



Parshas Vayeishev 2019, Yosef's life hack

Our Parshas begins with Ya'akov Avinu settling down in the city of Chevron with his four wives and twelve children. The Pasuk writes that Ya'akov loved Yosef, the firstborn of his favorite wife, Rochel, more than the rest. He even made a unique colored coat to signify his fondness and love.

At night, Yosef would dream of his brothers bowing down to him, and he told them about his dreams and their part in them. Yosef's persistent nagging and preferable treatment infuriated his brothers and caused them to hate him with a vengeance.

Once his brothers were away tending to their sheep, Ya'akov asked Yosef to see how his brothers were doing. When the brothers saw Yosef approaching, they were enraged by his presence and decided to kill him. Reuven implored them not to kill him and instead throw him into a pit nearby. He said this because his plan was to return there later and save him.

When Yosef arrived, his brothers immediately removed his unique coat and threw him into a pit. Yeudah then sold him to an Arab caravan heading to Egypt, who sold him to Potiphar, Pharaoh's chief butcher.

The brothers dipped Yosef's coat into animal blood and brought it to Ya'akov, and told him that a wild beast had eaten Yosef. Ya'akov ripped his clothing and began to mourn for his beloved son. However, when his sons or daughters tried to comfort him, he ignored them and refused to be comforted.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, Yosef was highly successful in all that he did because Hashem was with him. Seeing his success, Potiphar, Pharaoh's chief butcher, put Yosef in charge of his household and businesses.

However, a question comes to mind: How could Yosef have kept the faith? Because it seems like every time he is successful, it is taken away from him, and when he finds another way to succeed, it is taken away from him again. How is it possible that he did not give up hope that he would return to his family? How did he stay strong and not give up hope?!

Yosef didn't give up hope because he knew that the misfortunes he was enduring now were only introductions to the blessing that would come to his life. We see in the next Torah portion that he becomes the second most important person in the world by the age of 30.

Yosef lived believing in G-d, knowing that one day he would be that leader he saw in his dream. One day he will be a ruler over his brothers. Yosef lived in the present but focused on the future. He held strong to his G-d that saved him countless times, telling himself that he would come out of this ordeal successful and prosperous.

In our daily life, we must live life in the present but focus on the future. We must not let the past put a mental block on our future. It is imperative to understand that sometimes misfortunes come our way, but they only make us stronger and more susceptible to the blessing that will come into our lives.

Because the next chapter of our life is unwritten, and it could be like Yosef's second chapter, which is a story of unprecedented success, not just physically and politically, but also spiritually and morally, he becomes the first person in recorded history to forgive.

He forgives his brothers for doing something that the Torah deems this sin worthy of capital punishment. Yosef also makes good on a promise that G-d pledged to Avraham, "That through you, all the families in the world will be saved," that through him and his warehouses of grain, the world was saved.

Yosef introduces the life-changing idea that despair is never justified, that even if your life has been scarred by misfortune, and happiness seems to be forever gone from your life, there is still hope. Because the next chapter in your life can be filled with blessings, not just blessings but also unprecedented success and prosperity.

"Today's curse may be the beginning of tomorrow's blessing."

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Sholom Yemini