

KMS Parent-Child Learning: Parashat Vayeshev:

Seeing things from different perspectives

Beraishit 37

ב אֵלֶּה תְּלֻדֹת יַעֲקֹב, יוֹסֵף בֶּן-שֶׁבַע-
עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת-אֶחָיו בְּצֹאן,
וְהוּא נֶעַר אֶת-בְּנֵי בְלָהָה וְאֶת-בְּנֵי זִלְפָּה,
וְנָשֵׁי אָבִיו; וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת-דִּבְתָּם רָעָה,
אֶל-אָבִיהֶם. **2** These are the generations of Yaakov:
Yoseph, being seventeen years old, was
feeding the sheep with his brothers, being still
a boy, and hanging out with the sons of Bilhah,
and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives;
and Yoseph brought evil report of them to their
dad.

What do you think Yosef told his dad?

When, if ever, is it ok to tattletale on someone?

When should we not speak negatively about others?

How do you think the brothers felt when Yosef told on them?

Why do you think Yosef did this?

What might Yosef have done differently in order to both give information to his father without getting his brothers angry at him?

ג וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל, אָהַב אֶת-יוֹסֵף מִכָּל-
בְּנָיו--כִּי-בֶן-זִקְנִים הוּא, לוֹ;
וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ, כְּתֹנֶת פָּסִים. **3** Now Yisrael loved Yoseph more than all his
children, because he was the son of his old age;
and he made him a coat of many colors.

ד וַיִּרְאוּ אֶחָיו, כִּי-אֶתּוֹ אָהַב
אָבִיהֶם מִכָּל-אֶחָיו--וַיִּשְׁנְאוּ,
אֹתוֹ; וְלֹא יָכְלוּ, דַּבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֵם. **4** And when his brothers saw that their father
loved him more than all his brothers, they hated
him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

Why do you think Yaakov loved Yosef more than his other children?

What did Yaakov make for his son? Do you think he made this for every son? If it was a uniform of some sort, what was Yosef's new job?

How do you think Yaakov thought the brothers should have responded to the gift he gave Yosef?

Why do you think the brothers responded the way they did?

Why didn't they speak peacefully to him anymore?

Were the brothers angry only at Yosef? Why do you think so?

A Rabbinic insight about the situation in Yaakov's family:

Shabbat 10b; Megilla 16b

Raba b. Mehasia also said in the name of R. Hama b. Goria in Rab's name:

A man should never single out one son among his other sons, for on account of the two sela's weight of silk, which Jacob gave Joseph in excess of his other sons, his brothers became jealous of him and the matter resulted in our forefathers' descent into Egypt.

Why do the Rabbis think that because of what Yaakov did for Yosef, the exile in Egypt resulted? (Think of the series of events that began with this and led up to the entire family going down to Egypt and being enslaved there.)

Do you agree with such a thought?

If Avraham was told that his descendent were going to be exiled to Egypt long before Yaakov was even born, let alone that he showed favoritism to Yosef,

(Beraishit 15:13-14 And He said unto Abram: 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance.)

why should Yaakov be blamed for the Jews having to go to Egypt? How can the two sources be reconciled with one another?

ה וַיִּחְלֵם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם, וַיַּגִּד לְאָחָיו ; וַיֹּסְפוּ עוֹד, שְׂנֵא אֹתוֹ. **5** And Yosef dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.

ו וַיֹּאמֶר, אֲלֵיהֶם : שְׁמְעוּ-נָא, הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חֲלַמְתִּי. **6** And he said to them: 'Listen, please, to this dream which I have dreamed:

ז וַהֲנֵה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְמִים אֲלֵמִים, בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה, וַהֲנֵה קָמָה אֲלַמְתִּי, וְגַם-נִצְבָּה ; וַהֲנֵה תִסְבֵּינָה אֲלַמְתֵּיכֶם, וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוּיֵן לְאַלְמְתִּי. **7** Check it out- we were binding sheaves in the field, and, my sheaf got up, and also stood upright; and, your sheaves turned around, and bowed down to my sheaf.'

ח וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ, אַחֲיוֹ, הֲמִלְךָ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ, אִם-מְשׁוֹל תִּמְשָׁל בָּנוּ; וַיּוֹסֶפוּ עוֹד שִׂנְאָתוֹ, עַל-הַלְמָתָיו וְעַל-דְּבָרָיו. **8** And his brothers said to him: 'Will you indeed rule over us? And will you indeed have power over us?' And they hated him even the more for his dreams, and for his words.

Why do they hate him even more now?

Why do you think that people might take dreams seriously?

Why do you think Yosef told them his dream?

In Yosef's dream, he is with his brothers in the fields. What do you think this means?

What do the brothers think his dream means? Do you agree with them? What could it have meant which would not have been a cause for the brothers to be angry?

Why sometimes, do we only see what we expect to see? How might this idea apply to Yosef's brothers?

What do you see when you look at the picture below? How is it possible to see the same thing, not only a picture but also ideas and situations, in different ways?

