

Winks of Love



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In this week's parasha we read about Yosef (Joseph) and his complex relationship with his brothers. We see how it becomes so tense that the brothers decide to kill Yosef. Ultimately, however, they decide to sell him as a slave.

When describing the Ishmaelites that Yosef was sold to, the verse says: "Ishmaelites were coming from Gilead and their camels were bearing spices and balsam and birthwort". Does it not seem that the details of the spices, balsam and birthwort are irrelevant? We are at a poignant moment in the story, Yosef is about

to be sold as a slave, betrayed by his own brothers, yet the verse seems to take a detour to describe the spices that the Ishmaelites were carrying! Why?

Rashi (1040-1105) explains that the seemingly irrelevant list is to show us how much God cared about Yosef.

Ishmaelites usually transported petroleum and resin, both of which have a foul smell. God, in His endless kindness, ensured that these specific travellers were carrying spices that smell pleasant, so that Yosef wouldn't have to suffer the foul odour. God knew that this was already a difficult ordeal for Yosef and He didn't want him to suffer even one little bit more than necessary.

There is a story of a king who had a son that lived in a castle far away. One day, a person asked the prince,

"how do you know whether your father loves you, or even remembers you? You live so far away!". The prince answered him proudly "I know my father loves me because of my morning post. Every day, I wake up and I have a letter on my breakfast table that reads, "I love you son, you're doing great. Love from your father, the king."

We are like the prince, we get little 'letters' or loving winks from God all the time. Sometimes we have bad days, days on which it seems that everything that could go wrong does. However, if we try to see the little things that are good, the little winks of love from God, we can be reminded that God loves us and is telling us, "I love you, you're doing great. Love from your father, the king".

Parasha Scramble

Unscramble the letters to make words related to the parasha.

1. oerstbh
2. tismsheial
3. yisevhva
4. icspes
5. snopsirco

