



I'm Thinking about You

"A bba, I am so inspired by these parshios about the life of Yosef HaTsaddik."

"That is wonderful, Dovie. Please share your inspiration with me."

"Yosef's greatness is incomprehensible. He was the son of Yaakov Avinu, the Godol HaDor. He grew up in a home permeated with Torah, *yiras shomayim*, and *hashoras HaShechina* (the Divine Presence). He was a teenager when he was kidnapped and sold as a slave by his own brothers. He ended up as a servant in Mitzrayim, a land full of immorality and idol worship, far, far away from his home and family. That trauma alone would be enough to break the spirit of most people. However, Yosef strengthened himself, kept his dignity, moral standards, and resisted the temptation to sin. What reward did he receive for his act of spiritual heroism? He was thrown into the pit dungeon of Mitzrayim under trumped up charges."

"Incredible, isn't it Dovie?"

"A bba, his courage is beyond belief. The first experience of being sold as a slave did not break his spirit. However, the subsequent cruelty of being thrown into the dungeon should have been unbearable. The conditions were absolutely horrible. There was no escape from such a place. Only a spiritual giant such as Yosef HaTsaddik could avoid despair in such a predicament."

"Dovie, I could not have said it better myself. May I share with you an insight from the sefer 'Chaim Sheyesh Bahem'?"

"I would love that, Abba."

"Yosef learned Torah from his father Yaakov Avinu. He learned 'kol haTorah kulah' – the entire Torah. He was constantly learning and reviewing his learning in his mind while he was working as a slave and sitting in the dungeon. This is how he withstood the tests and maintained his *madrayga* (spiritual level). One who is so absorbed in his Torah thoughts may not notice what is going on around him. He is able to shut out the outer world, and dwell in his own inner world of Torah learning. Was this the case with Yosef? Definitely not!"

"How do we know that Abba?"

"The verse in last week's parasha describes Yosef's reaction to two of the prisoners. 'Yosef came to them in the morning. He saw them and behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his master's house, saying, 'Why do you appear so sad today?'" (Bereshis 40:6,7)."

"Yosef was paying attention to them!"

"Exactly, Dovie. So much so, that he noticed that today they were sad. Previ-

ously, they had not been down. The officers did not come to complain to Yosef. Instead, he came to them. He did not wait for their sadness to pass. Rather, the very instant that he understood that they were depressed, he went over to them and asked them what was the source of the problem. Keep in mind also, that these were idol worshippers from a nation on the lowest spiritual level."

"What sensitivity! What concern for other people; even people who are far below him! What greatness in *bein adam li'chaveyro* (caring for one's fellow man)! Yosef was a tsaddik in all aspects of life. He was a giant in Torah learning, a *gibbor* in withstanding awesome spiritual and physical tests, and a *rachaman* in showing outstanding empathy for his fellow man. Abba, have always been inspired by Yosef's great deeds. You have now revealed another aspect of his righteousness that is even more inspiring – his interest in others. I hope to learn from and emulate his deeds."

"May Hashem help you to succeed!"



Kinderlach . . .

*Whom do you think about? You think about yourself when taking care of your needs. That is important. You also think about Hashem when performing His mitzvos. That is even more important. That is called "bein adam li'Makom." Thirdly, you think about other people, helping them, and easing their suffering. That is called "bein adam li'chaveyro." Yosef HaTsaddik is an outstanding example of this. He himself was withstanding a very difficult test in the dungeon. He strengthened himself by immersing his mind in Torah learning, yet he still found the energy to be concerned about easing the suffering of two lowly idol worshippers. That is *rommemus* (exaltedness). That is the righteousness of Yosef HaTsaddik. Emulate him. Become great by caring for others.*

Not By Chance

The famine ravages the Land of Canaan. Yaakov and his sons have no food to eat. There is only one place in the world where they can buy food. Mitzrayim. They make the journey. Everyone must appear before the viceroy of Mitzrayim and buy food directly from him. The brothers receive a very rough treatment from the Mitzri leader. He accuses them of being spies. How do they react? "They say to one another, 'We are guilty concerning our brother (Yosef). We saw his suffering when he pleaded with us and we did not listen to him. That is why this trouble has come upon us.'" (Bereshis 42:21). Rabbeinu Bechaye comments that this is the way of tsaddikim. When they sin, they admit the truth and thereby proclaim Hashem's justice.

A short time later, they return home with their sacks of food. They stop at an inn and one opens his sack to feed his donkey. He finds that his money has been placed in the sack. How do they react? "What is this that Hashem has done to us?" (Bereshis 42:28). The Chofetz Chaim comments that they did not attribute even the slightest little event to chance. Rather they realize that the Hand of Hashem did this.

Kinderlach . . .

Everything that happens is from Hashem. When something nice or pleasant happens, let us immediately say, "Boruch Hashem". Did you get a good grade in the test? Boruch Hashem. Did you finish learning a Perek of Mishnayos? Boruch Hashem. When something not so nice happens, we also have to realize that it is from Hashem. "Ow, I banged my toe on the chair leg. Who put that chair there? How careless of him!" Is that the proper way to react? Yosef's brothers probably would have said something like, "Ow it hurts. Boruch Hashem, it could have been worse. I could have broken my toe. Hashem must be trying to tell me something." One of the hidden tsidkonios of Yerushalaim used to give tsedaka and say Tehillim when something unpleasant happened to her. Nothing happens by chance. She knew that the Hand of Hashem was at work.

Parasha Questions:

- How much grain did Yosef store up in Mitzrayim? (41:49 and Rashi)
- What happen to the grain that others, besides Yosef, stored up in Mitzrayim? (41:55 and Rashi)
- When the shevatim went down to Mitzrayim, why were they referred to as "the brothers of Yosef" and not "the sons of Yaakov"? (Rashi 42:3)