

Good or Bad? Happy or Sad? You Decide

"I have a couple of questions for you, Chaim."

"Go ahead, Avi."

"If a teenage boy's own brothers try to kill him by leaving him in a pit to die, is that good or bad?"

"Terrible."

"What if some merchants draw him out of the pit and sell him to Arabs? Is that good or bad?"

"At least he didn't die in the pit. However, it's still pretty horrible."

"What if he is sold as a slave to a master who has an evil wife?"

"Oy vey, this poor boy."

"He then is thrown into prison for twelve years."

"How much worse can it get?"

"It actually turns around at this point. He miraculously rises to become second in command to the king."

"Avi that is a miracle."

"Then his brothers, who left him to die in the pit, come face to face with him. However, they do not recognize him because he has grown a beard."

"Oh boy, are they in trouble."

"He reveals himself to them, telling them the story of how he got there."

"They must have been terrified."

"They were. They felt that he was surely going to punish them for all of the *tsorus* (suffering) that they caused him."

"What did he do?"

"He told them, 'Do not be distressed or blame yourselves for having sold me . . . for Hashem sent me ahead of you to be a provider . . . to insure your survival in the land and to sustain you . . . It was not you who sent me here, but Hashem. He has made me a father to Paroh, master of his entire household, and ruler over the whole land of Mitzraim'" (from Bereshis 45:5-8).

"That is truly a miracle. Look at his *emunah* in Hashem! Look at how he saw the good in everything! What a tsaddik!"

"That's who he was. Yosef HaTsaddik. He taught us a lesson that is worth more than gold and diamonds."

"What do you mean, Avi?"

"We look at events a certain way. Your initial reaction to Yosef's experiences was bad. However, everything turned out very good. We have the power to control how we think about the events that happen to us. We can choose to evaluate something as good or bad. Can you think of an example?"

"Getting a cavity filled."

"Excellent Chaim! It is unpleasant and therefore it may be initially judged as bad. However it is a lot better than doing nothing and eventually running into bigger problems."

"For sure. To be a tsaddik like Yosef, you must learn to challenge your initial negative reaction. Think for a moment. Hashem has something very good in store

for you. This event is a part of it. Therefore you should see it as good, and be happy about it."

"I'll try my best."

Kinderlach . . .

What is stopping you from being happy? Nothing. A person is happy when he looks at things positively. You decide how you will view the events of your life. Do you have to deal with a difficult person? Great! Hashem has sent you a wonderful opportunity to work on your middos. Are you sick in bed today? Be happy! This is a chance to spend more time with Imma. Did you lose some money? Don't worry. Let it be a kapara. Better lost than spent on doctor bills. You can see the positive in everything. Learn a lesson from Yosef HaTsaddik, who saw the positive in being a slave and prisoner in a foreign land. See the good and be happy.



Judgment Day

"Six hundred ninety seven, 698, 699, 700. Finished."

"What did you finish, Shaya?"

"I finished counting out the money that I am going to pay back to the king's loan officer."

"My dear husband, I did not know that you borrowed 700 silver pieces."

"I didn't."

"Then why are you paying it back?"

"I actually borrowed 1000 silver pieces, but I am only paying back 700."

"How do you propose to get away with that, Shaya?"

"Don't worry, Miri. I have it all worked out. I will tell the king's officer that I performed many favors for him during the time of the loan. I am also paying him back with newer coins than he lent me. They should be worth more to him."

"My dear husband, I do not wish to spoil your plans. However, do you realize that you are dealing with the king's loan officer? He is an honorable and influential man. I would be surprised if he accepted such excuses. He wants the loan paid in full."

"I realize that, Miri. However, I am a very good talker. Trust me. I know what I am doing."

"Okay. Don't say that I didn't warn you."

The day of the loan payment approaches. Miri makes one last attempt to change her husband's mind, enlisting the children's help.

"Abba, we don't want anything bad to

happen to you. Please pay back the whole loan to the king's officer."

Shaya becomes angry.

"Don't tell me how to conduct my business affairs! I am doing this for your own good. I will pay less money and we will have more left for ourselves. Stay out of my way!"

And so the day finally arrived. Shaya packed up his 700 silver coins and set out for the royal palace. He came to the gate and was ushered in to the chamber of the royal loan officer.

"Yes, loyal subject. What is your business here?"

The officer sat behind a large oak desk. He was dressed in royal robes. Surrounding him were his deputies and servants, who stood ready to carry out his every command. Shaya's knees began to feel weak.

"I repeat, WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS HERE?"

The voice thundered in Shaya's ears. The deputies and servants looked on impatiently. Shaya wanted to speak, but he was petrified from fear.

"We will be terrified on the Day of Judgment . . . Yosef was the youngest of the brothers, yet they could not stand before his reproof." (Medrash Rabba 93). As the verse states, "And his brothers were not able to answer him because they were panicked" (Bereshis 45:3). The previous story was adapted from a parable of the Dubno Maggid, illustrating the fear that we should have for Yom HaDin. Yosef HaTsaddik was only flesh and blood, and the brothers were terrified by his reproof. How much more so should we be afraid of the judgment of The King of Kings, The Holy One Blessed Be He.

Kinderlach . . .

Many things are unpredictable in life. However, one thing is for sure: Yom HaDin will come. Many people try to help us prepare for that day. Our parents give us a good start in life. Teachers educate us in the ways of Hashem. Rabbis and community leaders try to keep us on the straight path. They are all here to help us. Just like Shaya's wife and children tried to help him. Listen to them. Do what they say. Help yourself. Prepare for the big day.

Parasha Questions:

- Who owned all of the land in Mitzraim? (47:20)
- Why did Yosef relocate all of the Mitzrim? (Rashi 47:21)
- What was Yaakov's blessing to Paroh? Was it fulfilled? (Rashi 47:10)
- What did Yehuda do in Goshen? (Rashi 46:28)
- What did Yosef and Yaakov do when they saw each other for the first time? (Rashi 46:29)