

Probing the Heart and Soul - Insights of the Great Hasidic Masters into the Weekly
Torah Portion
Class One, Parshat Vayahi
Melton Gesher, January 4, 2012

Summary of the whole Yosef narrative

The blessing of Ya'acov to Yehudah, Breishit chapter 49, verses 8 - 10

The burial of Ya'acov, Breishit chapter 50, verses 7 - 14

The aftermath of the death of Ya'acov, Breishit chapter 50, verses 15 - 21

Midrash Tanhuma

Midrash Raba

Mei Shiloach, Rabbi Mordechai Leiner, volume one, parshat Vayachi, on the words,
You intended me harm, God intended it for the good

IT MAY BE THAT JOSEPH WILL HATE US.
His brothers had sinned against Joseph and had hated him. Now his brothers thought that he hated them, just as they had hated him. He, however, did not act thus toward them, but re-turned good for evil.

Midrash Tanhuma, Parshat V'yei, 17

Joseph's brothers began to realize [the implications] of their father's death. And what did they realize, not so much that they were fearful? When they were re- turning from their father's burial, they saw Joseph go and utter a benediction at the pit into which his brothers had thrown him; for you must recite a blessing at the place where a miracle was performed for you; and so he de- clared, "Blessed is He who wrought a miracle for me in this place." When his brothers saw this they exclaimed, "It may be that Joseph will hate us."

MIDRASH RABBAH

GENESIS (VAYECHI) [C.]

8. AND JOSEPH RETURNED UNTO EGYPT . . . AND WHEN JOSEPH'S BROTHERS SAW THAT THEIR FATHER WAS DEAD, THEY SAID: IT MAY BE THAT JOSEPH WILL HATE US (L, 14 f.). R. Levi and R. Isaac disagree. R. Levi said: [They feared this] because he did not invite them to dine with him. R. Tanhuma observed: His motive indeed was a noble one, for he reasoned: Formerly my father placed me above Judah, who is a king,⁹ and above Reuben, who is the firstborn; but now it is not right for me to sit above them. They, however, did not speak thus, but, IT MAY BE THAT JOSEPH WILL HATE US. R. Isaac said: They feared because he had gone and looked into that pit.² R. Tanhuma observed: His motive indeed was a pious one.³ ²y, however, did not think so, but, IT MAY BE THAT JOSEPH WILL HATE US.

לו ישטמנו יוסף, יוסף הטאו לו אחיו
וישטמוהו, וזויו אחיו סבורים ששטמנו,
כשם שעשו לו, לו ישטמנו יוסף, ולא עשה להם
כן אלא פרע להם טובות תחת רעות.

ויראו אחי יוסף כי מת אביהם, ומה
ראו עתה שפחדו, אלא שראו בעת שחזרו
מקבורת אביהם ראו שהלך יוסף לברך על אותו
הבור שהשליכוהו אחיו בתוכו, וברך עליו כמו
שחייב אדם לברך על מקום שנעשה לו נס, כבוד
המקום שעשה לי נס במקום הזה, וכיון שראו
כן, אמרו עכשיו שמת אבינו לו ישטמנו יוסף וגו'.

רבה

מדרש יוחי פרי ק

ח. (ד"טו) וישב יוסף מצרימה וגו' ר' לוי נר' יצחק
ר' לוי אמר שלא זמנן לטעודה אמר ר' תנחומא הוא
לא נתפנו אלא לשם שמנים אמר לשעבר אפא מושיב לי
למעלה מיהודה שהווא מלך ולמעלה מראובן שהווא כבוד
ועבשו אינו כדון שאשב למעלה מהן וכן לא אמרו כן
אלא לדי ישטמנו יוסף רבי יצחק אמר הן והציל פאוהו
הבור אמר ר' תנחומא הוא לא נתפנו אלא לשם שמנים
דהם לא אמרו כן אלא לדי ישטמנו יוסף.

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Mei haShiloach - Rabbi Mordechai Leiner
Breishit, Parshat Yayechi

*"You thought evil of me, but E-lohim
thought it for good . . ."* (Bereshit, 50:20)

With this matter, the blessed God showed it was possible to bring the tribes into the exile of Egypt, and the main point of this was the separation they began to experience, for at a time when Israel is unified, then nothing can rule over them. This began when Yosef was separated from the tribes, for while Yaakov Avinu was still among them it could not be discerned who was the greatest of the tribes, for sometimes he would bring this one closer, and sometimes this one closer, just whichever was fitting in his eyes to bring close at that time. Yet before his passing, at the time when he blessed them, he said to Yehuda, "the sons of your father will bow down before you," and all recognized that Yehuda was dominant over his brothers. Because of this Yosef did not know how to conduct himself, whether to seat Yehuda at the head, (for was he) not the king, and it was forbidden to disrespect the king? Or should he seat himself at the head, (for did he not know) himself that Yehuda was the head and would therefore sit in a category unto himself, and not with the tribes? The tribes judged him that he did this out of hatred, and therefore they were punished to go into exile, for they should have judged him favorably.

but that would be problematic for was Josef but that would be problematic for he knew

[complete misunderstanding]

Also with Yosef, his response was counted as a sin, since he left room for them to be mistaken about him. Truly he should have acted by seating himself at the head since at this time he was king, yet he was to know in his heart that Yehuda was greater than he was. (And truly, that his brothers were mistaken about him might seem like a small mistake in the eyes of man (yet it had tremendous results)) Therefore one must always pray before the blessed God that it should never enter his mind to judge another as guilty, and also that his fellow man should not judge him as guilty, and therefore the tribes were punished, in that they were supposed to judge him favorably.