

ותתפשהו בבגדו לאמר וגו' באותה שעה באתה דיוקנו של אביו ונראתה לו בחלון אמר לו יוסף עתידין אהיה שיפתבו על אבני אפוד ואתה ביניהם רצונך שימטה שמך מביניהם ותקרא רועה זונות

Sotah 36b

The verse states: **“And she caught him by his garment, saying: Lie with me”** (Genesis 39:12).

At that moment his father’s image [*deyokeno*] came and appeared to him in the window.

The image **said to him: Joseph, the names of your brothers are destined to be written on the stones of the ephod, and you are to be included among them. Do you desire your name to be erased from among them, and to be called an associate [*ro’eh*] of promiscuous women?**

Questions:

1. What is the Talmud trying to add to the text?
2. Why was this the argument the image of Yaakov was making? What other pleas could he have made to dissuade Yosef from succumbing?
 - a. Think about it. Yaakov’s face appearing as some kind of apparition wasn’t enough on its own?
 - b. And why not just say, “How could you do this? I didn’t raise you like this!”
3. What is the connection between the stones on the breastplate and what Yosef was about to do?

Possible Messages

- I. We often need an incentive to do the right thing- especially when, as is usually the case, it is not the easy or fun thing. Simply appealing to someone’s conscience, sense of morality or even loyalty is often not enough to induce them to forsake pleasure in favor of principles
 - A. “Boycott the Olympics” or “Don’t Watch The Super Bowl”
 1. Without getting into the issue itself of whether these are good ideas or not, simply appealing to conscience is not necessarily the most effective strategy for those who feel this way.
 2. After all, people *enjoy* doing these things. It is a bonding experience for families, friends and communities
 3. There must be an argument that can be made that appeals to a person’s sense of vanity, or some other ulterior motive, that can get them to do the right thing
 - a) And doing the right thing for the “wrong” reason is not terrible

II. The power of belonging

A. Yaakov (or his image, or the internal dialogue he represents) recognized that the possibility of disappointing a dead parent was not necessarily the most compelling argument

1. More than anything, Yosef still wanted to belong
2. Wanted to be counted among the brothers- who had spurned him
3. The desire to belong is an overpowering one, particularly if it is to a group that has otherwise shunned you or that you desperately want to be a part of
 - a) Even if it is manifest in the form of a couple of rocks hanging on an article of clothing

B. Important for us to realize as well

III. The Choshen wouldn't happen without him

A. 11 stones would just look awkward- wouldn't work

1. Yosef didn't just *want* to belong, he needed to *feel* that there was a need for him
2. Important to have a sense of purpose
 - a) Viktor Frankl- "In some ways suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice."