

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



CHANUKAH EDITION
PARSHAT VAYESHEV

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

YOSEF'S SECRET - NAVIGATING HARDSHIP AND OVERCOMING!

Did you ever notice that life doesn't go exactly the way you want it to go?

At times your bank account is not exactly as full as it should be. Perhaps your best friends are thriving at a time when you are financially unstable? Perhaps the kids aren't acting as you'd like them to? There could be tension in the family, or maybe someone's wrongfully pursuing legal action against you. Life brims with tests and hardships. What's the hidden strength that helps us conquer and maintain unwavering faith amidst challenges? And how should we perceive the "Jones effect"?

This week we learn the secret to harnessing that power and faith.

The bulk of Parshat Vayeshev, and the remainder of the book of Bereishit, is devoted to the story of Yosef in Egypt. Yosef begins his life at ease as his father's Ben Zekunim. He is given a special garment and learns regularly with his father. Yet at the age of 17 the brothers jealousy and hatred comes to a boiling point. It is here that Yosef is tested with the harshest of tests. He is thrown into a pit and eventually sold by his own brothers. He is sold several times from one merchant to another before arriving in Egypt. Upon arrival, he was purchased as a slave by Potiphar, a courtier of Pharaoh.

His emotions must have been high, so many thoughts of distrust must have ushered by his mind. Yet he kept his cool and within a relatively short time, Yosef rose to become his master's most trusted servant and he was appointed over the entire household.

However, at this point Yosef began to face an extraordinarily difficult challenge. His master's wife developed a powerful desire for him. The Torah tells us that she spoke to him "day after day," seeking to seduce him. The Sages tell us that she used every weapon in her arsenal: seduction, bribery, and threats. Yet, despite all her efforts, Yosef never succumbed. Finally, one day, Potiphar's wife managed to get Yosef alone,

and she literally grabbed him by his garments. Yosef fled, leaving his coat in her hand. Potiphar's wife then accused him of doing exactly what she had been trying to do, and Yosef ended up being put in prison.

Yosef's resistance to sin is seen as one of the great examples of righteousness in history. This story is the main reason that Yosef is traditionally known as "Yosef HaTzaddik" - "Yosef the Righteous". The Sages (Sotah 36b) describe Yosef's actions as "sanctifying the Name of Heaven in private" and they tell us (Yoma 35b) that Yosef "obligates the wicked," meaning that his successful struggle against sin demonstrates that a person can never legitimately claim that his temptations were too overwhelming. If Yosef, a teenage boy cut off from his family and enslaved in a foreign country, could resist such an overwhelming temptation, then who can honestly claim that they have faced a more difficult challenge?

After enduring this gruelling experience, he found himself confined in prison for 12 years, wrongly accused. Consider the turmoil in his mind. How did he summon the resilience to navigate it all while staying connected to Hashem?

Rabbi Eliyahu Diskin explains with a fabulous insight.

The Torah tells us that (39:1) Veyosef Hurad Mitsrayma - Yosef was brought down to Egypt and purchased by Potiphar. Yet the next Pasuk seems to state the same thing - Vayhi Bvevet Adonav Hamitsri - and Yosef was in the house of his Egyptian master.

We find a similar superfluous statement elsewhere.

Once convicted of his "crime" - Vayitenuhu El Bet Hasohar - and Potiphar placed Yosef in prison. Yet the end of the same Pasuk states: Vayehi Sham Bevet Hasohar - and Yosef was there in the prison. Why the seemingly unnecessary redundancy?

Rabbi Diskin points out that when life throws challenges at us, we often glance around and yearn for someone else's situation. We think they've got it all figured out. If only we had different parents, better kids, more intelligence, wealth, or less stress... then maybe we'd be better at being Jewish.



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By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



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THE ORIGINAL COMMUNAL PARASHA SHEET, SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 12 YEARS!

That's not the right way to go about it! Instead, we should aim to believe that Hashem is always in control. If we find ourselves in a certain situation, it's because that's where Hashem wants us to be, to reach our fullest potential. He wants us to serve Him based on the family, wealth, and intelligence He's blessed us with. Yosef comprehended this deeply. The Torah emphasizes that he was sold to Egypt, yet he didn't lament, wishing he had stayed in Israel for better service to Hashem. Instead, he recognized it as Hashem's will and propelled himself forward, building his life and serving Hashem in those circumstances - as seen in "Vayehi Bevet Adonav Hamitsri." Even when sentenced to life in jail, Yosef didn't lose hope. He understood that this was the situation Hashem intended for him - "Vayehi Sham." He embraced it, making the most out of the circumstance, and continued to serve Hashem under these

new conditions. Hashem desires for us to persist in learning and studying, even amidst the challenges of marriage, difficult neighbours, or financial constraints that might not align with our dreams. Yosef's success holds an additional hint in the name given to him by his mother, Rachel. The Torah recounts Rachel's words after giving birth: "G-d has gathered in [Assaf] my disgrace." So she named him Yosef, saying, "May Hashem add on for me another son" (30:23-24). The name Yosef intertwines two ideas: Rachel's desire for another son and the removal of her disgrace following Yosef's birth. Among Yaakov's wives, she felt isolated and humiliated for not having a son, bearing the weight of shame during others' celebrations. With Yosef's birth, Hashem alleviated her disgrace. The Ibn Ezra provides a fascinating

perspective, suggesting that Rachel named her son Yosef to signify that Hashem collected all the insults she endured. She realized these insults paved the way for an extraordinary son. The strength and faith she exhibited in enduring those insults became the foundation for Yosef's ability to confront and conquer trials. Yosef's greatness stemmed from his mother's prayers and unwavering faith amidst countless insults. Hashem blessed him with the resilience to overcome challenges where others might have faltered. He comprehended the importance of living in the present, not dwelling on "if only," and honouring the legacy of his predecessors. This awareness was his strength. We stand on the foundation laid by remarkable individuals. May Hashem bless us to weave their teachings of faith into the fabric of our own lives, helping us overcome all challenges!



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT VAYESHEV

When Joseph was taken down to Egypt, Potiphar bought him off the Ishmaelites who had brought him there. Potiphar's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and tried to seduce him. One such day, he came into the house to do his work. None of the members of the household were around. She caught hold of him by his garment. But he left his garment in her hand and got away and fled outside. Rav U'shmuel differs as to what "To do his work" means. One holds that it means his actual housework; the other that it means to

associate with her, but a vision of his father's face appeared to him, and he resisted the temptation and did not sin (Sotah 36b). What kept Joseph from sinning? What gave him the power to resist his temptation? To refuse? What brought the vision of his father's face to appear in that crucial moment? The Torah says וַיִּמָּאן, 'and he refused'. The word וַיִּמָּאן comes with a very special טעם, a rare one that only appears 4 times in the Torah called שלשלת (Shalshet), a chain. The Torah here using this rare טעם to tell us that it was that chain, that strong connection and love he had with his father, that kept Joseph strong, and gave him the

power to overcome his challenges. Yaakov himself refused earlier in our Parasha. וַיִּמָּאן לְהִתְנַחֵם, He refused to be comforted, he refused to accept the disappearing of Joseph as a fact, he refused to disconnect himself from his dear son, and that is what gave Joseph the strength to refuse. As we approach the days of Chanukah the Torah reminds us that we too can bring the light into the darkness, we too can help each other overcome the difficulties by being strongly connected to those around us, by truly listening to them, believing in them, loving them and giving them the strength, they need to bring the light into their lives.



RABBI DANNY FISHER
Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

PARSHAT VAYESHEV

In this week's sedra the passuk tells us, "וישב ראובן אל הבור", that Reuven returned to the pit. But the question is why was he returning to the pit? Where had he gone, that he now needed to return? Chazal explain that ראובן was returning from doing teshuvah after having switched his mother's bed. It goes on to say that since ראובן was the first person who had done a cheit and then teshuvah, as a reward

he was promised that his descendent, Hosheiah ben Beri instigated the concept of Klal Yisroel doing teshuvah for their aveirot. In the Haftorah of Shabbos Shuva we say the famous words "שובה ישראל עד ה'".... "Return Yisroel to Hashem your G-d because you have stumbled with your aveiros" Hosheiah perek 14. These famous words were said by Hosheiah Hanovi, in his attempts to bring Yisroel back from their bad ways. The Yalkut Meamlloeiz asks a profound question, prior to ראובן there were many

people who had done aveirot and consequently teshuva for those aveirot. Odom Horishon and Kayin both did teshuvah, why is it that ראובן is singled out for having been the first for doing teshuvah? He answers that ראובן was the first to do teshuvah for an aveirah which he thought was a mitzvah. Says Hosheiah "שובה ישראל", "return Yisroel" even when you think that which you have done is a mitzvah, but in reality, it is in aveirah, you must still do teshuvah for that. This is a huge challenge, to change one's mind-set toward actions, which they

previously thought were aveirot, and do teshuvah for those very things. This takes effort and perseverance.

This is the concept which ראובן was mechadesh and was therefore zocheh to a descendent who also personified this idea and who's nevuah is used as a stereotype for teshuvah.

We say in Maariv "והסר שטן מלפנינו ומאחרינו" "remove the Satan from in-front of us and from behind us". What is the Satan in front of and behind us?

The Satan in front of us is the obvious Satan, which makes us slip up repeatedly. In comparison the Satan behind us, is the Satan, which pretends to us that, that which

we are doing is moral and correct. That Satan is a lot harder to combat and to fight, and we need tremendous amounts of siyatah dishmayah for that.

May we all be zocheh to discern that which is correct and just in Hashem's eyes.

Good Shabbos



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

HANUKAH- LIGHTING ONE HANUKAH CANDLE FROM ANOTHER

During the first half-hour after the Hanukah candles are lit, they may not be used for other purposes than publicizing the Hanukah miracle. Clearly, then, one may not light a cigarette, for example, from the Hanukah candles. Strictly speaking, it is permissible to make personal use of the candles after they have burned for a half-hour. Preferably, however, one should avoid making personal use of the candles at any point, out of respect for the Mitzvah.

The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 672) rules that one may light one of the Hanukah candles directly from another Hanukah candle. This means that after one lit the first candle, for example, he may extend the wick of that candle to the adjacent candle to light it. Although it is forbidden to use the Hanukah candles, as they are designated exclusively for the

Mitzvah, one may use a candle to light another candle, since this is for the purpose of the Mitzvah. And although only the first candle is needed to fulfil the strict obligation, and the others are lit only for the sake of "Hiddur" (glorifying the Mitzvah), nevertheless, all the candles relate to the Mitzvah, and thus lighting any of the candles is considered a Mitzvah. It is therefore permissible to light any of the Hanukah candles from any of the other Hanukah candles.

However, this applies only to the candles lit for the Mitzvah. If the Shamash is extinguished, one may not relight it from one of the Hanukah candles, as he would then be using a candle of Mitzvah for a non-Mitzvah purpose, since the Shamash is not part of the Mitzvah.

Furthermore, this Halacha applies only to lighting a candle for the first time. If, however, a Hanukah candle was lit and subsequently extinguished, one may not relight it from one of the other Hanukah candles. This is the ruling of the Magen Abraham (Rabbi Abraham Gombiner, Poland, 1637-1683), who explains that

Halacha follows the view of "Kabeta En Zakuk Lah" – meaning, if a Hanukah candle is extinguished, then one does not have to rekindle it. As long as the candle was lit with enough oil and under conditions that ordinarily allow it to burn for at least a half-hour, one does not have to rekindle it if it happens to be extinguished. Accordingly, the Magen Abraham notes, if a candle is extinguished, relighting it does not fulfil a Mitzvah, and therefore another Hanukah candle may not be used for this purpose. One would have to use the Shamash to relight the candle, or strike a match to make a new flame with which to rekindle the extinguished flame.

Summary: It is forbidden to use the Hanukah candles for any purpose during the first half-hour after they are lit, and, preferably, even after the first half-hour. One may, however, use a Hanukah candle to light one of the other Hanukah candles (but not the Shamash). If a Hanukah candle was already lit and subsequently extinguished, one may not relight it from another Hanukah candle.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Vayeshev

Yaakov settles in the land of Canaan. His favourite son, Yosef, brings him critical reports about his brothers. Yaakov makes Yosef a fine tunic of multi-coloured woollen strips. Yosef exacerbates his brothers' hatred by recounting prophetic dreams of sheaves of wheat bowing to his sheaf, and of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him, signifying that all his family will appoint him king. The brothers indict Yosef and resolve to execute him. When Yosef comes to Shechem, the brothers relent and decide, at Reuven's instigation, to throw him into a pit instead. Reuven's intent was to save Yosef. Yehuda persuades the brothers to take Yosef out of

the pit and sell him to a caravan of passing Ishmaelites. Reuven returns to find the pit empty and rends his clothes. The brothers soak Yosef's tunic in goat's blood and show it to Yaakov, who assumes that Yosef has been devoured by a wild beast. Yaakov is inconsolable. Meanwhile, in Egypt, Yosef has been sold to Potiphar, Pharaoh's Chamberlain of the Butchers.

In the Parsha's sub-plot, Yehuda's son Er dies as punishment for preventing his wife Tamar from becoming pregnant. Onan, Yehuda's second son, then weds Tamar by levirate marriage. He too is punished in similar circumstances. When Yehuda's wife dies, Tamar resolves to have children

through Yehuda, as this union will find the Davidic line culminating in the Mashiach. Meanwhile, Yosef rises to power in the house of his Egyptian master. His extreme beauty attracts the unwanted advances of his master's wife. Enraged by his rejection, she accuses Yosef of attempting to seduce her, and he is imprisoned. In prison, Yosef successfully predicts the outcome of the dream of Pharaoh's wine steward, who is reinstated, and the dream of Pharaoh's baker, who is hanged. In spite of his promise, the wine steward forgets to help Yosef, and Yosef languishes in prison.

Rabbi Sinclair, Seasonsofthemoon.com

KIDS zone

QUIZ TIME!

1 How do we see from Yosef's dream about the sun, moon and stars that all dreams contain some untrue element?

37:10 - The moon represented Rachel. Since she had already died, it was impossible for that element of the dream to come true.

2 Why didn't Hashem reveal prophetically to Yaakov that Yosef was alive?

37:33 - Because the brothers had issued a ban against revealing the truth to Yaakov, and Hashem, so to speak, abided by their ban.

3 For how long did Yaakov mourn the loss of Yosef?

37:34 - Twenty-two years.

4 In what merit did Tamar deserve to have kings as her descendants?

38:26 - In the merit of her modesty.



"Yehudah recognized; and he said, 'She is right; It is from me ...'" (Bereishis 38:26)



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5 Why were the butler and the baker imprisoned?

40:1 - The butler was imprisoned because a fly was found in the king's goblet, and the baker was imprisoned because a pebble was found in the king's bread.

6 How did the baker know that Yosef had correctly interpreted the butler's dream?

40:5 - The baker dreamed the interpretation of the butler's dream.



Pictures from our Chazanut, Chavruta, All night learning and UCL 1-1 programmes.

C	F	L	A	M	P	H	G	L
H	G	I	F	T	S	A	H	A
D	R	M	G	H	D	N	E	V
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G	L	O	G	C	I	K	H	S
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Spot the five differences in the pictures below

