

BEHIND THE SCENES

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

"And Midianite merchants passed and they drew Yosef and raised him out of the pit and they sold Yosef for twenty pieces of silver" Beresheet 37:28 There was once a simple G-d-fearing woman who went to the neighborhood synagogue every Shabbat morning to hear the public reading of the weekly Torah portion. On the week when the story of Yosef and his brothers was read, she burst out crying when the sale of Yosef was made to the Ishmaelite merchants. "Cruel, wicked brothers", she spontaneously cried out as the reader read "And they sold Yosef to the Ishmaelite for twenty silver."

The next year when the reader read the portion dealing with the sale, rather than cry and mourn she sighed in an understanding tone "He deserves it." When questioned about her contradictory behavior she replied, "It is Yosef's fault! Last year he told them his dreams and they sold him because he made them so angry. He should have known better this year and yet he still told them the dreams again!"

There are many people who laugh at this woman who themselves still take the liberty to judge the behavior of the brothers and Yosef. They analyze and criticize the behavior of these holy people without really understanding the dynamics of the situation. One MUST know and accept that there was a plan decreed by G-d in heaven as to how to bring into fruition His promises to Abraham Abinu in the covenant between the parts. Hashem Himself pulled the strings and it was His plan that required that the journey by Yaakob and the tribes down to Egypt should be a result of the spiritual jealousies etc that we see in the famous tale of Yosef and his brothers. It is forbidden, therefore to place blame or guilt on the brothers. As King Solomon said in Proverbs, "There is neither wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against Hashem." [Mishle 21:30]

There was once a dispute as to who should be appointed as the Rosh Yeshivah. in the citadel of Torah learning called Volozhin. Some felt that the head should be Rav Naftali Tzvi Berlin --The Netzib --while others felt strongly that Rav Yosef Solovetchik was the most suited for the position. Amongst the leaders chosen to make the final decision was Rabbi Ze-ev the Maggid of Volozhin. He stood up before the esteemed assemblage of Torah scholars and said, "I am known for the weekly dissertation that I speak out to the public. When we read the book of Beresheet I stress the battle between the forces of good and evil. In Beresheet it is Adam and Hava vs. the evil snake. In Noah, the tsadeek is pitted against his evil generations. In Lekh Lekha, Abraham combats the greed of Lot, the wickedness of Pharoah and the Kings who kidnap his nephew. Then we learn about, the people of Sodom and Yishmael and Yishak, Yaakob and Esav etc. But when I get to the story of Yosef and

his brothers I cannot be a judge of good and evil because they are all holy and righteous. We have been asked to choose between these great scholars but I cannot choose as I must admit that they are so far beyond what my simple mind can comprehend in wisdom and righteousness." After a long debate and great deliberation the council of sages chose the Netziv as the Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin.

The lesson is clear. We are not capable of judging the brothers in their dealing with Yosef. The people involved are so far from us in righteousness and wisdom and in their level of spirituality that one would be foolish to try and guess what really was on their minds and what motivated each one of them. Add to that that all that transpired was orchestrated by the deep thoughts of the plan of G-d to bring into fruition His plan for the children of Abraham and one should be humbled into submission to the thought that "there is no idea in regards to Hashem." We should all tread carefully through the "story" portions of the Torah in order to from our holy predecessors the lessons of life revealed to us in Hashem's holy book.

Shabbat Shalom

PARASHA RIDDLE

While in prison in Egypt after being falsely accused of improper conduct by his master's wife, Yosef is approached by two of the Pharaoh's officers who were incarcerated for misdeeds. They each had a mysterious dream and asked Yosef to interpret for them. He tells the royal wine steward that he will be returned to his position and he tells the royal baker that he will be executed. How did Yosef know that the baker would be killed?

ANSWER

There was once an outdoor art exhibit. Amongst the works of art on display was a painting of a man carrying a basket of fruit on his head. The scene was so lifelike that birds kept flying down to peck at the fruit. Everyone was in awe of the masterpiece. One rich man was not impressed and he offered a large sum as a prize to the one who could point out the flaw in the masterpiece. One young man stepped forward and declared, "The fruit is so real looking that the birds swoop down to get a taste. However, the man lacks reality comparable to the fruit. If the man were as lifelike as the fruit the birds would be afraid to approach the basket." He was quickly awarded the prize.

When the royal baker told Yosef that he saw a baskets of bread on his head and the birds pecking at the bread he knew that the man carrying the basket did not project enough human life to scare the birds away --to them he was dead. From the birds behavior he knew what the future had in store for the baker. *[Source Rabbi Meir Shapira from Lublin]*

DID YOU KNOW THAT

The optimum time to light Hanukkah is Tzet Hakokhabim-- nightfall-- approximately 20 minutes after sunset. One should pray Arbeet before lighting. The time extends until 1/2 hour after the

starting time (i.e. 45-50 minutes after sunset).

If one could not light at that time, one may light all night. *[Source Yalkut Yosef, Hilkhoh Hanukkah]*

Text Copyright © 2003 Rabbi Raymond Beyda and **Torah.org**