

Yosef: 'Going the Distance' for Proximate Reconciliation

Source Sheet by Jennifer Raskas

Introduction: Rambam: Hilchot Teshuva

Mishneh Torah, Repentance 4:2

(2) Among this group of twenty-four are five transgressions which block the way of repentance against the sinners, they are: (1) **he who secedes from the community...**

(5) He who despises criticism for he, indeed, left no path open for repentance, as it is **criticism that begets repentance**. Forsooth, when a man is informed that his sins are known, and that he should be ashamed of himself for his wrongdoings, he does repent... In like manner did all of the prophets criticise Israel until they turned in repentance. It is, therefore, necessary to appoint over each and every community in Israel a great scholar of mature age, God-fearing since his early youth, and **loved by them**, to preach to the public and turn them to repentance...

משנה תורה, הלכות תשובה די:ב'
 (ב) ומהן חמשה דברים הנועלים
 דרכי התשובה בפני עושיהו. ואלו
 הן. א) הפורש מן הצבור...
 ה) והשוניא את התוכחות שהרי לא
 הניח לו דרך תשובה. **שהתוכחה**
גורמת לתשובה שבזמן שמודיעין לו
 לאדם חטאיו ומכלימין אותו חזר
 בתשובה... וכן כל הנביאים הוכיחו
 לישראל עד שחזרו בתשובה.
 לפיכך צריך להעמיד בכל קהל
 וקהל מישראל חכם גדול וזקן וירא
 שמים מנעוריו **ואהוב להם** שיהא
 מוכיח לרבים ומחזירן בתשובה...

Part I - Joseph at 17

Genesis 37:2-5

(2) This, then, is the line of Jacob: At seventeen years of age, Joseph tended the flocks with his brothers, as a helper to the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. And Joseph brought bad reports of them to their father. (3) Now Israel loved Joseph best of all his sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he had made him an ornamented tunic. (4) And when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his brothers, they hated him so that they could not speak a friendly word to him. (5) Once Joseph had a dream which he told to his brothers; and they hated him even more.

בראשית ל"ז:ב-ה'

(ב) אֵלֶּה הַיְלָדִים וְיֹסֵף בֶּן־שִׁבְעֵ-עָשָׂר שָׁנָה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת־אֶחָיו בְּצֹאן וְהוּא נָעַר אֶת־בְּנֵי בְלָהָה וְאֶת־בְּנֵי זִלְפָּה נְשֵׁי אָבִיו וַיִּבֵּא יוֹסֵף אֶת־דִּבְתֵּם רָעָה אֶל־אָבִיהֶם: (ג) וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בְּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זִקְנִים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ כְּתוּנֵת פָּסִים: (ד) וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶחָיו כִּי־אֵתָּו אֶהָב אָבִיהֶם מִכָּל־אֶחָיו וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלָם: (ה) וַיַּחְלֵם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם וַיַּגִּד לְאֶחָיו וַיֹּסְפוּ עוֹד שִׁנְאוֹ אֹתוֹ:

Genesis 37:6-8

(6) He said to them, "Hear this dream which I have dreamed: (7) There we were binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly my sheaf stood up and remained upright; then your sheaves gathered around and bowed low to my sheaf." (8) His brothers

בראשית ל"ז:ו-ח'

(ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמְעוּ־נָא הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חֲלַמְתִּי: (ז) וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי־נֹבֵד מֵאֲלֵמִים אֲלֵמִים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלֵמְתִי וְגַם־נִצְבָּה וְהִנֵּה תִסְבְּינָה אֲלֵמְתֵיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְאֲלֵמְתִי: (ח) וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֶחָיו

answered, “Do you mean to reign over us? Do you mean to rule over us?” And they hated him even more for his talk about his dreams.

הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ אִם־מְשׁוֹל
תִּמְשַׁל בָּנוּ וַיֹּסְפוּ עוֹד שֹׁנֵא אֹתוֹ
עַל־חֲלֻמֹתָיו וְעַל־דְּבָרָיו׃

Genesis 37:12-17

(12) One time, when his brothers had gone to pasture their father's flock at Shechem, (13) Israel said to Joseph, “Your brothers are pasturing at Shechem. Come, I will send you to them.” He answered, “I am ready.”

(14) And he said to him, “Go and see how your brothers are and how the flocks are faring, and bring me back word.” So he sent him from the valley of Hebron. When he reached Shechem, (15) a man came upon him wandering in the fields. The man asked him, “What are you looking for?” (16) He answered, “I am looking for my brothers. Could you tell me where they are pasturing?” (17) The man said, “They have gone from here, for I heard them say: Let us go to Dothan.” So Joseph followed his brothers and found them at Dothan.

בראשית ל"ז: י"ב-י"ז

(יב) וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲיו לְרֻעוֹת אֶת־צֹאן
אֲבִיהֶם בְּשֶׁכֶם׃ (יג) וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֶל־יוֹסֵף הֲלוֹא אַחֲיָךְ רֹעִים בְּשֶׁכֶם
לְכָה וְאִשְׁלַחְךָ אֲלֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ
הַנְּנִי׃ (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לָךְ־נָא רֵאֵה
אֶת־שְׁלוֹם אַחֲיָךְ וְאֶת־שְׁלוֹם הַצֹּאן
וְהַשְׂבָּנִי דַבֵּר וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ מֵעֵמֶק חֶבְרוֹן
וַיָּבֹא שָׂכְמָה׃ (טו) וַיִּמְצְאוּהוּ אִישׁ
וְהָיָה תַעֲהָ בַשָּׂדֶה וַיִּשְׁאַלְהוּ הָאִישׁ
לֵאמֹר מַה־תִּבְקֶשׁ׃ (טז) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־
אֲחֵי אָנֹכִי מִבְּקֶשׁ הַגִּידָה־נָא לִי
אֵיפֹה הֵם רֹעִים׃ (יז) וַיֹּאמֶר הָאִישׁ
נָסְעוּ מִזֶּה כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי אֲמָרִים גִּלְכָה
דֹתָנָה וַיֵּלֶךְ יוֹסֵף אַחֲרֵי אַחֲיו
וַיִּמְצְאוּם בְּדוֹתָן׃

Genesis 37:18-20

(18) They saw him from afar, and before he came close to them they conspired to kill him. (19) They said to one another, “Here comes that dreamer! (20) Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we can say, ‘A savage beast devoured him.’ We shall see what comes of his dreams!”

בראשית ל"ז:י"ח-כ'

(יח) וַיִּרְאוּ אֹתוֹ מֵרָחֹק וּבְטָרֵם יִקְרָב
 אֵלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְנַכְלוּ אֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ: (יט)
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו הִנֵּה בָעֵל
 הַחֲלֻמוֹת הִלְטָה בָּא: (כ) וְעַתָּה וְלָכוּ
 וְנַהַרְגֵהוּ וְנִשְׁלַכְהוּ בְּאֶתֶד הַבְּרוֹת
 וְאָמַרְנוּ חִיָּה רָעָה אֲכָלְתָהוּ וְנִרְאָה
 מִהַיְהִינָּה חֲלֻמְתּוֹ:

Part II - Joseph learns to serve Potifar and is the victim of "Dibatam Ra'ah"**Genesis 39:17-20**

(17) Then she told him the same story, saying, “The Hebrew slave whom you brought into our house came to me to dally with me; (18) but when I screamed at the top of my voice, he left his garment with me and fled outside.” (19) When his master heard the story that his wife told him, namely, “Thus and so your slave did to me,” he was furious. (20) So Joseph’s master had him put in prison, where the king’s prisoners were confined. But even while he was there in prison,

בראשית ל"ט:י"ז-כ'

(יז) וַתִּדְבַר אֵלָיו כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
 לֵאמֹר בָּא-אֵלַי הָעֶבֶד הָעִבְרָיִ אֲשֶׁר-
 הֵבֵאתָ לָנוּ לְצַחֵק בְּנִי: (יח) וַיְהִי
 כַּהֲרִימִי קוֹלִי וְאֶקְרָא וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ
 אֵצְלִי וַיֵּנָס הַחוּצָה: (יט) וַיְהִי כִשְׁמַע
 אֲדָנָיו אֶת-דְּבָרֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר דִּבְרָה
 אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה עָשָׂה לִי
 עֶבְדְּךָ וַיַּחַר אָפוֹ: (כ) וַיִּקַּח אֲדוּשֶׁם
 יוֹסֵף אֹתוֹ וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ אֶל-בַּיִת הַסֵּהָר
 מִקְלוֹם אֲשֶׁר-אֲסוּרֵי [אֲסִירֵי] הַמֶּלֶךְ
 אֲסוּרִים וַיְהִי-שָׁם בְּבַיִת הַסֵּהָר:

Part III - Joseph in Jail

Genesis 39:21

(21) the LORD was with Joseph: He extended kindness to him and disposed the chief jailer favorably toward him.

בראשית ל"ט:כ"א

(כא) וַיְהִי יְקוֹק אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּט אֵלָיו חֶסֶד וַיִּתֶּן חַנּוּן בְּעֵינָיו שָׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר:

Genesis 40:6-8

(6) When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were distraught. (7) He asked Pharaoh's courtiers, who were with him in custody in his master's house, saying, "Why do you appear downcast today?" (8) And they said to him, "We had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." So Joseph said to them, "Surely God can interpret! Tell me [your dreams]."

בראשית מ"ו:ו'-ח'

(ו) וַיָּבֹא אֲלֵיהֶם יוֹסֵף בַּבֹּקֶר וַיֵּרָא אֹתָם וְהֵנָּם זֹעֲפִים: (ז) וַיִּשְׂאֵל אֶת־סָרִיסֵי פְרַעְהָ אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בְּמִשְׁמַר בֵּית אֲדֹנָיו לֵאמֹר מַדּוּעַ פְּנֵיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוֹם: (ח) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו חֲלֹם חֲלָמָנוּ וּפְתָר אֵין אֵתָּו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף הֲלוֹא לְאֱלֹקִים פְּתָרְנִים סָפְרוּ־נָא לִי:

Part IV - Joseph Interprets Pharoeh's Dreams

Genesis 41:15-16

(15) And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it. Now I have heard it said

בראשית מ"א:ט"ו-ט"ז

(טו) וַיֹּאמֶר פְּרַעְהָ אֶל־יוֹסֵף חֲלֹם חֲלָמָתִי וּפְתָר אֵין אֵתָּו וַאֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי

of you that for you to hear a dream is to tell its meaning.” (16) Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “Not I! God will see to Pharaoh’s welfare.”

עֲלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר תִּשְׁמַע חֲלוֹם לְפִתְרָא
 אֹתוֹ: (טז) וַיַּעַן יוֹסֵף אֶת־פַּרְעֹה
 לֵאמֹר בְּלִעְדֵי אֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶה אֶת־
 שְׁלוֹם פַּרְעֹה:

Genesis 41:37-40

(37) The plan pleased Pharaoh and all his courtiers. (38) And Pharaoh said to his courtiers, “Could we find another like him, a man in whom is the spirit of God?” (39) So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is none so discerning and wise as you. (40) You shall be in charge of my court, and by your command shall all my people be directed; only with respect to the throne shall I be superior to you.”

בראשית מ"א:ל"ז-מי
 (לז) וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי פַרְעֹה
 וּבְעֵינֵי כָּל־עֲבָדָיו: (לח) וַיֹּאמֶר
 פַּרְעֹה אֶל־עֲבָדָיו הֲנִמְצָא כָּזֶה אִישׁ
 אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ: (לט) וַיֹּאמֶר
 פַּרְעֹה אֶל־יוֹסֵף אַחֲרַי הוֹדִיעַ אֱלֹהִים
 אוֹתְךָ אֶת־כָּל־זֹאת אֵין־נִבֹּן וְחָכָם
 כְּמוֹךָ: (מ) אַתָּה תִּהְיֶה עַל־בֵּיתִי
 וְעַל־פִּיךָ יִשָּׁק כָּל־עַמִּי רַק הַכִּסֵּא
 אֲנִי אֶגְדֹּל מִמֶּךָ:

Once Joseph learned to interpret other people's dreams - his own dreams came true - Now Joseph is ready to re-face his brothers, this time as someone who can see others and their dreams.

Part V - Joseph meets his brothers

Genesis 42:6

(6) Now Joseph was the vizier of the land; it was he who dispensed rations to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed low to him, with their faces to the ground.

בראשית מ"ב:ו'

(ו) וְיוֹסֵף הוּא הַשְּׁלֵיט עַל-הָאָרֶץ
הוּא הַמְשַׁבֵּיר לְכָל-עַם הָאָרֶץ וַיָּבֹאוּ
אֵתָיו יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ-לּוֹ אַפְּיָם אֲרָצָה:

Genesis 44:18-20

(18) Then Judah went up to him and said, "Please, my lord, let your servant appeal to my lord, and do not be impatient with your servant, you who are the equal of Pharaoh. (19) My lord asked his servants, 'Have you a father or another brother?' (20) We told my lord, 'We have an old father, and there is a child of his old age, the youngest; his full brother is dead, so that he alone is left of his mother, and his father dotes on him.'

בראשית מ"ד:י"ח-כ'

(יח) וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנִי
אֲדֹנָי יְדַבֵּר-נָא עִבְדְּךָ דְבַר בְּאֲזְנֵי
אֲדֹנָי וְאַל-יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעִבְדְּךָ כִּי כַמּוֹד
כַּפְרָעָה: (יט) אֲדֹנָי שְׂאֵל אֶת-עִבְדִּי
לֵאמֹר הֲיֵשׁ-לְכֶם אָב אוֹ-אָח: (כ)
וַנֹּאמֶר אֶל-אֲדֹנָי יֵשׁ-לָנוּ אָב זָקֵן וַיִּגְדַּד
זְקֵנִים קָטָן וְאָחִיו מֵת וַיִּוָּתֵר הוּא
לְבִדּוֹ לְאִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו אֶהְבּוֹ:

Genesis 45:4-5

(4) Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come forward to me." And when they came forward, he said, "I am

בראשית מ"ה:ד-ה'

(ד) וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֶחָיו גִּשׁוּ-נָא
אֵלָי וַיִּגָּשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֶחְיֶכֶם

your brother Joseph, he whom you sold into Egypt. (5) Now, do not be distressed or reproach yourselves because you sold me hither; it was to save life that God sent me ahead of you.

אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרַיִם: (ה)
וְעַתָּה | אֶל־תִּעַצְבוּ וְאֶל־יִחַר
בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הֲגַה כִּי
לְמַחְלָה שְׁלַחְנִי אֱלֹקִים לְפָנֵיכֶם:

Genesis 45:10

(10) You will dwell in the region of Goshen, where you will be near me—you and your children and your grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all that is yours.

בראשית מ"ה:י

(י) וְיָשַׁבְתָּ בְּאֶרֶץ־גֹּשֶׁן וְהָיִיתָ קָרוֹב
אֵלַי אֶתְּהָ וּבְנֵיךָ וּבְנֵי בְנֵיךָ וְצֹאֲנֶךָ
וּבְקָרְךָ וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לְךָ:

Genesis 45:15

(15) He kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; only then were his brothers able to talk to him.

בראשית מ"ה:ט"ו

(טו) וַיִּנָּשֶׁק לְכָל־אָחָיו וַיִּבְךְ עֲלֵיהֶם
וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן דִּבְרוּ אָחָיו אִתּוֹ:

Part VI - Conclusion

Genesis 50:16-21

(16) So they sent this message to Joseph, "Before his death your father left this instruction: (17) So shall you say to Joseph, 'Forgive, I urge you, the offense and guilt of your brothers

בראשית נ':ט"ז-כ"א

(טז) וַיִּצְווּ אֶל־יֹסֵף לְאֹמֵר אָבִיךָ
צִוָּה לְפָנָי מוֹתוֹ לְאֹמֵר: (יז) כֹּה־
תֹאמְרוּ לְיֹסֵף אֲנָא שָׂא נָא פְּשַׁע
אָחִיךָ וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי־רָעָה גָּמְלוֹךָ

who treated you so harshly.’
 Therefore, please forgive the offense of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph was in tears as they spoke to him. (18) His brothers went to him themselves, flung themselves before him, and said, “We are prepared to be your slaves.” (19) But Joseph said to them, “Have no fear! Am I a substitute for God? (20) Besides, although you intended me harm, God intended it for good, so as to bring about the present result—the survival of many people. (21) And so, fear not. I will sustain you and your children.” Thus he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

וְעַתָּה שָׂא נָא לִפְשַׁע עַבְדֶּי אֱלֹקֵי
 אָבִיךָ וַיְבַךְ יוֹסֵף בְּדַבְרָם אֵלָיו: (יח)
 וַיִּלְכוּ גַם־אֶחָיו וַיִּפְּלוּ לְפָנָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ
 הֲנִנּוּ לָהּ לְעַבְדִּים: (יט) וַיֹּאמֶר
 אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף אֶל־תִּירְאוּ כִּי הִתַּחַת
 אֱלֹקִים אָנִי: (כ) וְאַתֶּם חֲשַׁבְתֶּם עָלַי
 רָעָה אֱלֹקִים חֲשַׁבָה לְטֹבָה לְמַעַן
 עֲשֶׂה כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַחֲלִית עַם־רַב:
 (כא) וְעַתָּה אֶל־תִּירְאוּ אֲנֹכִי אֶכְלָל
 אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־טַפְכֶּם וַיְנַחֵם אוֹתָם
 וַיְדַבֵּר עַל־לִבָּם: