

## TORAH THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

### PARSHAS VAYESHEV

#### “Look For The Signs”

“Behold! A caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, their camels bearing spices, balsam, and lotus - on their way to bring them down to Egypt.” (Gen. 37:25)

Rashi explains that Ishmaelite caravans normally carry foul-smelling spices, but in order to spare the righteous Joseph from the offensive odor, God arranged that this caravan carried fragrant spices. We learn from this the great reward that the righteous enjoy.

Imagine a man who was arrested and is about to be transported to a prison which houses dangerous criminals. The officer sees him shaking like a leaf and tells him "Don't worry - there is some good news - the bus that's transporting you to prison has a good smell!" The man stares at the officer in amazement. The last thing he cares about is how his transportation to prison smells!

Joseph was being sold as a slave. The last thing he cared about was the aroma; all he wanted was to be freed. How does the presence of spices show us the great reward that the righteous enjoy?

A young boy wakes up and finds himself in a car driven by a man he does not know. He realizes that he has been kidnapped! He starts crying for his parents, only to be ignored - causing him to cry even harder. The man stops the car and says, "We are going to eat now." The little boy opens up the platter and is shocked to see that the food is the same thing that he eats every day, in the exact same way that his mother prepares it for him. He realizes that it must be that his mother sent this food and she must have arranged this whole ride. He hasn't been kidnapped; he's in safe hands! He stops crying and immediately feels at ease. He feels great!

Joseph's brothers wanted to execute him. He was thrown into a pit feeling abandoned and lost. He was sold to a caravan of Ishmaelites who always had foul-smelling wagons. However, this time there was a pleasant smell. He understood the message: God was telling him that all of these events were part of the plan: "Don't worry, I'm holding your hand the whole way through."

Sometimes we may go through very hard periods, but throughout them we see seemingly random events that appear unusual - almost like a miracle. It's God telling us, "Don't worry, I'm orchestrating all these events and there's a plan behind everything. You're in safe hands!"