

HAFTORAH SUMMARY FOR PARSHAS VAYEISHEV

by Rabbi Aron Tendler

Amos 2:6 - 3:8

In this weeks Haftorah, Amos the Navi chastised the Bnai Yisroel [Children of Israel] for the perversion of justice manifest in their behavior toward the widowed, orphaned and the poor. Yoseph's sale for a few pieces of silver is referenced as a prime example of such injustice. Regardless of whatever rationalization the brother's may have used to justify their actions, the money they accepted for the sale reduced their actions to nothing more than selfish and self-serving.

This same theme is repeated in the story of the 10 Martyrs. The Roman Governor accused the brothers of selling Yoseph for money. If their motives were in fact righteous, they should not have accepted any personal gain from their actions.

The Navi contrasted the injustices against the poor to the three most severe sins of: idolatry, adultery, and murder. Hashem [G-d] is willing to give a second chance when humankind fails due to personal failing; however, when humankind fails in the arena of social justice, there can not be a second chance. Judges are intended to do G-d's work of ministering justice, and the administration of justice should be a primary display of Hashem's manifest presence within society. When a judge perverts the power of his office he compromises much more than justice. He compromises G-d Himself.