



# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ועתה אל תעצבו ואל יחד בעיניכם כי מברתם אתי הנה כי למחה שלחתי אליהם לפניכם ... (מז-ה)

When *Yosef Hatzaddik* finally reveals himself to his brothers, they are shocked and frightened. He tries to console them by telling them it was not their fault. “*It was not you who sent me down here, but Hashem; He has made me father to Pharaoh, master of his entire household, and ruler throughout the entire land of Egypt.*”

**R’ Yerucham Levovitz ז”ל, Mashgiach of Mir,** quotes the **Rosh in Orchos Chaim** who teaches that when someone commits an offense against us, that person feels guilty and we must not consider it a sin if the person wishes to excuse himself in front of us. We find an example of this in Yosef’s response to his brothers. Imagine how the ten brothers felt. They took Yosef, intending to kill him. In the end, they sold him into slavery. Their behavior toward him was almost inexcusable. What can they say to him now? What kind of apology can they hope to offer under such circumstances? Yosef tells them, “You did not sin toward me. It all turned out for the best. This was all part of the Almighty’s Divine plan. You were just pawns, puppets in the hands of the puppeteer.” Yosef was attempting to relieve his brothers of their unbelievable burden of guilt. This, says R’ Yeruchem, demonstrates the pristine quality of the *middos of Yosef Hatzaddik*.

The crowning glory of the renowned **Gerrer Rebbe, R’ Pinchos Menachem Alter ז”ל (Pnei Menachem)**, aside from his great devotion and prodigious depth in *Torah* learning, was his extraordinary *middos*. To properly appreciate his genius in *Torah*, one had to himself be a *Gaon* in *Torah*; to properly appreciate his exalted level of *avodah*, one had to himself be deeply connected to *avodah*. With regard to his *middos*, however, every individual - from the greatest *Gedolim* to the simplest of *Yidden* - were overwhelmed at his deep sensitivity, humility and kindness.

The *Gerrer Rebbe* was tasked with answering hundreds of *shailos* each day. People sought advice on a wide variety of matters, ranging from halachic to health issues and *chinuch*, etc. One of the unique things about the *Pnei Menachem* was his ability to see the question in a totally different light than it had been presented by the petitioner, as illustrated by the following story: One particular *Gerrer shtiebel* was remarkably successful. In the few years since its founding, it had welcomed many new *yungeleit*. A constant *kol Torah* reverberated throughout the building and the unique atmosphere of vibrant Chassidic camaraderie was a constant presence.

Due to its popularity and constant growth, it became extremely crowded. The *shtiebel* leadership decided that it was imperative to build an addition as they simply did not have enough room in their present accommodations. Plans were drawn up, money was collected and raised, and the *shtiebel* embarked on an ambitious expansion and renovation.

When the renovation was nearing completion they were faced with a question. In the old *shtiebel* the *aron kodesh* had been centered in the middle of the eastern wall, as is customary in most *shuls*. In the newly expanded *shtiebel*, however, the *aron kodesh* was no longer in the center of the wall, but located a bit off to the side. There were those who felt that in order to ensure that the *aron kodesh* would be centered, as is traditional, a new one should be built. Others, however, were of the opinion that the *shtiebel* should not take on additional financial obligations - especially since the bank account had been emptied as a result of the construction. They felt that an *aron kodesh* toward the side of the room was not such a terrible thing.

The question was brought to the *Gerrer Rebbe*. How should they proceed? How surprised they were to hear the *Pnei Menachem’s* answer, one that showed how the *Rebbe* viewed the entire question through a different set of values.

“*Chas v’shalom!* How can you even think to cause pain to a fellow *Yid*?!” the *Rebbe* replied agitatedly. “Think for a second about the feelings of the person who donated the original *aron kodesh* in memory of a loved one. He invested so much money and so much effort into donating that *aron kodesh*. If you demolish the original *aron kodesh* and build a new one, that *Yid* will certainly be pained.” A decision based on *middos tovos*. (Excerpted from “The *Pnei Menachem*” by R’ Avrohom Birnbaum)

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

**כתב עילוי ליהודה ורבני ישראל ... וכתוב עילוי ליוסף ... וכל בית ישראל ... (הקטל ל-מז)**  
*Yechezkel HaNavi* was instructed to take two sticks and inscribe the names *Yehuda* and *Yosef* on them. He was then to place the sticks near one another whereupon they fused together into one, symbolizing the eventual unification of the two Jewish kingdoms, *Malchus Yehuda* and *Malchus Yisroel*. Why was *Malchus Yehuda* referred to as “*Bnei Yisroel*” while *Malchus Yisroel* was referred to as “*Bais Yisroel*”?

**R’ Meir Simcha HaKohen ז”ל (Meshech Chochma)** explains that “*Bnei Yisroel*” denotes a male connotation, whereas “*Bais Yisroel*” implies a female connotation. *Malchus Yehuda* was called *Bnei Yisroel* since it housed the *Bais Hamikdash* and was considered the “main” kingdom in *Eretz Yisroel*. *Malchus Yehuda* also merited that all the Jews

were *Oleh Regel* there on the three *Regalim*. The *mitzvah* of *Aliyah L’rege* was only required for men while the women stayed home. On the other hand, *Malchus Yisroel* was called *Bais Yisroel*, with its female connotation marking a clear reference to the women who stayed home and are considered the “*Ikeres HaBayis*” - the mainstays of a Jewish home.

Men and women have different roles in life. *Hashem* allowed both Jewish kingdoms to exist since they were each meant to serve a different purpose in life. Ultimately, in the times of *Mashiach*, *Hashem* will fuse the two kingdoms allowing those roles to be served by one merged kingdom, similar to the how men and women marry and utilize their individual strengths and roles to create a fused, wholesome Jewish home.

וילקח יוסף את כל הכסף הנמצא בארץ מצרים ... ויבא יוסף את הכסף ביתה פרעה וגו' (מז-ד)

Yosef’s meticulousness and honesty with regard to ensuring that all the monies earned from their abundant stock went directly into Pharaoh’s coffers, was incredible. He was every country’s dream “Minister of Finance” in every possible way. It is with this introduction that we must analyze the *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (119a) which states that Yosef hid three treasures. The first was found by Korach. As we know, Korach was fabulously wealthy. The second was found by Antoninus. The last one has not yet been found and will remain hidden until *Moshiach’s* times. How can we understand this fabulous personal wealth of Yosef’s, when we see how scrupulous Yosef was and would not take even an extra penny for himself?

I heard the following explanation in the name of the *Posek Hador, R’ Yosef Sholom Elyashiv ז”ל*. The three treasures referred to are not literal ones. They represent non-monetary treasures. The first “treasure” was the ability to be *mechanech* his children in the ways of *Hashem*, even during impure times and in contaminated places, as Yosef proved with his own children. That was found in the times of Korach. The wife of און בן פלג uncovered her hair, knowing full well that the *Bnei Korach* would avoid her like the plague, and move on! The second “treasure” was תורה בגלות. That was found during the times of Antoninus, enabling *Rabbeinu Yehuda HaNasi* to learn in peace, and author the *Mishnayos*, which saved *Hashem’s* children תורתו. The last “treasure” was the *middah* of *achdus* which Yosef displayed, uniting his brothers as one, at last. This third *middah* won’t be discovered until אחרית הימים when we will all be united, בלא אחד אחד when we will be *mesaken* the טורח of *Sinas Chinam*. As the *posuk* in ישעי' says, “אפרים לא יקנא את יהודה, ויהודה לא יצור את אפרים”.

As we still find ourselves at war, *Klal Yisroel* has demonstrated its ability to put aside our differences and unite as one single nation. May we continue uniting, ending any previous discord and may this be a catalyst to bring the final *geula*. ב”ר,

## משל למה הדבר דומה

ועתה לא אתם שלחתם אתי הנה כי האלקים ... (מז-ה)

**משל:** There was a terrible storm at sea that wrecked a ship full of passengers. Unfortunately, only one lone survivor made it to shore alive. Upon arriving onshore, he realized that it wasn’t an inhabited island but rather a small parcel of land in middle of the vast ocean. He asked *Hashem* for help.

After waiting a long time and no help seemed to be arriving, he decided to build himself a makeshift hut with the destroyed bits of the shipwreck.

Every day he invested a great deal of energy searching for food. He tried various ways to make signals in the sand in the hope that someone would notice him on the deserted island. But as the days turned into weeks, he began to lose hope. He constantly scanned the skyline for *Hashem’s* helping hand, but try as he might, the situation seemed hopeless.

אנכי ארד עמך מצרימה ואנכי אעלך גם עלה ויוסף ישית ידו על עיניך (מז-ד)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R’ GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

## דרגה יתירה

The *Chizkuni* writes that the words, “ישתי דו על עיניך” are not to be understood literally, but are referring to a person’s “*ayin*” - his fountain, or essence, as in “עין יעקב” in *V’zos Habracha* (33-28) where it refers to the personification of what *Yaakov* stood for. Here, *Hashem* assures *Yaakov* that in *Yosef* he will have a suitable successor. He will take care ably of all of his needs.

The literal meaning of these words is that *Yosef* will pass his hands over *Yaakov’s* eyes when his father dies. *Chazal* tell us how *Rebbi* used to pass his hand over his eyes when he said *Shema* (ברכות יג) and the *Shulchan Aruch* (סא-ה) rules that we do this to help us concentrate. The *Zohar* suggests a deeper meaning: “*This is the SECRET of Krias Shema.*” This secret, says the **Kol Aryeh**, is based on the *Gemara* (פסחים ג) that עולם הזה and עולם הבא are different in the fact that here one recites the blessing “הטוב והמטיב” on good news and “דין האמת” on bad news, whereas in the next world only the *beracha* of “הטוב והמטיב” is recited. Why? Because in this upside down and deceitful world (עולם השקר), we are often deluded into believing that what is comfortable is “good” and what is painful is “bad.” This is absolutely FALSE because everything that *Hashem* does is truly GOOD. We see this from the words, “*Shema Yisroel*” - Hear *Yisroel*, “*Hashem Elokeinu*” - *Rachamim* (mercy) and *Din* (strict judgment), “*Hashem Echod*” - is all ONE: they are both mercy! Who, if not *Yosef* understood that often in life, what appears to be “bad” is really good. After being hated by his brothers he was sold down to *Mitzrayim* only to become the viceroy of Egypt, the one responsible for saving millions of people from starvation, including his very own family!

And so when we recite *Krias Shema*, we cover our eyes not to be distracted by the illusions of this false world, and to focus on the truth. Our eyes see so many things that make no sense to us. We must cover our eyes and reach into our souls where the truth can be found that everything *Hashem* does is good. This is the message that *Yosef* can “*place upon his father’s eyes.*”