

Table Talk Parshat Vayeshev

Read the Pasukim slowly! Each one has a lot of rich detail. See if you can find these stages as they unfold: hatred, name calling, conspiring, upstanding, lack of empathy.

בראשית ל"ז:י"ח-כ"ז

וַיֵּרְאוּ אוֹתוֹ מֵרֶחֶק וּבְעֵתָם יִקְרַב אֲלֵיהֶם וַיַּתְנַקְלוּ אוֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו הִנֵּה בָעַל הַחֲלָמוֹת הַזֶּה בָּא: וְעַתָּה | לְכוּ וְנַהַרְגֵהוּ וְנִשְׁלַכְהוּ בְּאֶחָד הַבְּרוֹת וְאָמְרֵנוּ חֲזָה רָעָה אֲבָלְתָהוּ וְנִרְאָה מִהֲיָהוּ חֲלָמָתוֹ: וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיִּצְלָהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נִכְנֹו נַפְשׁ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם | רְאוּבֵן אֶל־תִּשְׁכַּחוּ־דָם הַשְׁלִיכוּ אוֹתוֹ אֶל־בְּרוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בְּמִדְבָּר וְגַד אֶל־תִּשְׁלַחוּ־בּוֹ לְמַעַן הִצִּיל אוֹתוֹ מִיָּדָם לְהַשְׁבִּיבוֹ אֶל־אָבִיו: וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר־בָּא יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו וַיִּפְשְׁטוּ אוֹתוֹ יוֹסֵף אֶת־יוֹסֵף אֶת־כִּתְנֵהוּ אֶת־כִּתְנֵת הַפָּסִים אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו: וַיִּשְׁחָהוּ וַיִּשְׁלַכוּ אוֹתוֹ הַבְּרוֹר וְהַבְּרוֹר רָק אֵין בּוֹ מַיִם: וַיִּשְׁבּוּ לְאֶכְל־לֶחֶם וַיִּשְׂאוּ עֵינֵיהֶם וַיִּרְאוּ וְהִנֵּה אֲרֶתֶת יִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים בָּאָה מִגִּלְעָד וּגְמָלֵיהֶם נֹשָׂאִים נִכְאֹת וְצָרִי נֹשֵׂת הוֹלְכִים לְהוֹרִיד מִצְרָיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל־אֶחָיו מִהֲבָצַע כִּי נִהַרְגָה אוֹתָם וְכִסִּינוּ אוֹתָם־דָּמָם: לָכוּ וְנִמְכְּרֵנוּ לְיִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים וְנִדְּנוּ אֶל־יְהוּדָה כִּי־אֶחָיו בְּשָׂרֵנוּ הוּא וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶחָיו:

Genesis 37:18-27

They saw him from afar, and before he came close to them they conspired to kill him. They said to one another, "Here comes that dreamer! Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we can say, 'A savage beast devoured him.' We shall see what comes of his dreams!" But when Reuven heard it, he tried to save him from them. He said, "Let us not take his life." And Reuven went on, "Shed no blood! Cast him into that pit out in the wilderness, but do not touch him yourselves"—intending to save him from them and restore him to his father. When Yosef came up to his brothers, they stripped Yosef of his tunic, the ornamented tunic that he was wearing, and took him and cast him into the pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. Then they sat down to a meal. Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, their camels bearing gum, balm, and ladanum to be taken to Egypt. Then Yehudah said to his brothers, "What do we gain by killing our brother and covering up his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let us not do away with him ourselves. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh." His brothers agreed.

רמב"ן על בראשית ל"ז:כ"ו:א'

וכסינו את דמו והנחנו שהוא כפשוטו כי מנהג רוצחי מסתרים להרוג הנרצח ולקברו ולכסות דמו בעפר

Ramban on Genesis 37:26:1

And we will cover his blood. The correct understanding of this is the simple meaning, it was customary for murderers to hide the killed person in a grave and cover them with dirt.

רש"י על בראשית ל"ז:כ"ב:א'

למען הציל אותו. רוח הקדש מעידה על ראוּבֵן שֶׁלֹא אָמַר זֹאת אֱלָא לְהַצִּיל אוֹתוֹ שֶׁיָּבֵא הוּא וַיַּעֲלֵנוּ מִשָּׁם, אָמַר אֲנִי בְכוֹר וְגָדוֹל שֶׁבָּכְלָם, לֹא יִתְּלֶה הַסֵּרְחוֹן אֱלָא בִּי:

Rashi on Genesis 37:22:1

THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER HIM [OUT OF THEIR HAND] — The Holy Spirit (Scripture) bears witness for Reuven that he said this only for the purpose of saving his brother — that he would come afterwards and draw him up from there. He thought, "I am the first-born and the chief among them, and blame will attach to no one but myself" (Genesis Rabbah 84:15).

ספורנו על בראשית ל"ז:כ"ו:א'

מה בצע מה תועלת. כי אמנם הנקמה תכין לאחד משתים אם נשלם לעושי הרע והנה בזה כי נהרג את אחינו נשלם רעה גם לעצמנו כי יכאב לבנו על מיתתו ועל אכזריותנו נגדו. ואם להפחיד את הנשארם שישמעו וייראו מלהזיק אותנו. הנה גם זה המין מהתועלת לא נשיג כי נעלים את מיתתו:

Sforno on Genesis 37:26:1

What will we gain. By this we will do harm not only to Yosef but to ourselves, because we will be filled with remorse.

חזקוני, בראשית ל"ז:כ"ו:ב'

מה בצע כל המברך יהודה הרי זה מנאץ לפי שהציל יוסף בלשון מה בצע דמשמע הא אם יש בצע נהרגנו ועל זה נאמר ובוצע ברך נאץ ה'

Chizkuni, Genesis 37:26:2

מה בצע, the Talmud in Sanhedrin 6, states that anyone who blesses Yehuda for having said this (i.e. saving Yosef's life) is guilty of insulting him instead, because the reason he gave for saving Yosef's life was not in order to do him a favor but the reverse. He had implied that if killing him would be profitable they would certainly kill him. The only reason why they did not was because they could not see any advantage in it for themselves in doing so. The Torah spells this out in the next phrase.



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Bystander Versus Upstander: by <http://www.upstand.org>

A Victim, Bully, Bystander and Upstander can be anyone: a friend, a teacher/staff member, parent/caregiver, coach, colleague, classmate; and ANY age.

Bystander: a person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part.

Upstander: 1. A person who stands up for something, as contrasted to a bystander who remains inactive. 2. (verb) Being willing to stand up and take action in defense of others: "Speak up, #upstand – stop bullying!"

A bystander is someone who sees bullying happening and chooses to react by laughing, giggling, pointing, staring, doing nothing, whispering to other people about it and/or gossiping about it. They might play 'the messenger' between bully and victim, spread rumors they have heard or join in when a bully is ignoring/excluding someone. Or a bystander might 'like' or favorite a mean post on Facebook, Instagram or other social media sites. Being a bystander is like saying YOU agree with the bully. Not cool.

How to be an UPSTANDER!

- There's power in numbers. Team up with others to take the power out of bullying. Even standing with one other person is double the power you had standing alone. "let us help", "stop it", "we'll find an adult", "are you ok"?
 - Questioning a rumor is a great way to stop it in its tracks. When someone passes along a rumour, ask them how they know whether or not it's true.
 - If you see someone being cyberbullied, take a moment to write that person something supportive. Whether you write a private message or a public post, it will help them know they're not alone.
 - Sit with someone who's new or left out, or invite them to sit with you and your friends. One simple act of inclusion can have a lasting effect on someone's feelings of self worth.
 - Tell the bully to stop, if you can do so safely – "bullying is not ok", "this isn't cool", "please stop"
 - Shift the focus and redirect the bully away from the victim
- <http://www.upstand.org>

Let's Talk!

Why did the brothers have such hatred towards Yosef?

What did they want to do to him?

Describe Reuven as an upstander? Where did he help? Where did he fall short?

Was Yehuda an upstander?

Were there any bystanders?

What feeling does Yehuda think the brothers will have if they kill Yosef?

How and when can you be an upstander?

Kids... ask your parents!

Did you ever see someone being bullied and try to stand up for them? What was that like?

Did anyone ever bully you?



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