

How can I gain insight into a person's mind? How can I discern what they consider important? How do they handle troubling or distressing situations? The Torah suggests we observe the individual's speech. How a person speaks and express themselves can provide invaluable insights into a person's makeup. The Torah teaches this through the story of Joseph and his brothers.

Joseph and his brothers misunderstood each other. For various reasons they could not get on the same page. The Torah records that instead of murdering him, the other brothers sold Joseph into slavery

(בראשית לז כו-כז):

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל-אֶחָיו מִה-בָּצַע כִּי נִהְרַג אֶת-אֶחָיו וְכָסִינוּ אֶת-דָּמּוֹ: לָלוּ וְנִמְכְּרָנוּ לַיִּשְׁמַעֲאֵלִים וַיְדַלְנוּ אֶל-תְּהִי-בּוֹ כִּי-אֶחָיו בְּשָׂרֵנוּ הוּא וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶחָיו:

What led the brothers, including Judah, who moments before were enraged to the point of killing their own brother, to agree to Judah's suggestion to spare his life and instead sell him as a slave? How did this satisfy their desire for retribution against Joseph?

When Joseph arrives in Egypt he is sold as a slave to Potiphar, Pharaoh's chief executioner. The Torah tells us that Joseph was successful, (בראשית לט:ג):

וַיֵּרָא אֲדֹנָיו כִּי יְהוָה אִתּוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-הוּא עֹשֶׂה יְהוָה מַצְלִיחַ בְּיָדּוֹ:

Rashi says שם שמים שגור בפיו, כי ה' אתו. Whatever he was doing, however he felt, Joseph consistently invoked Gd's name. Where did Joseph learn to do this?

The Torah tells us when Jacob was told by his mother to stand in for his brother and receive the blessings from Isaac, he objected for several reasons. When Jacob reluctantly agreed and appeared before Isaac with the meal Rebekah prepared, he invoked Gd's name when he explained how he was able to prepare and present the meal so quickly:

(בראשית כז כ):

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-בְּנוֹ מִה-זֶּה מַהֲרַת לְמַצָּא בְּנִי וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי הִקְרָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנָי:

Isaac was suspicious because he reasoned that it was typical of Jacob to mention Gd all the time, not Esau: (בראשית כז כא)

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-יַעֲקֹב גִּשְׁה-נָא וְאִמְשֶׁךְ בְּנִי הָאֵתָה זֶה בְּנִי עֹשֶׂה אִם-לֹא:

רש"י - גשה נא ואמשך. אמר יעקב בלבד אין דרך עשו להיות שם שמים שגור בפיו, וזה אמר כי הקרה ה' אלהיך:

Rashi says that Isaac had doubts as to the identity of his son when Jacob mentioned Gd's name. Apparently, Jacob passed this trait of constantly mentioning Gd to his favorite son, Joseph. Joseph spent much time learning from his father, picking up his mannerisms and nuances. He emulated Jacob in life as well as in deed. It is interesting to note that in Jacob's encounter with Esau, he refers to Gd when talking about his eleven children,

(בראשית לג:ה):

וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא אֶת-הַנָּשִׁים וְאֶת-הַיְלָדִים וַיֹּאמֶר מִי-אֵלֶּה לָּךְ וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַיְלָדִים אֲשֶׁר-חָגַן אֱלֹהִים  
אֶת-עַבְדְּךָ:

When Joseph meets Benjamin in Parashat Miketz, he blesses Benjamin in a similar way  
(בראשית מג-כט):

וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא אֶת-בְּנֵימִין אָחִיו בֶּן-אִמּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲזֶה אַחֲיָכֶם הַקָּטָן אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם אֵלַי וַיֹּאמְרוּ  
אֱלֹהִים יַחְנֶנּוּ בְנֵי:

Joseph uses the same phraseology and the name of Gd his father ingrained in him many years before.

The children of Leah apparently did not pick up this trait from their father. When confronted by Jacob after they avenged their sister Deena by murdering the people of the city of Shchem, Simon and Levi do not invoke Gd. Instead they simply ask rhetorically should our sister be considered a prostitute? Throughout the ordeal with the sale of Joseph, until the end of Parashat Miketz, the brothers never invoke the name of Gd.

Interneccine rivalry permeates the Book of Genesis. We have Cain and Abel, the three children of Noah, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau. In each case, one of the children was selected while the others were rejected. After murdering his brother, Cain is exiled. Ham is cursed after he abuses his father. Ishmael is exiled by Sarah and Abraham to ensure he does not corrupt or interfere with Isaac. In each case the rejected child is exiled from his home and becomes irrelevant to the unfolding narrative.

Jacob was hesitant when Rebekah advised him to flee to Charan in order to escape his brother's wrath. Perhaps Jacob realized that flight meant exile which meant rejection. Esau would assume the place that was supposed to be his as the third link in the patriarchal chain. Rebekah reassured him that she will bring him back home after a period of time. His exile would be temporary, his place in the patriarchal chain would remain secure.

Judah and the brothers viewed sending Joseph into exile as the proper way to settle their sibling rivalry as had been done in all previous cases. The goal was to remove Joseph and make him irrelevant to their story. Judah realized there was nothing to gain by killing him, *מה בצע כי נהרג את אחינו וכסינו את דמו*, at the end of the day we will accomplish our goal by exiling him. Once he is gone from the scene, his dreams are null and void as would be his place in the ultimate Jewish destiny.

Suddenly the Torah tells us about another exile. Not only was Joseph exiled, but so was Judah. Judah never mentions Gd's name. When he makes the cold calculation as to what to do with his brother Joseph, the name of Gd never comes up. When he separates from

his brothers, marriages, fathers and names his children, the name of Gd is not mentioned. When two of his sons meet an untimely demise due to their inappropriate actions, Judah appears lost. Instead of acting decisively regarding his daughter in law, Tamar, he deflects her by telling her to wait for his third son, Shelah, to come of age and marry her. This despite the fact that he feared losing Shelah as well and had no intention to allow him to marry her. Ultimately Judah leaves his home and travels to shear his sheep and encounters Tamar who becomes pregnant with his children. The Torah relates the shame Judah felt at being deceived when he sought to retrieve his staff and signet ring. His principles have been corrupted, he has become remote, exiled from his father's house and values. He has hit bottom. Even though his name itself means to thank Gd and admit his failures, that is the farthest thing from Judah's mind.

What motivated Judah to act so callously towards Joseph and Tamar? Perhaps Judah resented that his mother, Leah, was less loved by Jacob than Rachel. This love manifested in the favoritism Jacob lavished on Joseph and was expressed by the brothers in jealousy displayed towards Joseph. Each gift Jacob gave to Joseph reopened the wound caused by the rivalry between Leah and Rachel.

Judah protected his own children, taking a bride for his eldest son Er and ultimately preventing his third son Shelah from marrying her out of fear that he would die like his older brothers. Judah realized that the twins carried by Tamar would now challenge Shelah for their proper place in his family. The same sibling rivalry caused by children from different mothers would befall him and his children.

His moment of redemption arrived when he was able to overlook his own shame and admit his mistakes. He now saw that Gd has plans that don't mesh with what we think is appropriate. He realized there was a master plan that directed father to marry both Rachel and Leah. Sometimes the expected result changes. The younger child may have a bigger and more important role than the other, older children. Peretz will eclipse Shelah. In fact King David, the Messiah himself, would descend from Peretz. The Torah says צדקה ממני, she was righteous and I was not. Rashi cites the Midrash that Judah admitted that he was wrong and Gd said that this was all My doing in order to set in motion the ultimate coming of the Messiah. Gd has reentered Judah's world. He publicly admits his mistake regarding Tamar, and when faced with a life and death decision that would spare him embarrassment but ultimately deny him his place as the father of the Messiah, he courageously rose above his own petty honor and spared their lives.

Subconsciously Judah now realized that he made a terrible mistake years before when he was confronted with a similar situation and sold Joseph into slavery to protect his self-perceived status among the children of Jacob. Judah lacked a recognition and acknowledgment of Gd in his life wherever he went and whatever he did. This deficiency led him to act callously towards his brother Joseph and by overcoming it he

was able to rebound and regain his rightful place in Jewish Destiny. He is now ready to accept Joseph and his great spiritual role and entertain the possibility of reconciliation.

Joseph was better equipped to handle the difficulties that befell him because שם שמים, שגורה בפיו, he learned the lesson from his father to always turn to Gd and rely on Him. He was tested by the wife of Potiphar and the image of his father saved him. At a moment of weakness he relied on the training he absorbed from his father on how to act in a difficult situation. He reacquired that fortitude at the last minute and gained the strength to survive the ordeal of prison. Mentioning the name of Gd consistently is a key character trait of Joseph as he does so when interpreting the butler's, baker's and Pharaoh's dreams. It was such a part of his makeup that he instinctively included a reference to Gd in the names of each of his children. In comparison, Judah did not.

The only times Judah or his brothers invoked Gd's name was when they realized that the money they used to purchase provisions in Egypt was returned in their sacks: (בראשית (מב:כח):

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־אֶחָיו הוֹשֵׁב כֶּסֶף וְגַם הִנֵּה בְּאִמְתִּי וַיֵּצֵא לָבָם וַיַּחֲרֹדּוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אֶחָיו לֵאמֹר מִה־זֹּאת עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים לָנוּ:

and when they were brought back to Joseph's home after the discovery of the goblet planted in Benjamin's sack and Judah admitted (בראשית מג טז)

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה מִה־נֹּאמַר לְאֹדְנִי מִה־נִּדְבָר וּמִה־נִּצְטַדֵּק הָאֱלֹהִים מִצָּא אֶת־עֵוֹן עַבְדֶּיךָ הִנֵּנוּ עֲבָדִים לְאֹדְנִי גַם־אֲנִי וְגַם אֲשֶׁר־נִמְצָא הַגִּבִּיעַ בִּידִי:

On the other hand, Joseph associates Gd's name with everything he has done or is about to do. What brought about this change in Judah?

Perhaps it is Joseph's repeated use of the name of Gd in their conversations recorded in Parashat Miketz that spurred the brothers to realize they, the children of Jacob, are the ones who should be invoking Gd's name, not an Egyptian overlord or his interpreter. They were impressed by his consistent use of Gd's name before and after he revealed his identity to them.

Or perhaps the distinction between Judah and Joseph derives from their respective mothers. Some people see Gd in the rear view mirror, after encountering a difficult situation. Others anticipate Gd before they act and realize that He is guiding them all along. When Leah realized that Jacob did not love her as much as Rachel, she gave her first two sons names that reflected her pain and anguish. On the other hand, after the birth of Joseph, Rachel looked to the future and asked Gd to give her another child. Like their mother, Leah's children displayed a retrospective association with Gd, seeing Gd in the rear view mirror after they were confronted with difficulty. Only after they are taken to prison do they express remorse over how they treated Joseph. Only after they discover the danger they are in because of the returned money do they ask what has Gd done to

them. Joseph displayed a prospective view, inherited from his mother, to rely on Gd for guidance about the future, whether in the house of Potiphar, jail with the butler and baker or when he came before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams.

After Jacob's death, the brothers apparently changed their approach. They sent a message to Joseph : (בראשית נב יח)

כֹּה-תֹאמְרוּ לְיוֹסֵף אֲנָא שָׂא נָא פֶשַׁע אֶחָיֶךָ וְחַטָּאתֶם כִּי-רָעָה גְמְלוֹךְ וְעַתָּה שָׂא נָא לְפָשַׁע עַבְדֶּי  
אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹיךָ וַיִּבְרַךְ יוֹסֵף בְּדַבָּרָם אֵלָיו:

They asked forgiveness in the name of the Gd of your father, the Gd whose name you always invoked but due to our own arrogance we never did. They acknowledged they learned the lesson that keeping the name of Gd on your lips at all times is the secret to living a redeemed life that can withstand the temptations and pull of jealousy, one that threatened to destroy their family and destiny. It is also the secret to surviving a long exile like they were about to endure. It is the secret for us to survive the long exile that we endure to this day, with the promise of redemption always on our minds and lips.

Joseph replies:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף אֵל-תִּירָאוּ כִּי הִתַּחַת אֱלֹהִים אָנִי:

He realized they finally understood him, that it was always about שם שמים שגור בפיו and he forgives them. He remains the same Joseph who before he died, strengthened the Jewish people by telling them eventually Gd will remember them and they will leave Egypt and return home: (בראשית ח כד):

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֶחָיו אֲנֹכִי מֵת וְאֱלֹהִים פָּקַד יַפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהָעֵלָה אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶל-  
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיְעֶקֶב:

The name of Gd was always on his lips and his faith remained intact till the very end. Reliance on Gd and invoking His name properly is sine qua non for inclusion among the great patriarchs of the Jewish People. Perhaps that is why from all the brothers, Joseph alone is considered among the great patriarchs of the Jewish people, for he alone exemplified שם שמים שגור בפיו.

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