

And it was at the end of two years. (41:1)

Yosef was only supposed to be in prison for ten years, because he had spoken *lashon hora*, slander, against his ten brothers. Why did he stay for two more years? *Chazal* explain that his reliance on the *sar ha'mashkin*, chamberlain, bespoke a failing in his level of *bitachon*, trust in Hashem. An individual of Yosef's spiritual level knows better than to rely on people. It is all up to Hashem – or nothing. Only the Almighty has the power to save. Indeed, whatever a man catalyzes requires Hashem's complete assistance.

In his *sefer Yado Bakol*, **Horav Eliyahu m'Izmir**, raises a question concerning the application of *middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure, regarding the ten-year punishment meted out to Yosef. He spoke *lashon hora* against his ten brothers. His punishment should consist of some sort of pain or humiliation. How is *lashon hora* related to Yosef being subjected to a restricted environment?

The author explains that, when one slanders another person, he causes him shame, which results in his attempt to “bury himself” from the stares of people who have just discovered his “secret.” A *baal lashon hora*, slanderer, causes the subject of his slander to feel ill at ease in the public sector. He hides from people in such a manner that he ends up living in a self-imposed prison, in order to avoid the stares, the whispers and other innuendo that are endemic to the public reaction to a scandal.

Yosef caused his brothers to feel shame and seek isolation. As a result, he was incarcerated. Perhaps the next time we are about to “save the world” by slandering those who have probably “earned” it, we should consider the repercussions to ourselves.