

LIFE IS LIKE A BOX OF CHOCOLATES

Background

Yosef Ha Tzaddik is now beginning a journey that will take him far away from his father's house for the next twenty-two years. For the next thirteen years, he will be sold over and over again as a slave. He will work one year in the house of Potiphar, and then be arrested and spend twelve years in a cell worse than a medieval dungeon. Yet, on his way down to Egypt, HASHEM arranges that the caravan taking him should carry fragrant spices so the smell during the ride should be pleasant. This, Rashi says, teaches us the reward waiting for *tzaddikim*.

Questions

If Yosef were going on a pleasure trip, we might be able to understand Rashi's comments. But he is now being sent on a very difficult, dangerous journey that will bring him great pain and hardship. If HASHEM wants to reward Yosef, it sure does seem like there are more effective ways to accomplish that. How about not allowing him to be tortured and oppressed? Or stopping his being kidnapped and sold as a slave? If HASHEM wants to reward the *tzaddik*, stopping the process that would take him from his beloved father for twenty-two years would seem a lot more effective. In this context, how do "the nice-smelling contents of the caravan" show the reward for *tzaddikim*?

ספר בראשית פרק לז

כה) וַיֵּשְׁבוּ לֶאֱכֹל לֶחֶם וַיִּשְׂאוּ עֵינֵיהֶם וַיִּרְאוּ וְהִנֵּה אַרְחַת יִשְׁמַעֲאֵלִים בָּאָה מִגִּלְעָד וּגְמֵלֵיהֶם נוֹשְׂאִים נִבְתָּת וְצִרֵי וְלֹט הוֹלְכִים לְהוֹרִיד מִצְרַיִמָּה

And they (the brothers) sat down to eat bread, and they saw a caravan of Yishmaelim coming from Gilad, and their camels were carrying spices, balsam, and lotus.

רש"י על בראשית פרק לז פסוק כה

וגמליהם נושאים וגו' - למה פרסם הכתוב את משאם להודיע מתן שכרן של צדיקים שאין דרכן של ערביים לשאת אלא נפט ועטרון שריחן רע ולזה נזדמנו בשמים שלא יוזק מריח רע

And their camels were carrying – Why did the Torah reveal what they were carrying? To teach the reward of the righteous, for it isn't the manner of Arabs to carry anything but petroleum and resin products whose smell is foul, but for this one (Yosef), it happened that they were carrying spices so that he wouldn't be damaged from their bad smell.