of their father, he could curse them— which was the equivalent of death.

Yosef's brothers thought he was set on taking the leadership position to become the father of the Jewish people and disposing of them. They therefore felt justified in defending themselves even by killing Yosef. This conflict arose because of a misunderstanding. Yosef could have averted this entire problem if he had only communicated with his brothers more effectively and carefully. However, Yosef lacked the clarity to behave in a more mature and effective manner with his brothers. Why didn't Yaakov's merit protect Yosef and his brothers from this lack of clarity and the subsequent chain of tragic events – namely *Klal Yisroel* going down to Egypt remaining for 210 years?

The answer is that Yaakov was not worthy of the merit to protect his children from this conflict. Yaakov wished to avoid the difficulties of the physical world and wished to retreat into a spiritual existence. Therefore, *Hashem* decreed that he would not merit having the power to protect Yosef and his brothers from this conflict. Why was it so wrong for Yaakov to wish to retreat into tranquility? Why should Yaakov and his children suffer because he desired to have serenity?

Chazal: Yosef was separated from his father for twenty-two years because Yaakov fled his parents' home for that same length of time and did not fulfill his obligation to honor them. From this we see measure for measure: Yosef was separated from Yaakov for the same amount of time that he was separated from his own parents. This was to be the atonement for Yaakov's failure to fulfill his obligation of honoring his parents for the twenty-two years after he fled from *Esav*. What does this have to do with Yaakov's desire to settle in peace?

Hashem has many ways to settle the divine accounts. If Yaakov truly understood that he was spiritually deficient because he had denied his parents the proper honor for twenty-two years he would never have believed that he deserved a life of peace and tranquility. Yaakov would have spent his entire life trying to understand and atone for his sin. Despite all the hardships Yaakov

faced, he would not have believed that he had been sufficiently purged of this spiritual deficiency.

However, Yaakov did not understand the depth of his sin. He believed he had the right to have a tranquil life. He believed that he had suffered enough. *Hashem* disagreed. Because he wished to have a tranquil life rather than atone for his own sin of not honoring his parents, Yaakov neither had the merit to protect Yosef from the conflict with his brothers nor to provide the necessary clarity to Yosef and his brothers. Therefore, Yosef needed to be taken from him for twenty-two years as atonement. What can we learn from this?

People very often believe that they are being "short changed" or that life is not treating them fairly. Even if this were the case, we need to understand that nothing happens without a reason. Life is a series of causes and effects. When G-d forbid a tragedy befalls us we say *Baruch Dayan Ha'Emes* (Blessed is the true Judge). We do not say this about minor inconveniences.

Gemara: If one's ship were to sink at sea with all of his possessions he would say *Baruch Dayan Ha'Emes*. The reason why this tragedy came upon the person was because G-d is the true Judge and apparently, the tragedy was needed to atone for his sins. We do not understand G-d's measuring rod or justice – we just acknowledge that He is the True Judge.

Yaakov believed that he had experienced enough tragedies and that he had sufficiently atoned for his sins. *Hashem* disagreed and exposed him to even more tragedies. Therefore, regardless of what we face in our lives we need to understand that we are confronted with these situations as a rehabilitation process. We need to appreciate the fact that *Hashem* is the True Judge and that we should utilize situations in our lives as mechanisms for spiritual growth and atonement.

Surviving the Difficulties of Exile

Torah: "Yisroel (Yaakov) loved Yosef more than all of his sons since he was a child of his old age, and he made him a fine woolen tunic."

Rashi: The words "child of his old age (*Ben Zikoonim*)" mean that Yosef was born at a time of Yaakov's old age.

Targum Onkelos: *Ben Zikoonim* means that Yosef was the wisest of all of Yaakov's sons. Therefore, all that

Yaakov learned from *Shem* and *Aver* he gave over to him. Alternatively, *Yosef* is called *Ben Zikoonim* because he resembled his father *Yaakov*.

Rashi: We know that *Yaakov* taught all of his sons *Torah*. However, the *Torah* that *Yaakov* learned from *Shem* and *Aver* was only communicated to *Yosef* and not to his other sons. If *Yaakov* taught all of his sons *Torah* – why didn't he teach them the *Torah* of *Shem* and *Aver*?

Torah: At age sixty-three, *Yaakov* fled his home to escape *Esav*. However before he departed for the home of *Lavan*, he spent fourteen years studying *Torah* with *Shem* and *Aver*. *Yaakov* is identified by the *Torah* as a man who studied *Torah* his entire life ("The man of the tent – the tent of *Torah*"). So why at age sixty-three does *Yaakov* need to go to *Shem* and *Aver* and learn *Torah* for an additional fourteen years before working for *Lavan*? What was the difference in the *Torah* *Yaakov* had learned from *Shem* and *Aver* from all the *Torah* that he had previously learned?

Until the moment that *Yaakov* fled from his home to escape *Esav*, he had never believed that he would need to leave *Eretz Yisroel*. He believed that he would live out his entire life in a holy environment. When *Yaakov* realized he needed to flee to *Lavan* and hide he knew that he would be in a spiritually dangerous environment. *Yaakov* understood that *Lavan* and his community were completely debased.

Midrash: *Yaakov* prayed to *Hashem* that he not be affected by the negative influences of Murder, Forbidden Relations, Idolatry, and *Lashon Hara*. How did *Yaakov* contend with all of these negative forces when he was with *Lavan*?

Gemara: "I (*Hashem*) created the *Yetzer Hara* and the *Torah* as its antidote." When *Yaakov* returned from his twenty-year stay with *Lavan*, the *Torah* tells us that he was completely spiritually unscathed. How did he accomplish this? In order to deal with the evil forces that he would encounter with *Lavan*, it was necessary for *Yaakov* to understand the nature of these forces. He needed to study *Torah* specifically geared to defusing these evil forces. *Shem* and *Aver* were the children of *Noach*. They witnessed the depravity of the world before the Great Flood.

The *Torah* that *Yaakov* needed to study with *Shem* and *Aver* was based on their personal experience with combating evil forces that existed in the pre-flood

society. The *Torah* that *Yaakov* learned from *Yitzchak* did not deal with these issues as we see that *Yitzchak* is referred to as the "unblemished offering". *Yitzchak* was not exposed to the evil influences to which *Shem* and *Aver* were exposed. Therefore, *Yitzchak* could not have provided *Yaakov* with the necessary *Torah* to combat the evil forces that he would face with *Lavan*. *Shem* and *Aver* could teach him the needed *Torah* and thus provide *Yaakov* with the tools to defeat the *Yetzer Hara*. This is why *Yaakov* spent fourteen years learning with *Shem* and *Aver*. Why didn't *Yaakov* teach the *Torah* he learned with *Shem* and *Aver* to all of his sons?

Torah: *Yosef* was like his father in many ways: in his appearance, in his experiences (*Yaakov* was also hated by his brother and had to confront him) and in his mission. Just as *Yaakov* was the Patriarch who represents survival in exile, so was *Yosef*. It was because *Yosef* created an insulated environment in Egypt that the Jewish people were able to survive the exile, spiritually. *Yaakov* saw all of his own characteristics reflected in *Yosef*. He knew that *Yosef*, unlike any of his other sons, had the ability to lead the Jewish people through the coming exiles.

Yaakov understood that *Yosef* was uniquely qualified to remain unaffected despite the exile. *Yaakov* taught *Yosef* the *Torah* he learned with *Shem* and *Aver* because it was the most relevant to him. However, the other sons did not have this. Thus, the *Torah* of *Shem* and *Aver* was not relevant to them and *Yaakov* only taught *Yosef* the *Torah* of *Shem* and *Aver* because he knew that *Yosef* would be able to ensure the survival of the Jewish people in exile.

Our Spiritual Inheritance

Torah: "*Yaakov* settled in the land of his father's sojourning, in the land of Canaan." Later the *Torah* tells us, "*Yisroel* loved *Yosef* more than all of his sons since he was a child of his old age, and he made him a fine woolen tunic". Why does the *Torah* refer to *Yaakov* as "*Yaakov*" at the beginning of the *parsha* and then change to "*Yisroel*" when it mentions *Yaakov*'s love for *Yosef*? Evidently, there must be a connection between the name "*Yisroel*" and the love for *Yosef*. *Yaakov*'s love for *Yosef* is in some way rooted in "*Yisroel*." What is the difference between the name *Yaakov* and the name *Yisroel*?

Torah: *Yaakov* became *Yisroel* after he wrestled with and defeated the angel of *Esav*: “No longer will it be said that your name is *Yaakov*, but *Yisroel*, for you strive with the Divine and with men and you have overcome”.

Sforno: Since *Yaakov* was able to overcome the insurmountable situation, he would always be at the level of *Yisroel* and there would be no situation in the future that he would not be able to overcome. Since *Yaakov* was able to pass the impossible test of wrestling with the angel (overcoming *Esav* and *Lavan*, for example), he established his level of spiritual dimension. *Yaakov*, from this point forth, would be *Yisroel* – the eternal spiritual force that can overcome and supersede anything.

The name *Yaakov* represents the physical being; the name *Yisroel* is rooted in spirituality. The Jewish people are referred to as the *B’nai Yisroel* (sons of *Yisroel*) not *B’nai Yaakov* (sons of *Yaakov*). We are an eternal people because of our spiritual dimension, which we have inherited from our forefather *Yisroel*. From this, we are able to understand why “*Yisroel* loved *Yosef* more than all of his sons.”

Chazal: *Yaakov* taught *Yosef* all of the *Torah* he had learned with *Shem* and *Aver* and that *Yosef* had a greater spiritual capacity than all of his brothers had. *Yaakov* loved *Yosef* more than any of his other sons because it was clear to him that *Yosef* was his spiritual successor, not because of his ability within the physical realm such as becoming the administrator of Egypt. It was because of *Yosef*’s spiritual dimension that his father loved him.

Gemara in *Yevamos*: Since Jews are descendants of the Holy Patriarchs, they are endowed with certain innate spiritual characteristics. Every Jew who is a descendant of *Avraham* has the innate characteristics of compassion, shame and the need to do acts of kindness. This is part of a Jew’s spiritual genealogy. Since the Jewish people are the *B’nai Yisroel* and have inherited his spiritual characteristics, then we can understand that the Jews have the capability to deal with untenable situations. There will never be a circumstance that cannot be overcome by the Jewish people because we possess the quality of *Yisroel*. On a spiritual basis, there is no temptation or situation that we cannot overcome as *B’nai Yisroel*.

Yaivitz zt”l: The existence of *Klal Yisroel* is a modern miracle even though we do not live in an era of miracles.

Despite all of the exiles, pogroms, and devastations, the Jewish people still exist while past civilizations that oppressed us have disappeared. This is because we are *B’nai Yisroel* and not *B’nai Yaakov*. Therefore, if we understand and appreciate who we are, we will know that there is no task that is too difficult.

Transforming the Physical into Spiritual

The *Torah* tells us about the beauty of *Yosef*. For example, after *Yosef* rose from being a slave in the house of *Potiphar* to becoming the administrator of the household, the *Torah* says, “Now *Yosef* was handsome of form and handsome of appearance.”

Rashi: This means that when *Yosef* saw himself in a position of authority he began to address his physical appearance by grooming his hair.

Torah: “(*Yosef*)was a youth with the sons of *Bilhah* and the sons of *Zilpah*...”

Rashi citing *Chazal*: The word “youth” refers to *Yosef*’s involvement with activities such as grooming his hair and perfecting the appearance of his eyes. We see that *Yosef* is associated with beauty.

Gemara in *Yuma*: The existence of a *Yosef* negates any possible excuses on the Day of Judgment that beautiful people might have regarding their level of observance of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*. When a beautiful person stands before *Hashem* after 120 years, he cannot claim that his beauty made it difficult for him to control his actions. *Hashem* will use *Yosef* as an example of someone who was very beautiful and yet conducted himself as a *tzaddik* and dedicated his life to the service of G-d.

Torah: *Yosef*’s mother, *Rachel* was also extremely beautiful. In fact, in order to protect *Rachel* from *Esav*, *Yosef* stood in front of her in order to obscure *Esav*’s view of her because she was very beautiful. Why is it so important that the *Torah* reveal to us that *Yosef* and *Rachel* were so beautiful? Why did the *Torah* reveal to us that *Yosef* was involved with enhancing his beauty? Was his grooming a positive or negative action? What can we learn from this?

We find that *Yosef* was incredibly successful at any activity in which he was involved. When *Yosef* was sold into slavery, he was quickly promoted to head of the ruler’s household. When he was imprisoned, he

rose to become the quasi-warden. When *Yosef* was released from this service, he became the Viceroy of Egypt who was, to some degree, even more powerful than Pharaoh. *Yosef* was an individual who always rose to the top of any pursuit. The *Torah* refers to him as the sustainer of *Klal Yisroel* because he settled them and provided for them in Egypt. This level of accomplishment demonstrated by *Yosef* must be in some way connected with his beauty. What do *Yosef* and *Rachel* epitomize?

Yosef and *Rachel* both epitomized the ultimate in physical beauty and perfection and dedicated their lives to the services of *Hashem*. The *Torah* reveals the level of beauty and physical perfection of *Yosef* and *Rachel* in order to demonstrate how physical attributes can be completely consecrated to serve *Hashem* and thus achieve spiritual perfection. We see from this that physical attributes, which could have been involved with negative behavior, were totally transformed into positive spiritual behavior.

We can now understand *Yosef's* involvement with his beauty. Since *Yosef* was a person who dedicated his physical beauty and all of his abilities to the service of *Hashem*, we can say that his actions, which were meant to improve his appearance, were for the purpose of demonstrating his physical beauty in a consecrated manner. The world could observe that despite the physical perfection and beauty of *Yosef* – he conducted himself as a *tzaddik*.

Despite *Rachel's* beauty, she despised *Esav* who personified physicality. Both *Rachel* and *Yosef* were able to subjugate their physicality in order to serve the spiritual. This is the connection between *Yosef's* beauty and his success. Since *Yosef* rose above physicality by dedicating his beauty and all of his abilities to the service of *Hashem*, he was not bound by the limitations of the physical world. *Yosef* was a subject, yet he was the equivalent of the king. He was a prisoner, yet he was the equivalent of the warden of the prison. The essence of *Yosef* was spirituality and it revealed itself in every situation. Thus, he was able to elevate himself and transcend the physical.

Gemara: There is a story of *Pinchas Ben Yoer* who purchased wheat before *Pesach* and was attempting to transport it home on his donkey to be processed into matzos. He came to a river, which was impossible to cross without the wheat becoming wet and thus

invalidating it for *Pesach*. *Pinchas Ben Yoer* told the river to split and the river split immediately. In order to understand this story we need to appreciate who *Pinchas Ben Yoer* was. He was the father-in-law of *Reb Shimon Bar Yochi*. He was a person whose entire being was dedicated to the services of *Hashem*.

If a person takes physicality and consecrates it to *Hashem*, G-d makes the world subordinate to that person. All the forces of existence are subject to that person's will since they have transcended physicality by devoting themselves completely to the service of *Hashem*. This is why *Pinchas Ben Yoer* was able to split the river. This is also why *Yosef* was able to achieve an ultimate level of accomplishment in all of his pursuits. *Yosef* perfected his physicality in order for others to appreciate his level of spirituality.

Yesod U'Shores Ha'Avoda: If a person performs a *mitzvah* and publicizes it, he diminishes the value of the *mitzvah*. However if the intent of the publicity is to motivate others to perform the *mitzvah* then not only is the *mitzvah* undiminished, it is enhanced. If a *mitzvah* is performed completely in secret then others can not be influenced. This is why *Yosef* emphasized his beauty. His intent was for people to see that despite his exceptional beauty he was a *tzaddik* and a completely spiritual being. *Yosef* demonstrated that physicality could be transformed into spirituality by dedicating his beauty to the service of *Hashem*. We can also learn from this that all of our physical activities have the potential to be transformed into spiritual activities if we have the proper intent.

Understanding Hashem's Messages to Us

Torah: *Yosef's* brothers threw him into a pit in the ground. "Then they took him, and cast him into the pit; and the pit was empty; no water was in it."

Rashi citing the *Gemara* in *Shabbos*: By the *Torah* telling us that the pit had no water, in addition to it being empty, we may infer that while there may have been no water in the pit, there were snakes and scorpions. Why is it important for us to know that there were snakes and scorpions in the pit? Who knew that it was a snake pit?

Rav Meir Simcha zt"l: *Yosef's* brothers were unaware that it was a snake pit because if they knew that there

were snakes and scorpions in the pit and Yosef was taken out alive, it would then be obvious to them that he was a *tzaddik*. They would have realized immediately that their evaluation of Yosef was incorrect because if he were not a *tzaddik*, he would not have survived the snake pit. Since Yosef did survive, his brothers did not realize that he was a *tzaddik*, this must mean that they were unaware of the snakes and scorpions in the pit. If there were snakes and scorpions in the pit how could Yosef's brothers not see them?

Rav Meir Simcha zt"l citing the *Midrash*: The snakes were hidden in the sides of the walls and not on the bottom of the pit. The only person who was able to see them was Yosef. Why should Yosef be the only person to see the snakes and scorpions? Another question stems from the *Torah* describing the caravan of merchants who purchased Yosef and took him to Egypt after he was taken from the pit. "A caravan of Ishmaelites from Gilead, and their camels were bearing spices, and balsam, and birthwort..."

Rashi: "Why did the verse publicize what their burden contained? To make known the reward of the righteous." It is not the way of Arabs to carry anything but petroleum and resin whose odor is foul. But for Yosef it happened that spices were the cargo so that he should not be harmed by the foul odor." The fact that Yosef was exposed to spices rather than foul smelling odors of petroleum was a demonstration of the reward of the *tzaddikim*. Do pleasant-smelling spices constitute a reward? How do we understand this? Is it the case that if we smell a sweet odor we should consider it a reward in this world?

Yosef had prophetic dreams that informed him that he would become a king and his brothers would bow to him. He also dreamed that he would be the sustainer of the Jewish people as well as the person to control the economy of the entire world. However, when Yosef's brothers threw him into the pit he began to question the validity of his dreams. Yosef despaired. He believed that he not only would not become a king and sustainer, but his brothers were going to kill him!

When Yosef began to despair in the pit, he noticed the snakes and scorpions that were inside the pit with him. He also noticed that they did not attack him.

At that moment, Yosef knew that *Hashem* was performing a miracle for him. He realized that he did not need to despair and that *Hashem* wanted him to know that his dreams were valid. We see from this that the entire episode of the snakes and scorpions had nothing to do with anyone but Yosef. The snakes and scorpions were in the pit in order to reassure Yosef that he would in fact fulfill his prophetic dreams and that he should not despair.

After Yosef was taken out of the pit by the Arab merchants and put onto the caravan, he noticed that there were no foul smelling odors but rather sweet smelling spices. Yosef knew that usually such a caravan transported foul smelling merchandise. From this we can understand the reward of the righteous. Yosef's reward was not that he did not smell a foul odor, but rather, *Hashem* was sending him a message through having him sense a sweet smell. *Hashem* was communicating with Yosef that the caravan was transporting him to become a king and that his dreams were in fact true. Therefore, despite the bleakness of the moment, *Hashem* sent miracles and messages to Yosef not to despair.

Often we are given indicators from *Hashem* that require our understanding. Indicators such as abilities, skills, successes, or G-d forbid tragedies. If we can process and understand the message that *Hashem* is sending us in our daily lives we would know not to ever despair. We say, *Hashem* does not abandon *Klal Yisroel*. We need to read between the lines and know that we should never despair but rather be invigorated by all of the miracles that *Hashem* performs for us.



Yad Avraham Institute