

א ביסל תורה!

December 26, 2025

THE PARSHA NEWSLETTER
OF MAIMONIDES SCHOOL

ר' טבת תשפ"ו · ז' גש

favoring יוסף: a Repeat of Prior Favoritism?

By Eitan Orkaby '27

One of the leading factors of the brothers' hatred of **יוסף** is his favoritism towards **יוסף**. From this hatred is separated from his family for 22 years. One would expect **יוסף** to learn from this that one should try to avoid favoritism, yet we see that he himself does it! This first mention of this is when **יוסף** gives the brothers food the second time, giving **בנימין** five times the amount of the others. **יוסף** then puts his goblet in **בנימין**'s sack, trying to force **בנימין** to stay with him, separate from the rest of his family. After revealing himself, **יוסף** proceeds to hug and kiss his brothers, starting with **בנימין**. And to make the favoritism even more clear, upon giving his brothers gifts of clothing, **יוסף** gives **בנימין** **נתקן שלוש מאות כנף** "and to **בנימין** he gave 300 silver pieces and 5 changes of clothing" (**בראשית מה:בב**). How did **יוסף** not learn his lesson?

In trying to explain the five times amount of food that **בנימין** received over his brothers, **רש"י** tries to avoid saying there was any favoritism and counts five people the portion of food is for: **בנימין**, himself, **יוסף**, **מנשה**, and **יוסף**'s wife **אסנת אפרים**. While this answers the number of items **בנימין** receives, there still seems to be a disparity between the brothers and **בנימין**.

There is another larger question on this whole story of the treatment that the brothers receive from **יוסף**, which the brothers themselves explain comes from

there mistreatment of **יוסף** due to their jealousy of him (**בראשית מב:ב**). The **ספורתן** understands this to be the same reason why **בנימין** was treated much nicer than his fellow brothers: to see if they would be jealous of **בנימין** as well.

While it is quite clear that many **מפרשים** are hesitant to say that **בנימין** was favored by **יוסף** it is possible that he actually did favor **בנימין**. The mother of **יעקב**, **רחל יוסף**, was the last of **יעקב**'s wives to have kids. She also was the only of his wives to die in childbirth. Already from birth **בנימין** is unlike the rest of his siblings, aside from **יוסף**, because he is motherless. Thus, **יוסף** formed a close bond with the sons of **בללה** after **בללה**'s death (**רש"י ר' רחל ל'ב**), however, after being thrown in a pit, a decision made by his brothers collectively, **יוסף** lost any connection that he had with **בללה**'s children. The only one who was not involved in this was his brother **בנימין**. Therefore, **יוסף** had an affection for **בנימין** unlike anyone else and gave him extra anytime there were gifts to be given out.

The actions of **יוסף** towards **בנימין** give a window into the family dynamics of **יעקב**'s children. While there were many fights within, in the end they are all referred to as **בני ישראל**, together and not individually. Furthermore, **יוסף**'s own children highlight how brothers are supposed to act towards one another. Upon blessing **יוסף**'s children, **יעקב** seems to mix up the ages of the children, putting his left hand on the eldest and right hand on the younger one. Nevertheless, **יוסף**'s children do not fight. They learned

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from their father and uncles that whoever seems to be the favorite should not affect their relationship, rather they should stay close.

Learning From **יְהוָדָה**'s Selfless Actions

By Sara Canner '28

Last week's **פרשה** ends with **יְוָסָף**, the ruler of Egypt, planting his silver goblet in his youngest brother **יְהוָדָה**'s bag. **יְוָסָף** declares that whoever's bag the goblet is found in must stay as a slave. When the brothers had earlier plotted to harm **יְהוָדָה**, **יְוָסָף** had stepped in and suggested selling him instead. In this week's **פרשה** **יְהוָדָה**, **פרשת ויגש** continues to protect his brothers by taking responsibility and offering himself as a slave in place of **בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל**. The **פרשה** opens with the words: "וַיַּגַּשׁ אֶלָּיו יְהוָדָה" "And approached him" (**בראשית מד:ח**).

This approach is not just physical, it is moral. **יְהוָדָה** steps forward to take responsibility for his family. By offering himself as a slave instead of **בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל**, he ensures that their father, **יְעַקֹּב**, will not suffer. This is especially meaningful and selfless because **יְהוָדָה** was the one who had originally suggested selling **יְוָסָף**. Now, we see how he has grown. **יְהוָדָה** demonstrates what true leadership looks like: acting selflessly, and taking responsibility to be willing to help others, even in difficult situations. As a result of **יְהוָדָה**'s actions, **יְוָסָף** is able to reveal his identity. Instead of seeking revenge, **יְוָסָף** forgives his brothers and recognizes that Hashem had a larger plan. All the events Hashem made

happen ultimately helped save many lives during the famine. Proving that everything Hashem does is for a reason even if at the time it may feel entirely wrong. **יְוָסָף** has so much strength to take a step back and accept that the terrible thing his brothers did to him ultimately had good results. **פרשת ויגש** teaches us many ways in which people can grow. **יְהוָדָה** managed to protect his father, **יְעַקֹּב**, and his brother **בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל**. May we learn from **יְהוָדָה** to act in a selfless way in order to protect others. From **יְוָסָף**, may we learn the importance of forgiveness and trusting in Hashem's bigger plan.



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A BISL TORAH
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at Maimonides School,
Brookline, Massachusetts

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