



#YHTyouandme

Table Talk Parshat Miketz

"Kindness, empathy, and care arise from standing so close, feeling what the other feels."

- Alan Morinis

בראשית מ"ב:כ"א

Genesis 42:21

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו אֲבֹלֵי אֲשָׁמִים | אֲנַחְנוּ עַל-
אָחִינוּ אֲשֶׁר רָאִינוּ צָרַת נַפְשׁוֹ בְּהִתְחַנְנוּ אֵלֵינוּ
וְלֹא שָׁמַעְנוּ עַל-כֵּן בָּאָה אֵלֵינוּ הַצָּרָה הַזֹּאת:

They said to one another, "Alas, we are being punished on account of our brother, because we looked on at his anguish, yet paid no attention as he pleaded with us. That is why this distress has come upon us."

רמב"ן על בראשית מ"ב:כ"א

Ramban on Genesis 42:21:1

אשר ראינו צרת נפשו בהתחננו אלינו חשבו
להם האכזריות לעונש גדול יותר מן המכירה כי
היה אחיהם בשרם מתחנן ומתנפל לפניהם ולא
ירחמו ...

We saw the anguish. They considered their callous deafness to Yosef's pleas to be a greater wrong than the actual sale.

"Compassion is the feeling of empathy which the pain of one being of itself awakens in another; and the higher and more human the beings are, the more keenly attuned are they to re-echo the note of suffering which, like a voice from heaven, penetrates the heart."

- Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

"Why did they (the brothers) not recall the sale of their brother during the three long days in prison, when they lived in fear of what destiny awaited them and were apprehensive that they would not return home? Surely, such incarceration is particularly appropriate for stimulating feelings of remorse. In the light of this, the *Akedat Yitzhak* provides us with an illuminating explanation. This commentary suggests that only when they were faced with the prospect of returning home to their father, one brother short, did the memory of Joseph arise in their minds, by association: Our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul.."

- Nechama Leibowitz

Let's Talk!

When did the brothers realize that they were callous to Yosef?

Why do you think it took their own suffering to feel the pain of Yosef?

How did returning to Yakov without Binyamin bring up the sale of Yosef in the minds of the brothers?

Why did the brothers think they were being punished for ignoring the suffering of Yosef?

Why do you think the Ramban identifies their lack of empathy for Yosef as worse than actually selling Yosef?

Where in your life could you have more empathy for other people?

Was there ever something that happened that was hard for you but helped you understand other people better?



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