



The Joy of Torah - For Life

Parshas Vayeishev - Seeing the Future

Shmuz by Rabbi Shimon Max

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The Torah, at the beginning of the Parsha, describes Yosef Hatzadik in a negative term of “V’hu Na’ar.” The Seforno explains that what the Torah is saying that because of Yosef’s “na’aros” that he was young, he ended up sinning ,because he wasn’t able to see the “end of the matter” because he lacked life's experiences, as he was only 17 years old, and even though he was brilliant in every way, he still had trouble seeing the future results of his actions. The Rosh Hayeshiva, Reb Henschel Leibowitz ZT’L brought out that Yosef Hatzadik was taught all the Torah that his father learnt in Yeshivas Shem V’ Ever, and he was therefore a huge chacham. He was brilliant in worldly matters as well as he was made the CFO of Yaskov’s estate, and even more he had so much fear of Heaven which is the character trait based on seeing the future! Yet even so, since he was a youngster, he wasn’t able to see the future to the fullest extent and didn’t anticipate the consequences of his actions properly. What is the reason for this? For us, our lack of experience makes us not know as much, but Yosef Hatzadik was brilliant, he knew the entire Torah and definitely had the ability to predict what the results of his actions will be?

Rabbi Max wanted to say there are two points here - that despite Yosef Hatzadik knowing everything, his young age hindered him in 2 ways. 1. A person who is young, it’s much harder for him to mamash see the future as right now in front of his face, because a person who’s older, since he already experienced similar situations to these, he has his future etched in front of him in the present and he can bridge that gap much more and base his decision on that, much more than a younger person. 2’ An older person, since he already experience many times doing actions and there being consequences, it’s already in his kishkes that if you do something there are consequences and therefore he feels much more of a pressure in his decision now because of the future results, whereas a young person, even if he has the ability to predict the results, he doesn't feel the same pressure to make sure to factor in the future into his present decision.

Therefore, Rabbi Max concluded, we all the more so have to learn Mussar to drill into ourselves the idea of seeing the future. As well, we have to make sure to ask advice from someone older since they can see the future results of our decisions much better than us.