



The Joy of Torah - For Life

## **Parshas Shemos - Forgiveness is Complicated!**

**Shmuz by Rabbi Shimon Max**

**Written by Moshe Reuvein Sussman**

The Midrash on Parsha Shmos, this week's parsha, mentions in the narrative of Yosef that when Yosef was passing by the pit that he was thrown into years before, he stopped and stared at it. The Maharzu explains that when Yosef's brothers saw Yosef staring, they thought that Yosef was remembering their sin. But, in reality, Yosef was only staring at the pit to remember the kindness of Hashem and to make a bracha in thanks to Hashem for all that happened as a result of his brothers' actions--which he was obligated to do--but not because he was remembering the sin of his brothers.

It seems that even though the brothers saw Yosef make a bracha, which was the halacha, they still suspected him of not acting for the sake of Heaven, but rather because he might be holding a grudge. Why would they think such a thing and not give Yosef the benefit of the doubt? Perhaps we can answer this question with another question. Is it even possible in this case for a person to make a bracha for the sake of heaven? Perhaps the brothers felt that it was not possible for Yosef to make a Bracha, which would require him to recreate the miracle of his personal salvation in his mind, without feeling on some infinitesimal level a need to make the brothers realize how wrong they were, since they were standing right next to the site where his brothers caused him so much pain. Yet, Yosef still managed to overcome the negative aspect of what happened and say the bracha fully for the sake of heaven.

We see from here that even if someone forgives someone, an opportunity could arise that can potentially cause the negative feelings to resurface, to which the recipients will be very sensitive and cause them pain. So even long after we have forgiven someone, we need to be careful not to say or do anything that may cause us to bring the pain back within us as it can resurface, and even if it doesn't, the other party may very well assume it has if we do anything at all that can raise their suspicions.