

The Moment of Truth

Rabbi Yosef Vogel

We all experience moments in our lives when we are faced with profound moral dilemmas. Sometimes we find ourselves in positive circumstances and as a result we are in a good position to make the right choice. However there are also trying moments in our lives and it is under these circumstances that we lose clarity and the correct path in our journey becomes obscure.

In one of the most epic scenes in the story of Joseph and his brothers, after Joseph had been sold as a slave and finds himself alone in a foreign and hostile environment, he is confronted with the greatest test in his life. Joseph has moved on and has become a successful financial consultant to one of the most prominent people in Pharaoh's court. At this point the wife of his master tries to seduce the young and handsome Joseph and as we are told Joseph is unsure as to what to do.

After having been so utterly betrayed by his brothers, and no family or friends to call on, his sense of loneliness and despondency are beyond anything we can imagine. Yes, Joseph was a great man brought up by his father Jacob, has been exposed to greatness and is thoroughly imbued with the ideals with which his father has lived. However he has also witness profound betrayal by people supposedly representing those same ideals and we can appreciate his hesitation in closing his options.

It is at this point, that all of a sudden, he witnesses the image of his saintly father and everything becomes very clear. Joseph discovers his Raison d'être and in the process helps to define it for all Jewish people throughout the ages.

There are many reasons why we hold on to our tradition in both good times and more difficult times. However there is one reason more than any other that lies at the core of our existence as Jews and which defines our main purpose. The word is, continuity.

We may as some points in our lives be confused and uncertain regarding judgments and decisions that we have to make. We should always remember that nothing more sums up our lives as Jews then that, each and every one of us are a link in a chain that connects our rich past with the future. And if any point in our lives we are having doubts as to our purpose or mission, we should evoke in our minds the image of our parents or grandparents and as in the story of Joseph things will become very clear.

13 December | 20 Kislev

Vayeishev

Shabbat Begins: 3:37 pm

Shabbat Ends: 4:46 pm