



Parshas Vayieshev 2020, the hope that keeps us going

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of the Kedoshim who were killed in Jersey city last week, H"YD. May G-d grant solace and comfort to their families and communities.

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 him 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 took off 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. Meanwhile, the brothers dipped Yosef's coat into animal blood, 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 G-d 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: Why did Ya'akov refuse to be comforted? Did he not know that the Torah has a process for this unfortunate situation, which includes comforting the mourners and coping with the time of bereavement?

The Midrash Rabbah on this Pasuk gives an explanation; it explains that a person can be comforted for one who is dead. However, a person can not be comforted for one who is still alive. Since Ya'akov hoped and believed that Yosef was still alive, he refused to be comforted. In fact, his hope and belief were justified because 22 years later, he was reunited with his son, Yosef, in Egypt.

Ya'akov's refusal to be comforted and his belief that his son was still alive was passed down to the Jewish people and distinctly clear throughout our storied history. From our slavery in Egypt to the destructions of both Beis Hamikdash and subsequent exiles. From the pogroms in Europe and the holocaust to the recent shootings in Israel, Pittsburgh, Poway, and Jersey City.

It has and will always be the same hope and belief that Ya'akov had that keeps us going. The hope we say many times a day of returning to the land that G-d has given us with Moshiach and the ultimate redemption. The same "refusal to be comforted" has kept us from giving in to the victimhood mentality that has brought down many others and, instead, made us unimaginably successful and prosperous.

As we approach Chanukah, we are reminded that our purpose is to create and add light to this world. We do this by first keeping strong to our faith and beliefs and then by doing acts of goodness and kindness. Because it not only helps the people involved but also brings them closer to the coming of Moshiach and the ultimate redemption.

“A little bit of light can push away a lot of darkness.”

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

*Have an inspirational Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*