

Shabbos Maverchim Chodesh Teves - Rosh Chodesh will be Shabbos Kodesh & Sunday , Dec 4 & 5, 2021

“CAN WE CHANGE OUR DESTINY?”

Very often, adults, looking back and reflecting upon some problems in their own childhood upbringing would vow not to make the same mistakes of their parents. What is ironic is that even as they try a different path nothing is a definite guarantee; destiny will take its course. Our parasha is an example of such an event.

After Yosef's two dreams his brothers are naturally upset, they believed that Yosef had ambitions to control them. This rage turns into jealousy when Yaakov seems to give credence to these dreams (Bereshit 37:11). In response, Yosef's brothers set out to Shechem- this is where Shimon and Levi Killed all of the male inhabitants for the rape of Dinah, their sister. (Bereshit 34:25). According to the midrash, the brothers again chose the city of Shechem to decide how best to once again, take retribution. But this time, it was against their own brother, Yosef (Rashi ,Bereshit 37:12)

Now Yaakov comes into the picture. He sends Yosef to seek out to his brothers welfare. Sforno, (15th century) explains that although Yaakov could have sent a servant to ascertain the welfare of his sons, he purposely sent Yosef in the hope that he would be able make peace with them by having direct talks. The question now is, Yaakov, who knew of the previous incident in Shechem wasn't he placing Yosef in serious danger?

What was Yosef thinking and feeling at this moment? He could have felt that he was being set up by his father, but of course, his obedience to Kibbud Av gave him no choice but to go through with his fathers' command, no less than Yitzchak felt on the way to the Akeida. On the other hand he could have surmised that his father sent him to his brothers because of what occurred to Yaakov in his younger years, and to rectify the mistake that was then made . After Yaakov took the Brachot from his brother Eisav, he is advised by his mother to flee and avoid his brothers' wrath (Breishit 27:43). In the end, that advice was very costly to Yaakov, for as a result, he does not see his family for 22 years.

As he has now grown older, Yaakov doesn't want to make the same mistake. So when Yaakov's son feud, he adopts a plan-one that is directly opposite of what was suggested to him when he was younger and when his life was in danger. Rather than have Yosef flee from his brothers, he sends Yosef to talk and negotiate with his siblings perhaps they can find common ground, hoping that they will reconcile.

Ironically, despite Yosef being sent to his brothers rather than away from his brothers, as it turned out, he remained separated from his family for 22 years. Circumstances and choices changed but Divine destiny remained unchanged!

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT VAYEISHEV

- 1- In 37:13, Yaakov sends Yosef to Shechem. The gemara Sandhedrin (102a) tells us that the city of Shechem is destined to bring about three misfortunes to our people. A- the rape of Dina, B-The sale of Yosef. What is the third misfortune?
- 2-Although Yaakov was shown evidence that, Yosef was killed, yet he refused to be consoled (37:35). Why is that?
- 3-Based on the pesukim in our parasha, there was a minhag that the father is given the privilege of naming the first child and the mother has the privilege of naming the second child. On which pesukim is this minhag based upon?
- 4- On which word in our parasha do we find the “shalsholet” note, and what is its significance?
- 5-Both the Sar HaMashkim (the butler) and the Sar HaOfim (the baker) related their respective dreams to Yosef. How did Yosef understand from the words of the Sar HaMashkim that he will be exonerated and return to his job, and from the words of the Sar HaOfim that he will be found guilty and executed?