



Tiferet

ת פ א ר ת



TIFERET SHABBAT

This Week in Tiferet

On Shabbat Vayigash, Tiferet hosted Shabbat together with students from **Darkaynu**, a seminary for students with disabilities in Yerushalayim. Our students worked hard to welcome the Darkaynu students, with projects, ruach and activities to make the Shabbat enjoyable and inspiring, ending with a great concert on Motzaei Shabbat! Special thanks to our Shabbaton coordinators, **Liora Posin, Renee Weitschner and Kayla Suss**. We look forward to hosting the Darkaynu Shabbaton for many years to come!

תורת תפארת

Why So Distanced?

Rav Azriel Rosner (arosner@tiferetcenter.com)

Parashat Vayechi

At the very end of Parashat Vayechi, after Yosef and his brothers return from Eretz Yisrael, where they went to bury Yaakov Avinu, the brothers begin to worry about Yosef's attitude towards them.

ויראו אחי יוסף כי מת אביהם ויאמרו לו ישטמנו יוסף והשב ישיב לנו את כל הרעה אשר גמלנו אותו (בראשית פרק נ פסוק טו)

"And Yosef's brothers saw that their father had died and they said: Perhaps Yosef hates us and will return to us all the evil that we did to him" (Bereishit 50:15)

Rashi comments there that Yosef's brothers noticed from Yosef's behavior that something had changed. He writes, "What did they see? They noticed Yaakov's death by Yosef, for they often used to eat by his (Yosef's) table and he drew them closer in honor of his father, but since his father had died, he did not draw them closer."

According to Rashi then, the brother's worry was justified, as Yosef had indeed changed his behavior towards them. Since they were no longer being invited to dine with Yosef, they had good reason to suspect that his attitude towards them had changed, and good reason to worry about the future.

But of course this brings up the logical question – why did Yosef change his behavior? We see from the continuation of the perek that Yosef did not resent his brothers, and indeed was genuinely hurt and surprised at their suspicion of him. But then why did he change his behavior towards them?

The various mefarshim on Rashi suggest various reasons. The Maharal, in the Gur Aryeh, suggests that Yosef was trying to protect his brothers. He worried that the Egyptians would suspect this family of becoming too powerful, and thus, Yosef tried to distance himself from them in order to protect them.

The Siftei Chachamim writes that Yosef did not invite his brothers to dine with him anymore, because after Yaakov's death, there was some confusion about who should be seated at the head of the table – Yehuda, who Yaakov had just named the king of the brothers, Reuven, the eldest or Yosef himself. So too avoid political difficulties, Yosef refrained from inviting them.

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Mazal Tov!

Mazal Tov to Katie (Becker, 5766) and Yoni Lazarus on the birth of their son, Aharon Mordechai! May they be zochim to raise him l'Torah, l'chupa, u'l'maasim tovim!

Strength Through Darkness Nehama Weiss (5774)

At the end of the Parasha we are told of Yosef's death. Immediately after, the book of Bereishit closes and we say the words חזק חזק ונתחזק, be strong, be strong and may we be strengthened. How can the book end like this? We know that after Yosef's death, the slavery began. In fact after only 8 p'sukim in Shemot we learn that 'A 'new' king arose who did not remember Yosef', starting the slavery in Egypt. So how can the last words of Bereishit be 'he was placed into a coffin in Egypt'? How can we become strengthened with these words and Yosef's death? I want to try and bring some comfort within this seemingly sad ending.

The beginning of Bereishit starts with the creation of the world. Often when we think of this, we think of the sin that happened after the creation, making it seem that the first book of the Torah both starts and ends with sad times. However looking at the beginning words again it is very different. The first words of the Torah are... 'In the beginning of G-d's creation of the heavens and the earth, when the earth was astoundingly desolate, darkness was on the surface of the deep...G-d said 'Let there be light!' and there was light.' Looking at these words I think it brings some comfort to both the death of Yosef as well as for within our own lives.

The beginning words start with a depressing impression of the world. However then G-d brings light within the darkness, creating light within the world. Why does it need to tell us this description of the world before the light? Why not just 'let there be light'? Perhaps the reason could be to show that without the darkness there could be no light. If we take this and bring it back to the end of the book, ויחי, we can find a new message of this confusing ending.

True Yosef's death seems sad to us; however it could in fact bring hope. Although it may look like things are about to go bad and we are soon going into slavery, there is another way to view it. It was this slavery that helped form us as a people. When we came out of it we became a nation and received the Torah. Therefore in some way the darkness brings strength to us. Through the darkness we can find the light.

We are now in a long period of darkness. The days are now shorter and the gap between the festivals is a lot longer. So we might feel saddened by the dark times ahead. However in some ways it is by reading this parasha and noticing that the darkness can bring redemption that will help us through. The ending shows that even in the hard times we can be strengthened. Therefore by the first book of the Torah ending like this, the first time we say the words חזק חזק ונתחזק is after a 'dark' time, therefore showing that even in the darkness we can find strength.

תורת תפארת (המשך)

Perhaps the most enlightening but obvious explanation though, comes from Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch. Rav Hirsch explains that it's really quite natural for brothers to "get together" less often after their father dies. After all, beforehand, they had gotten together at Yaakov's home, so of course, it's not surprising that the brothers would see less of Yosef after Yaakov's death. The brothers interpreted this natural stage negatively though, because they were still plagued with guilt over the original sale of Yosef – even so many years later. Their actions continued to haunt them, and they were constantly worried that Yosef would avenge himself – even though Yosef had no intention of doing so.

If so, the continuation of the story is even more beautiful. Yosef isn't just alleviating his brothers' fear at the end of the story, he is calming their sense of guilt. He knows that they have done teshuva and shows them that he forgives them with all his heart. And then the brothers once again attain the closeness that they had before Yaakov's death, and continue in their path towards becoming a unified ישראל.

Shabbat Shalom!