



### Parashat Vayeshev

In this week's Parasha, Parashat Vayeshev, we hear the story of Yosef and his brothers. As we know, Yaakov's favorite son was Yosef and his brothers were very jealous because he got special treatment, like the colorful coat Yaakov makes for Yosef. Yosef tells his brothers about dreams that he had which ultimately foretell that he is destined to rule over them, which just increases their jealousy and hatred towards him. The brothers plot to kill Yosef but Reuven, the oldest son, suggests that they throw him into a pit instead, intending to come back later and save him as Rashi says:

רוח הקודש מעידה על ראובן שלא אמר זאת אלא להציל אותו (בראשית לז:כד)

While Yosef is in the pit, Yehuda sells him to the Ishmaelites. Then, after dipping Yosef's special coat in the blood of a goat they show it to their father which causes him to believe that his favorite son was killed by a wild animal. Yosef is taken to Egypt and is sold to Potiphar, a very important man to Pharaoh. Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Yosef, he rejects her and then she twists the story and Yosef ends up in jail. While in jail, Yosef interprets other inmates' dreams.

As I read over this week's Parasha, I noticed that the Torah really points out that Yaakov favored Yosef, as it says:

וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת-יוֹסֵף מִכָּל-בָּנָיו (בראשית לז:ג)

But wouldn't it have just been obvious even if the Torah didn't straight out say it? Through the Torah explicitly stating this information we are able to learn a very important lesson about parenting.

With this Parasha, the Torah opens up the discussion of challenges that come with parenting. Yaakov, one of our avot, had a clear favorite child. Ultimately, we see the consequences this led to—there was so much hatred that Yosef's brothers wanted to kill him! This is a very intense hatred that was only started because of the favoritism he received. We must understand that when it comes to parenting it is very important to make sure that we don't show favoritism.

While spending my year in Israel at Midreshet Torat Chessed, where we work with the children of Bet Elazraki, a children's home for youth at risk, I am presented with this challenge. Yes, sometimes certain children show more love than others and our automatic gut reaction is to give them more attention because they show their appreciation. Although that is our initial reaction, it is important to make sure you

don't actively show favoritism. I love every child the same amount, even though some are harder to connect with. I make sure to give every kid the same amount of attention and love. Although it may seem like it is something that is not always in our control, we have to make sure to control what we can and not act differently towards any child.

Lynn Franco is honored to represent her community in Midreshet Torat Chessed this upcoming year. She says that growing up in a traditional home has taught her the importance of the Torah, as it is the guide book to life. She has also learned the value of her community and family. Lynn is forever grateful for all of her years of Yeshiva education. She attended Yeshivah of Flatbush from Atideinu until tenth grade. She then transferred and graduated from Hillel Yeshiva. Lynn always had a love for Israel but her passion grew after spending an adventurous summer there with ILEAD. Chessed has always been an integral part of Lynn's life for as long as she can remember and that is why she is going to be spending the year giving back to others while learning in Israel.