

## **Parshat Vayeshev: Love thy fellow Jew**

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The scourge of the Jewish People is Sinat Chinam (Baseless Hatred). Our Sages say the Second Temple was destroyed and the Jews driven into our longest Exile because of Sinat Chinam.

It is the bane of our existence. Parshat Vayeshev makes this crystal clear. "And (when) his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren they hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him". The sons of Yaakov (Jacob) were all great and righteous men and yet they made a terrible blunder in hating Yosef (Joseph). We have paid much too high a price for this error. This has bothered me my whole life. How is it that these great tzadikim could make such a great mistake? There are valuable lessons to be learned today from how the Brothers mistreated Yosef to the point of actually wanting to kill him. We, the Jewish People cannot harm a fellow Jew no matter how much we might disagree or disprove of his philosophy or his actions. This is the main lesson of Yosef and his brothers.

One of Menachem Begin's Z"L great legacies was that he would not harm a fellow Jew no matter what. This was his teaching and guiding principle. Because the brothers were indeed such great men, what made them think seriously about killing their very own brother. How did this come about? They were brilliant men who had learned Torah from their grandfather Isaac and their father Yaakov.

They are the Founders of the Nation of Israel. Many explanations are given but the one that helps me understand what went wrong is found in the Malbim (37:4). In the previous two generations each of the Avot had a desirable son and an undesirable son. Abraham had Isaac who he transferred all of the Blessings to including the land of Israel. He also had Ishmael whom he loved but did not transfer his Blessings from G-d to. Isaac gave the main Blessings to Yaacov and lesser blessings (to live by the sword and Mount Seir but deprived of the "heritage of G-d") to Eisav (Esau). Both Ishmael and Eisav were considered the "external Bark" whereas Isaac and Yaakov were considered "internal treasures".

The brothers experienced the torment that Eisav subjected their family to. They knew fully well that Eisav wanted to kill their father, Yaakov. This was a constant refrain in their home of always being wary of Eisav. They lived in utter fear of Eisav from the time they were born. Yishmael was also a threat. The brothers knew fully well that both Yishmael and Eisav were considered the "sitra achara" of their Grandfather Abraham and Father Isaac respectively.

They considered Yosef to be the "sitra achra" of the family. Eisav out of respect and honor for his father would put on the finest garments before they met. Isaac in turn showed a degree of favoritism to Eisav. The brothers misinterpreted the favoritism showed Yosef by their Father. They saw the "coat of many colors" of Yosef as Eisav dressed in his special clothing.

It created jealousy, but it also made the brothers more convinced that Yosef was turning into Eisav. When Yosef spoke of his dream to his brothers they interpreted that to mean that Yosef

was going to grab all the blessings from their father and leave them as the outsiders with none. They felt like Yosef was usurping their future as Leaders of the Nation of Israel. They were unaware that G-d's plan was for each of the Sons of Yaakov to be Great and receive Yaakov's full blessings and inherit the Land of Israel. They were worried that Yosef was Eisav in their midst.

They did not want to live, as their father did, worried sick every day of his life about Eisav. They were very wrong. They acted upon a wrong perception and a wrong understanding. Yosef would have given the shirt off his back for his brothers as is evidenced by the fact he went down to Dothan to seek out their safety despite the risks. Shimon and Levi had already demonstrated that they stood for utterly strict Din(Judgement) in regards to Shechem and the rape of Dinah.

Once Yosef was wrongfully labeled by the brothers as the Eisav in the Family it was just a matter of time before they acted. They were wrong. The lesson for today is that a fellow Jew is to be loved at all costs. We are too small a people to fight among ourselves. The real Eisav's and the real Ishmael's of the world are ready to pounce at every opportunity.