



דרכים בפרשה

וישב



ויחלם יוסף חלום ויגד לאחיו ויוספו עוד שנא אתו

And Yosef dreamed a dream and told his brothers, and they continued to hate him

Looking at the dreams of Yosef HaTzaadik, we note two different reactions from the brothers. The first dream featured the sheaves of the brothers bowing down to the sheaf of Yosef. Upon hearing this, the brothers hated Yosef for his dream. In the next dream, the sun, the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to Yosef. This time however, the reaction was not hatred but rather envy.

The Alter of Slabodka explains that in the first dream, the sheaves represent *gashmiyus*/materialistic pursuits. Yosef was telling them that he would be wealthier and more superior to them. Such a message is tough to accept, especially when there is a sense that the one delivering the message is projecting themselves, and only doing so for their own personal self-aggrandizement. The end result was a feeling of hatred towards him. In the second dream, the sun, moon, and stars represent the heavenly spheres. This was a dream of *ruchniyus* /spiritual pursuits. Yosef was telling them that he would be more superior to them in spiritual matters. This caused envy because the brothers wanted the same for themselves as well.

When we see another person with more money than us, it may bother us, but it

shouldn't. On the other hand, if that person is greater than us in Torah and mitzvos, this should arouse a feeling of envy causing us to want the same for ourselves.

It is a well-known principle that all *middos* have a good and a bad to it (e.g. עז vs. עז פנים). In this *parsha*, the Torah is giving us an insight into the *middah* of *kinna*. Let us endeavour to understand both sides of this potent character trait.

On the one hand, we find in Masechta Bava Basra (21a) that קנאת סופרים תרבה חכמה - jealousy amongst *talmidei chachamim* increases wisdom, i.e. jealousy is a good thing. Yet, we also find a possuk in Mishlei (14:30) that tells us ורקב עצמות קנאה - *jealousy rots the bones*, i.e. it eats away at the best parts of a person, leaving him with nothing. *Kinna* is such a motivator, that it inspires one to reach levels of greatness that may have been otherwise unattainable. Yet, we have Shlomo HaMelech warning us in Mishlei to stay far away from *kinna* with a ten-foot pole.

Rav Yeruchem Levovitz (Daas Torah) explains how to tell the healthy *kinna*, from the dangerous one. Let us take an every-day example that can be found in most "healthy" homes. The mother tells her fourteen year old

son that he can attend his first cousin's bris the next morning and will go to yeshiva a little bit later. Moments later, the twelve year old son shows up, and upon hearing of his brother's good fortune, requests the same. The mother refuses his requests, causing an all-out temper tantrum. She turns to her husband that is just walking in and asks him to resolve it. Lacking the patience, he responds that no one is going. At this point, the younger brother *should* respond "okay, fine, if I can't go either way, at least let him go". But, typically, this is not the case. גם לי - if I can't have it, none of us can have it!

Rav Yeruchem explains that there are two different roots where jealousy can come from. The first example is a situation where I can see my friend having something and I may tell myself that I would like the same. Perhaps I was unaware that this was even available or attainable. I am happy for him that he has it, and now I want to be on that level as well. This is what the gemara refers to when it talks about קנאת סופרים תרבה חכמה - jealousy being a good thing.

But what happens when we are not happy that the other person has it? What happens if we would like the same, but would be just as happy if neither of us had it? This jealousy is not shaped by a desire for that particular item, and it is also non-motivational. The reason for this jealousy is because he is aggravated by the perceived inferiority that

comes with not having what *yenem* has. The solution is that I have the same, or neither of us have it. It is to this unhealthy *kinna* that Shlomo HaMelech told us ורקב עצמות - קנאה - *jealousy rots the bones*.

The English language actually has two distinct words that clearly denote the difference: *envy and jealousy*. Envy occurs when we lack a desired attribute enjoyed by another. We see it and we want it for ourselves as well. Jealousy is a feeling of resentment to what the other person has, whether we want it or not. Although similar, the outcome may be very different. It is such a slight difference, yet it can be the difference between a good *middah* and a bad *middah*.

May we be *zoche* to use the *middah* of *kinna* in the proper fashion, always motivating ourselves to achieve ever higher goals. But at the same time, we should always be cognizant of overstepping the boundary.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפער

