

# טעמו וראו

A taste of the  
Rebbe's teachings

## Vayechi

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### Sibling Rivalry

Joseph brings his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to be blessed by Jacob before his demise. Jacob surprises them by putting his right hand on Ephraim, the younger son, and his left hand on Manasseh, the older one. Joseph jumps in to correct the mistake. But what exactly bothered him? What was so wrong about Jacob's choice?

A lesson about education, sibling rivalry, and honoring parents.

# Contents:

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## Part 1 | Why Must You Insist?.....3

**Torah sources:** The setting of Jacob's blessing to his grandsons Manasseh and Ephraim, and Joseph's effort to put Manasseh ahead.

**The Rebbe's Sichra, Part 1:** Why was Joseph so insistent on fighting his father's decision?

## Part 2 | Avoiding Conflict.....6

**Torah sources:** Decades earlier, Jacob favored one son and it led to terrible sibling rivalry and the tragedy of Joseph's sale into slavery.

**The Rebbe's Sichra, Part 2:** When Joseph attempted to move his father's hands, he was trying to avoid the same mistake that had wrecked his childhood.

**Torah sources:** The Talmud's lesson from the story of Joseph – never discriminate between your children.

## Part 3 | Why Didn't Jacob Learn a Lesson?.....9

**Torah sources:** A Midrash that relates that Joseph never told his father the truth about his brothers, and law in Maimonides about the definition of gossip and lashon harah.

**The Rebbe's Sichra, Part 3:** Jacob never learned the truth about his sons and was therefore ready to again show preference between his grandchildren. Joseph, who had learned the hard way, wanted to make sure it didn't happen again—while protecting his father from knowing about the terrible deeds of his children.

**Torah sources:** A Midrash cited in the Sichra, that Jacob was destined to go down to Egypt and the entire story of Joseph's sale was orchestrated to allow him and his family to go there in dignity.

**A Story:** Just like Joseph, the Rebbe made every effort to ensure that his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, never learned about the passing of her son, Reb Yisrael Aryeh Leib.

# Part 1 – Why Must You Insist?

## Source 1

*Jacob lies on his deathbed. Joseph comes to visit with his two sons in tow, Manasseh and Ephraim, for Jacob to bless them before his demise. Ignoring the way Joseph positions them, Jacob places his right hand on the younger son, Ephraim, and his left on Manasseh. Joseph jumps in, asking his father to switch back.*

Genesis 48:1-2, 8-10, 13, 14-19



A short time after this, Joseph was told that his father was sick. Joseph went to his father, taking his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, along with him. When Jacob was told that Joseph was coming to him, he summoned his strength and sat up in bed.

Jacob saw Joseph's sons. "Who are these?" he asked. "They are the sons that G-d gave me here," replied Joseph to his father. "If you would, bring them to me," said Jacob. "I will give them a blessing." Jacob's eyes were heavy with age, and he could not see. When Joseph brought his sons near him, he kissed him and hugged them.

Joseph then took the two boys. He placed Ephraim to his right, to Jacob's left, and Manasseh to his left, to Jacob's right. He then came close to his father.

### Rashi on the verse:

**Ephraim to his right, to Jacob's left:** When one approaches another person, his right hand is opposite the other's left. Since Manasseh was the firstborn he should be placed on the right for the blessing.

חומש בראשית, פרק מ"ח

א. וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה  
וַיֹּאמֶר לְיוֹסֵף הִנֵּה אָבִיךָ חָלָה  
וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי בָנָיו עִמּוֹ אֶת־  
מְנַשֶּׁשֶׁה וְאֶת־אֶפְרַיִם: ב. וַיֵּגֶד  
לְיַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה בְנֵךְ יוֹסֵף בָּא  
אֵלַיךְ וַיִּתְחַזֵּק יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּשָׁב עַל־  
הַמִּטָּה:

ח. וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־בָּנָיו יוֹסֵף  
וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵלֶּה: ט. וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף  
אֶל־אָבִיו בְּנֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לִי  
אֱלֹהִים בְּזֶה וַיֹּאמֶר קָח־נָא אֵלַי  
וְאֶבְרָכֶם: י. וַעֲיָנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּבָדוֹ  
מִזֶּקֶן לֹא יוּכַל לָרְאוֹת וַיִּגֶשׁ אֹתָם  
אֵלָיו וַיִּשַׁק לָהֶם וַיַּחֲבֹק לָהֶם:

יג. וַיִּקַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת־שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶת־  
אֶפְרַיִם בְּיָמִינוֹ מִשְׁמָאל יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וְאֶת־מְנַשֶּׁשֶׁה בְּשִׁמְאֵלוֹ מִיָּמִין  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּגֶשׁ אֵלָיו:

### רש"י על הפסוק:

את אפרים בימינו משמאל  
ישראל. הבא לקראת חברו,  
ימינו כנגד שמאל חברו, וכיון  
שהוא הבכור, מימין לברכה:

Jacob reached out with his right hand and placed it on Ephraim's head even though he was the younger son. He placed his left hand on Manasseh's head. He deliberately crossed his hands, even though Manasseh was the firstborn. He gave Joseph a blessing.

He said, "The G-d before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, walked, is the G-d who has been my shepherd from as far back as I can remember until this day, sending an angel to deliver me from all evil. May He bless the lads, and let them carry my name, along with the names of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac. May they increase in the land like fish."

When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on Ephraim's head, he was displeased. He tried to lift his father's hand from Ephraim's head and place it on Manasseh's. "That's not the way it should be done, father," said Joseph. "The other one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head."

His father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. The older one will also become a nation. He too will attain greatness. But his younger brother will become even greater, and his descendants will become full-fledged nations."

יד. וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְמִינוֹ וַיָּשֶׁת עַל־רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וְהוּא הַצֶּעִיר וְאֶת־שְׁמָאלוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה שְׁכַל אֶת־יְדָיו כִּי מְנַשֶּׁה הַבְּכוֹר: טו. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלְכוּ אֲבֹתִי לִפְנֵי אַבְרָהָם וַיִּצְחָק הָאֱלֹהִים הָרַעָה אֹתִי מֵעוּדֵי עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: טז. הַמְלֵאךְ הַגָּאֹל אֹתִי מִכָּל־רָע יְבָרֶךְ אֶת־הַנְּעָרִים וַיִּקְרָא בָהֶם שְׁמִי וְשֵׁם אֲבֹתִי אַבְרָהָם וַיִּצְחָק וַיִּדְּגוּ לָרֹב בְּקֶרֶב הַחֲרָץ: יז. וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף כִּי־יֵשֶׁת אָבִיו יַד־יְמִינוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וַיֵּרַע בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּתְמַךְ יַד־אָבִיו לְהַסִּיר אֹתָהּ מֵעַל רֹאשׁ־אֶפְרַיִם עַל־רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה: יח. וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אָבִיו לֹא־כֵן אָבִי כִי־זֶה הַבְּכוֹר שִׁים יְמִינְךָ עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ: יט. וַיִּמָּאֵן אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר יָדְעָתִי בְּנִי יָדְעָתִי גַם־הוּא יִהְיֶה־לָּעַם וְגַם־הוּא יִגְדֹּל וְאוֹלָם אַחֲיו הַקָּטָן יִגְדֹּל מִמֶּנּוּ וְזָרְעוֹ יִהְיֶה מְלֹא־הַגּוֹיִם:

## The Sicha, Part 1

### Why Does Joseph Insist?

*It is reasonable for Joseph to expect the older son to be placed in the more prominent position. However, the Rebbe asks, once his father specifically placed his right hand on the other, why did he insist on making a scene? Why was it so important to him?*

ויוֹבֵן בַּהֲקָדִים הַבִּיאֹר בַּהֲשַׁתְּדָּלוּתוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף בְּשִׁבִּיל מְנַשֶּׁה - "שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים שֶׁעָשָׂה יוֹסֵף בְּשִׁבִּיל מְנַשֶּׁה שֶׁהָיָה מִבְקֵשׁ לִגְדֹּל עַל אֶפְרַיִם אֲחִיו":



בְּשִׁלְמָא מַה שֶׁרָצָה בְּתַחֲלִילָה לַהֲקָדִים אֶת מְנַשֶּׁה, שְׁלֹכָן, "וַיִּקַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת אֶפְרַיִם בְּיָמֵינוּ מִשְׁמָאל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת מְנַשֶּׁה בְּשִׁמְאָלוֹ מִיְּמִין יִשְׂרָאֵל" - הִרִיזָה מִפְּנֵי שֶׁ"בְּכוֹר מִיּוֹמָן לְבִרְכָּה":

אֲמֵנָה, לְאַחֲרֵי שֶׁרָאָה יוֹסֵף שִׁיעָקֵב "שִׁיכַל אֶת יְדִיו", "אֶת יְמֵינוּ . . . עַל רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם . . . וְאֶת שְׁמָאלוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה", וְכֵן בִּירְכָם - אֵינוֹ מוֹבֵן: הֵייתָכֵן שֶׁ"וַיִּתְּמוּךְ יָד אָבִיו לְהַסִּיר אוֹתָהּ מֵעַל רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם עַל רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה", בְּאוֹמְרוֹ "לֹא כֵן אָבִי, כִּי זֶה הַבְּכוֹר, שִׁים יְמִינְךָ עַל רֹאשׁוֹ", כִּיצַד מִשְׁתַּדֵּל אֵב לְהַסִּיר בְּרִכָּה מִבְּנֵינוּ?! וְאֵם מִפְּנֵי טוֹבָתוֹ שֶׁל מְנַשֶּׁה הַבְּכוֹר - הִיָּה לוֹ לְבַקֵּשׁ מִיַּעֲקֹב שִׁיתֵּן לְמְנַשֶּׁה בְּרִכָּה נּוֹסֶפֶת, אֲבָל לֹא לְהַסִּיר אֶת הַבְּרִכָּה שֶׁנִּיתְּנָה כְּבָר לְאֶפְרַיִם!?



Joseph acted three times to ensure his father treated Manasseh as the first born.

The first time is understandable. Wanting to position Manasseh before Ephraim, he placed Ephraim to his right and Manasseh to his left, to the right of his father. He did so because "the firstborn should be placed on the right for the blessing."

However, after noticing that Jacob deliberately switched his hands during the blessing, placing his right on Ephraim and left on Manasseh, the question arises: Why did he attempt to switch his father's hands, saying, "The other one is the firstborn, place your right hand on his head"? Why would he, as a father, attempt to withhold a blessing from his son? If he were seeking Manasseh's welfare, he should have requested a second blessing for him, instead of attempting to retract the blessing that was already granted to Ephraim!

## Part 2 – Avoiding Conflict

### Source 2

*During Joseph's childhood, Jacob loved him more than his brothers and gave him a special coat of many colors. This favoritism prompted jealousy and hatred in the family.*

Genesis 37:3-11



Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, since he was the child of his old age. He made Joseph a long colorful coat. When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than all the rest, they began to hate him. They could not say a peaceful word to him. Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.

“Listen to the dream I had,” he said to them. “We were binding sheaves in the field, when my sheaf suddenly stood up erect. Your sheaves formed a circle around my sheaf and bowed down to it.”

“Do you want to be our king?” retorted the brothers. “Do you intend to rule over us?” Because of his dreams and words, they hated him even more.

He had another dream and told it to his brothers. “I just had another dream,” he said. “The sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”

When he told it to his father and brothers, his father scolded him and said, “What kind of dream did you have? Do you want me, your mother, and your brothers to come and prostrate ourselves on the ground to you?” His brothers became very jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

חומש בראשית, פרק ל"ז

ג. וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־  
בָּנָיו כִּי־בֶן־זָקֵנִים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשֵׂה  
לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פָּסִים: ד. וַיְרָאוּ אָחָיו  
כִּי־אֹתוֹ אֶהָב אָבִיהֶם מִכָּל־אָחָיו  
וַיִּשְׁנָאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבָּרוֹ  
לְשָׁלֹם: ה. וַיַּחְלֵם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם וַיַּגִּד  
לְאָחָיו וַיֹּסֶפוּ עוֹד שְׂנֹא אֹתוֹ: ו.  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמְעוּ־נָא הַחֲלוֹם  
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חֲלַמְתִּי: ז. וְהִנֵּה  
אֲנַחְנוּ מֹאֲלָמִים אֲלֵמִים בְּתוֹךְ  
הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלֵמְתִי וְגַם־  
נִצְבָה וְהִנֵּה תִסְבִּינָה אֲלֵמְתֵיכֶם  
וְתִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְאֵלֵמְתִי: ח. וַיֹּאמְרוּ  
לוֹ אָחָיו הֲמַלֵּךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ  
אִם־מִשׁוֹל תִּמְשָׁל בָּנוּ וַיֹּסֶפוּ  
עוֹד שְׂנֹא אֹתוֹ עַל־חֲלֹמְתּוֹ וְעַל־  
דְּבָרָיו: ט. וַיַּחְלֵם עוֹד חֲלוֹם אֲחֵר  
וַיְסַפֵּר אֹתוֹ לְאָחָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה  
חֲלֹמְתִי חֲלוֹם עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַשָּׁמֶשׁ  
וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְאַחַד עֶשֶׂר כּוֹכָבִים  
מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לִי: י. וַיְסַפֵּר אֶל־  
אָבִיו וְאֶל־אָחָיו וַיַּגְעֲרוּ־בּוֹ אָבִיו  
וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר  
חֲלַמְתָּ הִבּוֹא נְבוֹא אָנִי וְאַמֵּן  
וְאֲחֵיךָ לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לָךְ אַרְצָה: יא.  
וַיִּקְנְאוּ־בּוֹ אָחָיו וְאָבִיו שָׁמַר אֶת־  
הַדָּבָר:

## Source 3

*Their hatred reached a boiling point, and they sold Joseph into slavery.*

Genesis 37:18-20, 26-28

חומש בראשית, פרק ל"ז

”

They saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they were plotting to kill him. “Here comes the dreamer!” they said to one another. “Now we can have the chance! Let’s kill him and throw him into one of the wells. We can say that a wild beast ate him. Then let’s see what will become of his dreams!”

Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover his blood? Let’s sell him to the Arabs and not harm him with our own hands. After all, he’s our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed. Midianite Arab traders passed by, and the brothers pulled Joseph out of the well. They sold him to the Arabs for 20 pieces of silver, and they brought Joseph to Egypt.

יח. וַיֵּרְאוּ אוֹתוֹ מֵרֶחֶק וּבְטָרֶם יִקְרַב אֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְנַכְּלוּ אוֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ: יט. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו הֲנֵה בָעַל הַחֲלֹמוֹת הֵלֵךְ בָּא: כ. וַעֲתָה לָכוּ וְנַהַרְגֵהוּ וְנַשְׁלִכֵהוּ בְּאֶחַד הַבְּרוֹת וְאָמְרֵנוּ חַיָּה רָעָה אֲכָלָתָהּ וְנִרְאָה מִה־יָּהּיּוּ חֲלֹמָתוֹ:

כז. וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל־אָחָיו מִה־בִּצְעַ כִּי נִהַרְגָה אֶת־אָחִינוּ וְכָסִינוּ אֶת־דָּמּוֹ: כח. לָכוּ וְנִמְכְּרֵנוּ לַיִּשְׁמָעֵאלִים וַיִּדְּנוּ אֶל־תְּהֵיבוּ כִּי־אָחִינוּ בְּשָׂרֵנוּ הוּא וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אָחָיו: כט. וַיַּעֲבְרוּ אַנְשִׁים מִדִּינִים סְחָרִים וַיִּמְשְׁכוּ וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִן־הַבּוֹר וַיִּמְכְּרוּ אֶת־יוֹסֵף לַיִּשְׁמָעֵאלִים בְּעֶשְׂרִים כֶּסֶף וַיְבִיאוּ אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִצְרָיִמָּה:

## The Sicha, Part 2

### Joseph's Personal Memories

*The Rebbe explains: Joseph, who personally experienced the result of favoritism among children, wanted to avoid the same tragedy between his own sons.*

והביאור בזה: יוסף ידע מה עלול לקרות מהנהגה כזו שמקדימים את הצעיר לבכור - שהרי ראה מה קרה לו כשיעקב אביו הראה לו חיבה יתירה משאר בניו בעשותו לו כתונת פסים, שבגלל זה נתקנאו בו אחיו כו', עד שנמכר לעבד במצרים!



ולכן, כאשר יוסף ראה את הנהגתו של יעקב שמקדים את אפרים למנשה - השתדל בכל כוחו לבטל את הדבר, כדי שלא יארע דבר בלתי רצוי על-דרך מה שאירע לו. ובלשון חז"ל: "לעולם אל ישנה אדם בנו בין הבנים, שהרי בשביל משקל שני סלעים מילת לכתונת פסים שעשה יעקב ליוסף יותר משאר בניו, נתקנאו בו אחיו, ונתגלגל הדבר וירדו אבותינו למצרים..."



The explanation is as follows:

Joseph knew what could happen when a younger child is given preferential treatment—he personally experienced the result of his father’s special attention to him and his gift of the coat of many colors; it resulted in his brother’s jealousy, to the extent that they sold him into slavery in Egypt!

Therefore, when Joseph saw Jacob giving preferential treatment to Ephraim over Manasseh, he did everything in his power to stop it, to ensure that his own sons do not experience the same unfortunate fate. In the words of our Sages, “A person should never differentiate between his sons; due to two extra measures of fine wool that Jacob gave to Joseph over his brothers, his brothers were jealous of him, and ultimately our forefathers went down to Egypt.”

## Source 4

*As cited in the Sicha, the Talmud in Tractate Shabbat teaches that a person should never give preferential treatment to one of his children. The entire exile in Egypt, it explains, was a result of Jacob’s favoritism for Joseph.*

Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 10b

תלמוד, מסכת שבת, דף י' עמוד ב'



Rava bar Mechaseya said in the name of Rabbi Chama bar Gurya, who said in the name of Rav: Due to two extra measures of fine wool that Jacob gave to Joseph over his brothers, his brothers were jealous of him, and ultimately our forefathers went down to Egypt.

*The Talmud’s message is very clear. Never differentiate between your children. Favoritism will only hurt the family—and the favorite child as well. Always show equal love to your children.*

וְאָמַר רַבָּא בְּרַם מְחַסְיָא אָמַר רַב  
הָמָא בְּרַם גּוּרְיָא אָמַר רַב: לְעוֹלָם  
אַל יִשְׁנֶה אָדָם בְּנוֹ בֵּין הַבָּנִים  
- שְׁלֹא יַפְלֶה אוֹתוֹ לְטוֹבָה.  
שְׁבַשְׁבִּיל מִשְׁקַל שְׁנֵי סָלְעִים  
מִילָת שְׁנֵיתוֹ יַעֲקֹב לְיוֹסֵף -  
כְּשַׁעֲשֶׂה לוֹ כְּתוֹנֶת פָּסִים. יוֹתֵר  
מִשְׁאָר בְּנָיו, נִתְקַנְאוּ בּוֹ אֲחָיו  
וְנִתְגַּלְגַּל הַדָּבָר וַיֵּרְדּוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
לְמִצְרַיִם.



## Part 3 – Why Didn't Jacob Learn a Lesson?

### Source 5

*The Midrash asks: If Joseph showed so much honor to his father, why did he need to be informed that his father was ill? Didn't he visit often? The Midrash explains that Joseph kept his visits to a minimum. He was afraid that his father would ask him what exactly had occurred between himself and his brothers. He didn't want to share the sad truth with his father, that his brothers had sold him into slavery...*

Midrash Pesikta Rabbati chapter 3

מדרש פסיקתא רבתי פרק ג'



#### **When Jacob fell ill, they informed Joseph:**

What about all the praise of Joseph for honoring his father? Did he not visit often? Did he need to be informed by others that his father was sick? Rather, this is to inform you of his righteousness. He did not want to be alone with his father, lest he say to him, "What did your brothers do to you?" And then curse them...

Joseph said, "I know that my father is righteous, and all his declarations come true. He told Laban that whoever stole his idols would die, and my mother perished. Will I be the cause of a curse on my brothers? If he curses them, the destruction of the entire world will be on my head," [for the entire world was created for the sake of the twelve tribes]. Therefore, he didn't visit his father frequently.

כיון שהרגישו ביעקב שחולה, באו והודיעו ליוסף. והרי כל שבחו של יוסף שהיה מפליג על כבוד אביו, ולא נכנס אצלו בכל שעה? שאילולי שבאו אחרים ואמרו לו אביו חולה לא היה יודע?

אלא להודיעך צדקו, שלא רצה להתייחד עם אביו, שלא יאמר לו היאך עשו בך אחיך ומקללם.. אמר יוסף: אני יודע צדקו של אבא כל דבריו גזירות הן. אמר ללבן: עם אשר תמצא את אלקיך לא יחיה ומתה אמי, ואני בא לומר שיקללם? יקללם ונמצאתי מחריב את כל העולם! שלא נברא העולם אלא בשביל השבטים. לפיכך לא היה הולך אצל אביו בכל שעה:

## Source 6

Maimonides explains that spreading negative information about a fellow person—when true—is even worse than fabricating lies about him.

Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De'ot 7:2

משנה תורה, הלכות דעות, פרק ז, הלכה ב'



There is a much more serious sin than gossip. It is called lashon horah, referring to someone who repeats negative information about a colleague, even if true.

When someone spreads fabrications, it is called “defamation of character.” But lashon horah is someone who sits and relates: “This is what so and so has done;” “His parents were such and such;” “This is what I have heard about him,” telling uncomplimentary things. Concerning this transgression, the verse states: “May G-d cut off all guileful lips, the tongues which speak proud things...”

יש עון גדול מזה עד מאד והוא  
בכלל לאו זה והוא לשון הרע.  
והוא המספר בגנות חברו אף  
על פי שאומר אמת.

אבל האומר שקר נקרא מוציא  
שם רע על חברו. אבל בעל  
לשון הרע זה שיושב ואומר  
כן וכן עשה פלוני וכן וכן היו  
אבותיו וכן וכן שמעתי עליו  
ואמר דברים של גנאי. על זה  
אמר הכתוב “יכרת ה' כל שפת  
חלקות לשון מדברת גדלות:

## The Sicha, Part 3

### Jacob Never Knew

Until his dying day, Jacob never learned that his sons sold their brother. Not wanting to cause his father anguish, Joseph kept the story to himself for seventeen years. As far as Jacob was concerned, his parenting was a success. He had paid extra attention to a promising son, and this son ultimately became ruler of Egypt.

מה- שאין-כן יעקב - שלא ידע מכל המאורע שבניו מכרו את יוסף למצרים בגלל הקנאה כו', שהרי בוודאי לא סיפרו לו על כך, וגם יוסף - בוודאי לא סיפר "לשון הרע" על אחיו [גם בדבר אמת, שזהו החילוק שבין "מוציא שם רע" - סיפור דבר שאינו אמת, ל"לשון הרע" - סיפור דבר אמת<sup>3</sup>], לא ראה כל חיסרון בהקדמת אפרים למנשה (בראותו ש"אחיו הקטן יגדל ממנו"), ואדרבה: כך נהג יעקב בנוגע לבניו - שהקדים את יוסף לפני ראובן הבכור, והתוצאה בפועל - שיוסף נעשה "משנה למלך", "מושל בכל ארץ מצרים"<sup>4</sup>, ובזה ראה יעקב את קיום החלום ד"השמש גו' ואחד- עשר כוכבים משתחוים לי"<sup>5</sup>. ואפילו בנוגע לירידה למצרים - הרי עצם



(3) רמב"ם הל' דעות פ"ז ה"ב. שו"ע אדה"ז אור"ח סקנ"ז ס"י.

(4) ויגש שם, כו.

(5) וישב לו, ט.

הירידה למצרים היתה דבר הכרחי, כפי שנאמר לאברהם אבינו בברית בין הבתרים, ועל-ידי ירידתו של יוסף - היתה הירידה למצרים (לא בשלשלאות של ברזל, כי אם) באופן של כבוד!

אמנם, מכיוון שיוסף לא היה יכול לומר ליעקב את טעמו האמיתי על סירובו להקדים את אפרים למנשה, שהרי בוודאי לא היה מספר לשון הרע (כנזכר לעיל) - לכן לא אמר אלא "כי זה הבכור, שים ימינך על ראשו".



Jacob never found out that his sons sold Joseph into slavery out of jealousy. They certainly did not share this information with him, and Joseph too, certainly didn't speak evil of his brothers [for we are forbidden to speak evil about other people, whether or not the information is true]. Therefore, Jacob saw no harm in granting Ephraim preferential treatment (seeing that he showed greater promise); to the contrary, that was how he treated his own children; he gave special status to Joseph instead of Reuven, the first born, and as a result, Joseph became the second-to-the-king, a ruler throughout the land of Egypt. It was the fulfillment of Joseph's dream of the eleven stars bowing to him. Even the descent of the people of Israel into Egypt—Jacob saw it as the fulfillment of the destiny which G-d told to Avraham at the covenant. And notable, through Joseph's descent into Egypt, the descent of all the Israelites took place (not by force but) in an honorable fashion.

When Joseph saw favoritism being extended to his younger son, he couldn't share his true feelings about it with his father, because he did not want to speak evil about his brothers. Therefore, he excused his actions by saying, "This is the first-born, place your right hand on his head."

Shabbat Hagadol 5745-1985.  
Toras Menachem-Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 3 pg. 1642.

*This Sichra contains a powerful lesson about how one should be sensitive to the feelings of his or her parents. Joseph went through such severe trauma, and finally sees his beloved father. What could be more natural than to tell him what he had gone through? But Joseph also knew what grief he would cause Jacob if he heard the truth—that ten of his sons sold their brother into slavery, and then lied to their father about it. For seventeen years, Joseph does not say a word, and even minimizes his time with his father, to protect his father from knowledge that would cause him pain.*

## Source 7

The following Midrash states that Jacob's destiny was in Egypt. Instead of being brought there by force, G-d decided to entice him by sending his son there first. It employs an analogy of a cow being taken to slaughter. If she doesn't want to move, its child will be placed ahead of her and she will naturally follow.

Midrash, Bireishit Rabbah 86:2

בראשית רבה, פרק פ"ו ב'

” Rabbi Berechya said in the name of Rabbi Judah ben Simon: When a cow is being dragged to the slaughter and she refuses to budge, what is done? Her son is drawn in front of her, and she follows him instinctively, even though it is against her will.

So too: Jacob's destiny was to go down to Egypt, even, if need be, in chains. But G-d said, “Will I humiliate my ‘first-born son’ so? Should I place it in Pharaoh's heart to publicly draw him to Egypt? Rather, I will bring his son ahead of him, and he will follow impulsively, even if it against his will.” Ultimately, he went down to Egypt, bringing the Shechinah with him.

רבי ברכיה בשם רבי יהודה בר סימון אמר, לפרה שהיו מושכין אותה למקולין ולא היתה נמשכת, מה עשו לה, משכו את בנה לפניו והיתה מהלכת אחריו על כרחיה שלא בטובתה. כך היה יעקב אבינו ראוי לירד למצרים בשלשלאות ובקולרין, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא בני בכורי ואני מורידו בבזיון, ואם לתן בלבב של פרעה אני מורידו פומבוי, אלא הריני מושך את בנו לפניו, והוא יורד אחרי על כרחיה שלא בטובתו, והוריד את השכינה למצרים עמו.

## A Story

When his brother, Reb Yisrael Aryeh Leib, passed away, the Rebbe did everything in his power to hide the information from his mother, in order to protect her health.

A Chassidisher Derher, Iyar 5774

On 13 Iyar 5712-1952, Reb Yisrael Aryeh Leib, the Rebbe's brother, passed away in Liverpool, England at a young age. The Rebbe feared that the bad news would negatively impact the health of his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, and therefore made every effort to hide the information.

Rabbi Berel Junik related:

“The Rebbe sat shivah in his room in 770. Rabbi Hodakov was the chazan for all the tefillos with a small minyan present.”

The small minyan was one of the ways to ensure that Rebbetzin Chana did not find out about the news. The Rebbe went to great lengths to ensure that she would not become aware of the tragedy, for fear of the devastating effect it might have on her health.

The Rebbe would customarily visit Rebbetzin Chana daily, at 7:00 or 8:00 o'clock in the evening. In order that she would not suspect anything, the Rebbe continued visiting daily during even the shivah. Since the Rebbe was wearing nonleather shoes with rubber soles and their appearance might arouse suspicions, Reb Berel Junik polished them with black shoe polish, thereby making them less conspicuous.

Reb Berel continued:

“Each day, I would find ways to try to keep the Rebbe's visit short. For example, on the first day when the Rebbe went to visit, I waited a bit and went to a public phone and dialed the Rebbetzin's home. When the Rebbe heard the phone ring, he said ‘rayd gezunterheit, enjoy your conversation,’ and quietly left the house. Each day I would find another ploy. The main thing was that the Rebbe should not have to spend much time in the home which would strengthen Rebbetzin Chana's suspicion that the Rebbe is in aveilus.

“The Rebbe also told me to make sure that no one sends his mother any letters of consolation and instructed that I bring the mail to him. The Rebbe would look through it and then return it to me to place in the mailbox.”

Later, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib's wife and daughter would send letters to Rebbetzin Chana in which they would write that her son was very busy with his studies and did not have time to write. After a few months Rebbetzin Chana expressed her concern and anguish to Reb Berel that she was not hearing from her son.

She added, “I don't want to ask my son [the Rebbe] because he has enough worries, and I generally try to tell him only happy things.”

Reb Berel relayed to Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka that her mother-in-law was beginning to become suspicious that all was not okay. A week or so later, the Rebbe handed Reb Berel a letter from his sister-in-law in London to give to his mother, in which the Rebbe had added a few lines at the end in his brother's name. That night Rebbetzin Chana told Reb Berel Junik

with excitement that she had received a letter from her son in London.

A few days before Shavuot, the Rebbe told Rabbi Junik to send a telegram in the name of his brother to his mother. Seemingly it was the custom of Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib to send a telegram to his mother before Yom Tov.

“We acted in this manner every Yom Tov until the passing of Rebbetzin Chana in the year of 5725. It was all done in accordance with request of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin, who wanted to ensure that the news of Yisroel Aryeh Leib’s passing should not reach Rebbetzin Chana.”

Regarding this fact—that Rebbetzin Chana did not know at all of the passing of her son, Rabbi Yechezkel Besser recounts:

“After the passing of the Rebbe’s brother I was visiting with Rebbetzin Chana.” He would visit often because of his close connection to her son Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib. “The Rebbetzin asked me when I would be traveling to Europe. I answered, ‘in a week.’

“Will you be traveling through London?’ she asked. I answered ‘yes,’ and then she asked me if I will be able to visit Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib. Suddenly I realized that she did not know anything...”

