

## Parsha Plug: Parshat Vayeishev

Bereshit 37:36-38:1-26	בראשית לו:לו-לח:א-ל
<p><b>36</b> And the Midianites sold him into Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard. <b>1</b> And it came to pass at that time, that Yehudah went down from his brethren, and turned to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. <b>2</b> And Yehudah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her, and went in unto her. <b>3</b> And she conceived, and bore a son; and he called his name Er. <b>4</b> And she conceived again, and bore a son; and she called his name Onan. <b>5</b> And she yet again bore a son, and called his name Shelah; and he was at Chezib, when she bore him. <b>6</b> And Yehudah took a wife for Er his first-born, and her name was Tamar. <b>7</b> And Er, Yehudah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. <b>8</b> And Yehudah said unto Onan: 'Go to your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her, and raise up seed to your brother.' <b>9</b> And Onan knew that the seed would not be his; and it came to pass when he went to his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest he should give seed to his brother. <b>10</b> And the thing which he did was evil in the sight of the LORD; and He slew him also. <b>11</b> Then said Yehudah to Tamar his daughter-in-law: 'Remain a widow in your father's house until Shelah my son is grown up'; for he said: 'Lest he also die, like his brothers.' And Tamar went and dwelled in her father's house. <b>12</b> And after much time, Shua's daughter, the wife of Yehudah, died; and Yehudah was comforted, and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. <b>13</b> And it was told to Tamar, saying: 'Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.' <b>14</b> And she put off from her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the entrance of Enaim, which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given to him as a wife. <b>15</b> When Yehudah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; for she had covered her face. <b>16</b> And he turned to her by the way, and said: 'Come, let me come to you'; for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said: 'What will you give me, that you may come to me?' <b>17</b> And he said: 'I will send you a kid of the goats from the flock.' And she said: 'Will you give me a pledge, until you send it?' <b>18</b> And he said: 'What pledge shall I give you?' And she said: 'your signet and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand.' And he gave them to her, and he came to her, and she conceived by him. <b>19</b> And she arose, and went away, and put off</p>	<p>לו והמדננים--מכרו אתו, אל-מצרים:  לפוטפאר סרס פרעה, שר הטבחים.  א ויהי בעת ההוא, וירד יהודה מאת  אחיו; וישט עד-איש עדלמי, ושמו חירה.  ב וירא-שם יהודה בת-איש כנעני, ושמו  שווע; ויקחה, ויבא אליה. ג ותהר, ותלד  בן; ויקרא את-שמו, ער. ד ותהר עוד,  ותלד בן; ויקרא את-שמו, אונן. ה ותסף  עוד ותלד בן, ויקרא את-שמו שלה;  והיה בכזיב, בלדתה אתו. ו ויקח יהודה  אשה, לער בכורו, ושמה, תמר. ז ויהי,  ער בכור יהודה--רע, בעיני ה'; וימתהו,  ה'. ח ויאמר יהודה לאונן, בא אל-אשת  אחיו ויבם אתה; והקם זרע, לאחיו. ט  וידע אונן, כי לא לו יהיה הזרע; והיה  אם-בא אל-אשת אחיו, ושחת ארצה,  לבלתי נתן-זרע, לאחיו. י וירע בעיני ה',  אשר עשה; וימת, גם-אתו. יא ויאמר  יהודה לתמר פלתו שבי אלמנה  בית-אביך, עד-יגדל שלה בני--כי אמר,  פן-ימות גם-הוא כאחיו; ותלך תמר,  ותשב בית אביה. יב וירבו הימים,  ותמת, בת-שווע אשת-יהודה; וינחם  יהודה, ויעל על-גזזי צאנו הוא וחירה  רעהו העדלמי--תמנתה. יג ויגד לתמר,  לאמר: הנה חמיר עלה תמנתה, לגז  צאנו. יד ותסר בגדי אלמנותה מעליה,  ותכס בצעיף ותתעלף, ותשב בפתח  עינים, אשר על-דרך תמנתה: כי ראתה,  כי-גדל שלה, והוא, לא-נתנה לו לאשה.  טו ויראה יהודה, ויחשבה לזונה: כי  כסתה, פניה. טז וישט אליה אל-הדרך,  ויאמר הבה-נא אבוא אליך, כי לא ידע,  כי כלתו הוא; ותאמר, מה-תתן-לי, כי  תבוא, אלי. יז ויאמר, אנכי אשלח  גדי-עזים מן-הצאן; ותאמר, אם-תתן  ערבון עד שלחך. יח ויאמר, מה הערבון  אשר אתן-לך, ותאמר חתמך ופתילך,  ומטף אשר בידך; ונתן-לה ויבא אליה,  ותהר לו. יט ותקם ותלך, ותסר צעיפה</p>

<p>her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. <b>20</b> And Yehudah sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand; but he found her not...<b>24</b> And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told to Yehudah, saying: 'Tamar your daughter-in-law played the harlot; and moreover, behold, she is with child by harlotry.' And Yehudah said: 'Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.' <b>25</b> When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law, saying: 'By the man, whose these are, am I with child'; and she said: 'Discern, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff.' <b>26</b> And Yehudah acknowledged them, and said: 'She is more righteous than I; for I did not give her to Shelah my son.' And he knew her again no more.</p>	<p>מַעֲלִיָּה; וּתְלַבֵּשׁ, בְּגָדֵי אֶלְמְנוּתָהּ. <b>כ</b> וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוּדָה אֶת-גְּדֵי הָעִזִּים, בְּיַד רֵעֵהוּ הַעֲדֻלְמִי, לְקַחַת הָעֵרְבָבוֹן, מִיַּד הָאִשָּׁה; וְלֹא, מִצָּאָה...<b>כד</b> וַיְהִי כַּמְשָׁלֶשׁ חֳדָשִׁים, וַיִּגַּד לְיְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר זָנְתָה תָמָר כַּלְתֶּךָ, וְגַם הִנֵּה הָרָה, לְזַנּוּנִים; וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה, הַצִּיאֹתָהּ וּתְשָׂרָף. <b>כה</b> הוּא מוֹצֵאתָ, וְהִיא שְׁלַחָה אֶל-חַמְיָה לֵאמֹר, לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-אֵלֶּה לּוֹ, אֲנֹכִי הָרָה; וּתֹאמֶר, הַכֵּר-נָא--לְמִי הַחֲתָמֹת וְהַפְתִּילִים וְהַמַּטֵּה, הָאֵלֶּה. <b>כו</b> וַיִּכַּר יְהוּדָה, וַיֹּאמֶר צְדָקָה מִמֶּנִּי, כִּי-עַל-כֵּן לֹא-נָתַתִּיהָ, לְשִׁלָּה בְנִי; וְלֹא-יָסַף עוֹד, לְדַעְתָּהּ.</p>
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Bereshit 39:1-21	בראשית לט:א-כא
<p><b>1</b> And Yosef was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, that had brought him down there. <b>2</b> And the LORD was with Yosef, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. <b>3</b> And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand...<b>6</b> And he left all that he had in Yosef's hand; and, having him, he knew not aught save the bread which he did eat. And Yosef was of beautiful form, and fair to look upon. <b>7</b> And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Yosef; and she said: 'Lie with me.' <b>8</b> But he refused, and said unto his master's wife: 'Behold, my master, having me, knows not what is in the house, and he has put all that he has into my hand; <b>9</b> he is not greater in this house than I; neither has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' <b>10</b> And it came to pass, as she spoke to Yosef day by day, that he did not listen to her, to lie by her, or to be with her. <b>11</b> And it came to pass on a certain day, when he went into the house to do his work, and there were none of the men of the house there, <b>12</b> that she caught him by his garment, saying: 'Lie with me.' And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. <b>13</b> And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, <b>14</b> that she called the men of her house, and spoke to them, saying: 'See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to mock us; he came to me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice. <b>15</b> And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my</p>	<p><b>א</b> וַיּוֹסֶף, הוּרַד מִצְרַיִמָּה; וַיִּקְנֵהוּ פוֹטִיפָר סָרִיס פְּרֹעֵה שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים, אִישׁ מִצְרַיִם, מִיַּד הַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים, אֲשֶׁר הוֹרְדוּהוּ שָׁמָּה. <b>ב</b> וַיְהִי ה' אֶת-יוֹסֵף, וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצַלִּיחַ; וַיְהִי, בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרַיִם. <b>ג</b> וַיֵּרָא אֲדֹנָיו, כִּי ה' אִתּוֹ; וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-הוּא עֹשֶׂה, ה' מְצַלִּיחַ בְּיָדוֹ...<b>ו</b> וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ, בְּיַד-יוֹסֵף, וְלֹא-יָדַע אֹתוֹ מֵאֹמְתָהּ, כִּי אִם-הִלָּחֵם אֲשֶׁר-הוּא אוֹכֵל; וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף, יָפֵה-תֹאֵר וַיִּפֶּה מְרֹאָה. <b>ז</b> וַיְהִי, אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, וּתְשָׂא אִשְׁת-אֲדֹנָיו אֶת-עֵינֶיהָ, אֶל-יוֹסֵף; וּתֹאמֶר, שְׁכַבָּה עִמִּי. <b>ח</b> וַיִּמָּאֵן--וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-אִשְׁת אֲדֹנָיו, הֵן אֲדֹנִי לֹא-יָדַע אֹתִי מִה-בְּבֵית; וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יֵשׁ-לוֹ, נָתַן בְּיָדִי. <b>ט</b> אִינְנִי גְדוֹל בְּבֵית הַזֶּה, מִמֶּנִּי, וְלֹא-חָשַׁךְ מִמֶּנִּי מֵאֹמְתָהּ, כִּי אִם-אוֹתָךְ בְּאִשְׁרֵךְ אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ; וְאִיךָ אֶעֱשֶׂה הָרָעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה, הַזֹּאת, וְחַטָּאתִי, לְאֱלֹקִים. <b>י</b> וַיְהִי, כַּדְּבָרָה אֶל-יוֹסֵף יוֹם יוֹם; וְלֹא-שָׁמַע אֵלֶיהָ לְשֹׁכֵב אִצְלָהּ, לְהִיּוֹת עִמָּה. <b>יא</b> וַיְהִי כַּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, וַיָּבֵא הַבַּיִתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלֹאכְתּוֹ; וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי הַבַּיִת, שָׁם--בְּבֵית. <b>יב</b> וּתְחַפְּשֵׁהוּ בְּבִגְדוֹ לֵאמֹר, שְׁכַבָּה עִמִּי; וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ, וַיִּנָּס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה. <b>יג</b> וַיְהִי, כַּרְאוֹתָהּ, כִּי-עֲזַב בְּגָדוֹ, בְּיָדָהּ; וַיִּנָּס, הַחוּצָה. <b>יד</b> וּתְקַרָּא לְאֲנָשֵׁי בֵיתָהּ, וּתֹאמֶר לָהֶם לֵאמֹר, רְאוּ הֵבִיא לָנוּ אִישׁ עִבְרִי, לְצַחֵק בָּנוּ; כִּי אֵלַי לְשֹׁכֵב עִמִּי, וְאֶקְרָא בְּקוֹל גְּדוֹל. <b>טו</b> וַיְהִי כַּשְּׁמָעוֹ, כִּי-הִרְיָמְתִי קוֹלִי</p>

<p>voice and cried, that he left his garment by me, and fled, and went out.'...<b>20</b> And Yosef's master took him, and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were bound; and he was there in the prison. <b>21</b> But the LORD was with Yosef, and showed kindness unto him, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.</p>	<p>אָקראַ; וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ אֶצְלוֹ, וַיֵּנֶס וַיֵּצֵא הַחֹזֵף... כִּי וַיִּקַּח אֲדֹנָי יוֹסֵף אֹתוֹ, וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ אֶל-בֵּית הַסֹּהַר--מְקוֹם, אֲשֶׁר-אֲסוּרֵי (אֲסִירֵי) הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲסוּרִים; וַיְהִי-שָׁם, בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר. כִּי וַיְהִי ה' אֶת-יוֹסֵף, וַיְהִי אֵלָיו חֶסֶד; וַיִּתֵּן חַנּוּן, בְּעֵינֵי שַׂר בֵּית-הַסֹּהַר.</p>
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<p><b>Rashi on Bereshit 38:26</b></p>	<p><b>רש"י על בראשית לה:כו</b></p>
<p><b>From me:</b> She is pregnant (Targum Onkelos). Our Sages, however, explained this midrashically to mean that a “bat-kol” came forth and declared, “From Me and from within Me these matters have emerged. Since she was modest in her father-in-law’s house, I decreed that kings should be descended from her, and from the tribe of Yehudah I [already] decreed to raise up kings in Israel.”</p>	<p><b>ממני:</b> היא מעוברת. ורבותינו ז"ל דרשו שיצאה בת קול ואמרה ממני ומאתי יצאו הדברים, לפי שהיתה צנועה בבית חמיה גזרתי שיצאו ממנה מלכים, ומשבט יהודה גזרתי להעמיד מלכים בישראל:</p>

<p><b>Rashi on Bereshit 39:1</b></p>	<p><b>רש"י על בראשית לט:א</b></p>
<p><b>Now Yosef had been brought down to Egypt:</b> [Scripture] returns to the previous topic, which it had interrupted in order to juxtapose the demotion of Yehudah with the selling of Yosef, to imply that because of him (Yosef), they (his brothers) demoted him (Yehudah) from his high position; and also to juxtapose the incident of Potiphar’s wife with the incident of Tamar, to tell you that just as that one [the incident of Tamar] was meant for the sake of heaven, so too this one [the incident of Potiphar’s wife] was meant for the sake of heaven. For she saw through her astrology that she was destined to raise children from him (Yosef), but she did not know whether [they would be] from her or from her daughter. [From Gen. Rabbah 85:2]</p>	<p><b>ויוסף הורד:</b> חוזר לענין ראשון, אלא שהפסיק בו כדי לסמוך ירידתו של יהודה למכירתו של יוסף לומר לך שבשבילו הורידוהו מגדולתו. ועוד, כדי לסמוך מעשה אשתו של פוטיפר למעשה תמר, לומר לך מה זה לשם שמים אף זה לשם שמים, שראתה באצטרולוגין שלה שעתידי להעמיד בנים ממנו ואינה יודעת אם ממנה אם מבתה:</p>

<p><b>Masechet Sotah 10b</b></p>	<p><b>מסכת סוטה י:</b></p>
<p>And Yehudah acknowledged them, and said: She is more righteous than I. That is what Rav Hanin bar Bizna said in the name of Rav Shimeon the Pious: Yosef who sanctified the heavenly Name in private merited that one letter should be added to him from the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written: He appointed it in Yosef for a testimony. Yehudah, however, who sanctified the heavenly Name in public merited that the whole of his name should be called after the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He. When he confessed and said: She is more righteous than I, a bat kol issued forth and proclaimed, ‘You rescued Tamar and her two sons from</p>	<p>ויכר יהודה ויאמר צדקה ממני היינו דאמר רב חנין בר ביזנא א"ר שמעון חסידא יוסף שקדש ש"ש בסתר זכה והוסיפו לו אות אחת משמו של הקב"ה דכתיב עדות ביהוסף שמו יהודה שקדש ש"ש בפרהסיא זכה ונקרא כולו על שמו של הקב"ה כיון שהודה ואמר צדקה ממני יצתה בת קול ואמרה אתה הצלת תמר ושני בניה מן האור חייך שאני מציל</p>

the fire. By your life, I will rescue through your merit three of your descendants from the fire'. Who are they? Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

בזכותך ג' מבניך מן האור מאן נינהו  
חנניה מישאל ועזריה.

**Rabbi Benjamin Hecht Insight 5769-09 'Leshem Shamayim'**  
**<http://www.nishma.org/articles/insight/insight5767-09.htm>**

In both these stories, we re-visit the age-old question: does the end justify the means? In the case of Tamar, the answer is yes. Tamar's actions in dressing as a prostitute and seducing Yehudah were somewhat problematic; all things being equal, this would not be proper behaviour. It was Tamar's intent and goal that transformed these actions into acts of righteousness; the end justified the means. In the case of *Eishet Potiphar*, however, the end did not justify the means. *Eishet Potiphar's* noble desire to connect with the Jewish People could not justify adultery. There are times when the end does justify the means and there are times when it does not. The demand, as such, is for thoughtful consideration of an issue and the development of a Torah methodology by which one can determine when the end does justify the means and when it does not.

To develop such a methodology, though, one must gain a most important perspective on life. One can live in the minute and make decisions pursuant to the emotions and motivations of the moment. One can also live with a recognition of past, present and future, and a realization that what occurs in the minute can also transcend time. The difficulty with lust is not that it highlights the physical and lauds physical pleasure. The spiritual lust for idolatry is seen within the world of Torah in a similar vein as sexual lust. The problem with lust is that it captures the moment, driving the human being to miss the grander, full picture of reality but rather to succumb to the world of the moment. The first step to righteousness is to challenge this view, to see reality in its greater sense and live beyond the moment in a world that contemplates past, present and future and the breadth of existence. This was the vision of Tamar – and this vision is further enhanced by Rashi's words that Tamar considered the future and her involvement in establishing the monarchy of Israel. This is the root of *l'Shem Shamayim*. To act in this manner demands thought, a vision of the whole, a recognition that there is more beyond the present. But such a perspective does not mean a denial of the present. While *Eishet Potiphar* may have been seeing beyond the moment, she was mistaken in not including the moment – and the fact that she was still a married woman.

There is no simple formula for righteousness. A first step is clearly that we do not succumb to drives and emotions in the moment; lust acting in a vacuum is the antithesis of Godliness. To act *l'Shem Shamayim* demands that one see the entire vision of reality and recognize that proper Torah behaviour must emerge from thought and an evaluation of all time beyond the moment. Is this not the very essence of a belief in One God? Still to escape the world of the moment, to consider one's behaviour with thought and perceive a fuller picture does not necessarily mean that one's decision is the correct one. *Eishet Potiphar* may have been motivated *l'Shem Shamayim* but her actions still fell tragically short. To act *l'Shem Shamayim* still demands that we make correct decisions – and sometimes that involves recognizing that the moment is still part of this fuller vision of reality.