



## MARITAL HARMONY AND THE DIVINE SPIRIT

Jacob wants to bless his grandsons but suddenly the Divine spirit leaves him. Why that happened, what was the solution, and the relevance to the sanctity of Joseph and Osnat's marriage.

TEACHER'S MANUAL



# JEWISH INSIGHTS

A TASTE OF THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS



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## A. Why Did The Divine Spirit Depart?.....5

Jacob's grandchildren gather to receive his blessing before his passing, and Jacob asks his son, Joseph, "Who are they?" Rashi explains that the Divine spirit left Jacob, prompting him to ask "Where did these children come from that they are unworthy of blessing?" Joseph produced his marriage documents to show his father that they were his children, born in purity and holiness (Source 1).

Why doesn't Rashi explain simply, that Jacob's vision was deteriorating so he asked Joseph who the youngsters accompanying him were, and Joseph answered that they were his children? The Rebbe explains that when looking at the full picture, it's clear that despite his poor eyesight, Jacob knew these were Joseph's children coming to be blessed. Thus, his question "Who are they?" must have had a deeper meaning.

No explanation was offered to Jacob for why the Divine spirit had left him. The Rebbe explains that Jacob recognized that Menashe and Ephraim were righteous, he therefore feared that the issue may be that Joseph's marriage to Osnat wasn't conducted in a holy manner. This is why Joseph showed his father the marriage documents, to demonstrate that his marriage was religiously sound.

The story of the Rebbe stopping Ariel Sharon from boarding a plane that went on to be hijacked and taken to Algeria, and the Rebbe's answer to Rabbi Segal about why he hadn't stopped everyone from boarding.

## B. The Laws of Marriage Practiced by Our Forefathers.....14

When Rashi says that Joseph showed his marriage documents to Jacob, this doesn't mean marriage contracts as defined by today's halachic system. Maimonides rules that before Sinai, the halachic concept of kidushin did not exist. Likewise, nowadays we also don't consecrate the marriage with a written document (Source 2).

Though it's possible to suggest that our forefathers observed the post-Sinaitic laws, and Joseph may have used a written marriage contract, it is apparent that our forefathers did not observe these laws the same way they were observed post-Sinai. For instance, Jacob married two sisters, Amram married his aunt, and when Jacob himself married Leah, no mention is made of a written marriage document.

Eirusin before nisuin—the final stage of marriage—is intended to lend respect and moral character to the marriage, so it is undertaken seriously and in holiness. Likewise, the ketubah is designed to protect the woman’s rights. Though it had no halachic validity before Sinai, Joseph nevertheless wrote a document stating his intentions before the marriage, giving his bride peace of mind, in order for it to be a holy and ethical relationship. This is what Joseph showed Jacob.

The way G-d relates to His people is analogous to the relationship of bride and groom. G-d must fulfill His obligations to His bride, to live with the Jewish people in love and harmony, and to sustain them in dignity.

## Introduction

An innocent question posed by Jacob to Joseph as Jacob says goodbye to his grandchildren encapsulates a world of hidden meaning.

“Who are they?” Jacob asked about his two grandchildren. These two words open a window to a mystical place, where personalities of the past and future are aroused to change the very destinies of Menashe and Ephraim.

The question gives a peek into the marriage customs of the ancient world and imparts an important lesson for our relationship with the Creator today.

### השיעור לפרשת ויחי

משיחות שבת פרשת ויחי, ט"ז טבת, ושבת פרשת שמות, כ"ג טבת, מבה"ח שבט, ה'תשמ"ז  
הנחה בלתי מוגה.

תורת מנחם ה'תשמ"ז חלק ב' עמודים 264-270, עמודים 296-299

לשלימות העניין, עיין בלקוטי שיחות חלק ל', שיחת ויחי ב', עמוד 241 ואילך.

# A. Why Did The Divine Spirit Depart?

## Background

Jacob lived for 147 years. His final 17 years were spent in Egypt, near Joseph, his long-lost and beloved son.

When Jacob is on his deathbed, Joseph hurries to bring his sons Menashe and Ephraim to be blessed by their grandfather. "Ephraim and Menashe are like my sons Reuven and Shimon," Jacob tells Joseph.

After kissing and embracing his grandsons, Jacob places his right hand over Ephraim, the younger of the boys, and his left over Menashe, the firstborn. He blesses them, pronouncing: "May the angel who redeemed me from all harm bless the youths, and may they be called by my name and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and may they multiply abundantly like fish, in the midst of the land."

In this class, we will focus on the drama that took place as Jacob blessed Menashe and Ephraim.

## The Drama Behind The Blessings

### Source 1 Genesis 48:1, 8-9:

**Student's** pg. 3 Now it came to pass after these incidents that someone said to Joseph, "Behold, your father is ill." So he took his two sons with him, Menashe and Ephraim.

Then Israel [Jacob] saw Joseph's sons, and he said, "Who are these?"

Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom G-d gave me here." So he said, "Now bring them near to me, so that I may bless them."

Rashi:

**Then Israel saw Joseph's sons:** He attempted to bless them, but the Divine presence withdrew from him because of Yeravam and Achav, who were destined to be born from Ephraim, and Yehu and his sons, who were destined to be born from Menashe.

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר  
לְיוֹסֵף: הִנֵּה אָבִיךָ חָלָה. וַיִּקַּח אֶת  
שְׁנֵי בָנָיו עִמּוֹ, אֶת מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶת  
אֶפְרַיִם.

וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר:  
מִי אֵלֶּה?

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל אָבִיו: בְּנֵי הֵם,  
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לִי אֱלֹהִים בְּזֶה - וַיֹּאמֶר:  
קַחם נָא אֵלַי וְאֶבְרַכְם.

רש"י

וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף:  
בְּקֶשׁ לְבָרְכָם וְנִסְתְּלָקָה שְׂכִינָתָהּ  
מִמֶּנּוּ, לְפִי שְׁעֵתִיד יִרְבְּעָם  
וְאֶחָאָב לְצֵאת מֵאֶפְרַיִם,  
וַיְהוּא וּבָנָיו מִמְנַשֶּׁה.

Student's  
pg. 3

**And he said, "Who are these?":** Where did these come from that they are unworthy of a blessing?

**Here:** Joseph showed Jacob the document of betrothal and the ketubah, and Joseph prayed for mercy concerning the matter, and the Holy spirit returned and rested upon Jacob.

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אֱלֹהִים מֵהֵיכָן יֵצְאוּ  
אֵלָיו, שְׂאִינָן רְאוּיִין לְבִרְכָה?

בְּזֶה: הִרְאָה לוֹ שְׂטָר אַרוּסִין  
וְשְׂטָר כְּתוּבָה. וּבִקֵּשׁ יוֹסֵף  
רַחֲמִים עַל הַדְּבָר, וְנָחָה עָלָיו  
רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

In 1964, after the passing of his mother, Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, the Rebbe embarked on a project to delve into Rashi's explanations. Each Shabbat, at a public gathering of Chassidim, the Rebbe would choose one of Rashi's interpretations on that week's Torah portion and expound on it at length.

With time, these addresses on Rashi's teachings became a focal point in the lives of the Chassidim. In the days leading up to Shabbat, the Chassidim would speculate on which of Rashi's explanations the Rebbe would choose and what the Rebbe would say.

For years, the Rebbe encouraged the Chassidim to delve into Rashi's teachings on their own, to ask questions and suggest answers, and to publish their own explanations in weekly Torah journals. On occasion, the Rebbe chose to focus on one of the questions or explanations posed by one of the Chassidim.

In the address we're studying today, the Rebbe weighed in on a question posed by one of the Chassidim, and offered an answer of his own.

## >> The Rebbe

### Why Not Explain It Simply?

Student's  
pg. 4

We will now discuss that question that has been raised by a few people. The verse states, "Then Israel [Jacob] saw Joseph's sons, and he said, "Who are these?" Rashi comments on this, that Jacob "wished to bless them, but the divine presence departed from him," so he asked "who are these?" - "where did these children come from that they are unworthy of a blessing?"

בנוגע לפירוש רש"י - נתעכב על  
מה שהעירו אחדים בפירוש רש"י  
על הפסוק<sup>1</sup> "וירא ישראל את בני  
יוסף ויאמר מי אלה", "בקש לברכם  
ונסתלקה שכינה ממנו כו", ולכן  
שאל "מי אלה", "מהיכן יצאו אלו  
שאינן ראויין לברכה" - כי לכאורה,  
מהו הכרחו של רש"י להוציא את

**Student's** The question was raised: what compels Rashi to  
pg. 4 set aside the simple meaning of the verse, that Jacob asked “who are these” because he didn’t recognize them, as the verse continues, “Israel’s eyes had become heavy with age, to the extent that he could not see”?

There is an additional difficulty with Rashi’s interpretation, that it compels him to add, in his commentary to the following verse, new details that aren’t mentioned explicitly. The verse states that Joseph answered his father “They are my sons, whom G-d gave me here,” and Rashi adds that Joseph “showed his father a marriage (eirusin) document and a ketubah” to prove that his children were born in sanctity and were therefore worthy of a blessing. This detail is not attested to in the verses themselves.

*The question is simple: why doesn't Rashi explain the verse according to its simple meaning? Jacob's eyesight wasn't good, so he asked Joseph who the two youngsters accompanying him were. Joseph answered that they were his sons, and that was the end of the story.*

*Why must Rashi add details not mentioned in the verses, that the divine presence departed from Jacob—leading him to ask who the children were—and that Joseph showed his father marriage documents to prove that his marriage was legitimate? Rashi endeavors to explain the verses according to their simple meaning, so what is problematic here that caused him to depart from it?*

## Visually Impaired, But Mentally Sharp

**Student's** To explain Rashi:  
pg. 5

The explanation offered by other commentators on the verse “then Israel saw Joseph’s sons, and he said, ‘Who are

הפסוק מפרוטו, ששאל “מי אלה” מפני שלא הכירם, כמו שכתוב בפסוק שלאחרי זה? “ועיני ישראל כבדו מזוקן לא יוכל לראות”!?

וקושי נוסף בפירוש זה - שמכריח להוסיף ולחדש גם בפסוק שלאחרי זה דבר שלא נזכר בכתוב: “ויאמר יוסף אל אביו בני הם אשר נתן לי אלקים בזה”, “הראה לו שטר אירוסין ושטר כתובה” (להוכיח שנולדו בקדושה וטהרה שלכן ראויין לברכה) - דבר שלא נזכר בכתוב!

הביאור בפירוש רש"י:

פירוש הפשטנים על הפסוק “וירא ישראל את בני יוסף ויאמר מי אלה”, ש“ראה שהם בני אדם אבל

these,” that Jacob “saw human forms but couldn’t recognize them” because his vision had deteriorated in his old age, cannot be squared with a straightforward reading of the verses. Even if Jacob couldn’t visually identify their faces, he certainly understood that the people standing before him were Joseph’s sons.

The five-year-old student already learned about Isaac’s blessing to Jacob in his old age, as is natural for fathers to bless their children before parting forever.

Therefore, when Joseph came to Jacob accompanied by two people, even if Jacob couldn’t make out their faces due to his weak eyesight, he should nevertheless have gathered that they are Joseph’s children who have accompanied their father to receive his blessing. This is especially so considering that Jacob himself had mentioned Joseph’s sons earlier, “And now, as for your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt.” What room is there then to ask “who are these?”

*The Rebbe asks: a simple reading of the account leads to the conclusion that Jacob should have known exactly who the two youth accompanying Joseph were. His vision may not have been 20/20, but his mind was sharp, as evidenced by the blessings he went on to give his sons and Joseph’s sons. Based on the circumstances, Jacob would have understood who the young men were, so it is clear to Rashi that the Jacob’s question “who are these” had a deeper meaning, This is why Rashi brings the mystical explanation.*

לא הכירם,” “יש רואה דמות אדם ואין מכיר דמות פניו” (מכיון ש”עיני ישראל כבודו מזוקן”) - אינו מסתבר בפשוטו של מקרא, שכן, גם אם לא הכיר דמות פניהם, בוודאי ידע והבין מעצמו שהעומדים לפניו הם בניו של יוסף.

ובפשטות:

הבן חמש למקרא למד כבר אודות ברכתו של יצחק ליעקב בעת זקנותו, “כי זקן יצחק...לא ידעתי יום מותי”<sup>3</sup> - כטבע האב שכאשר עומר להיפרד מבניו לעולמים, קורא להם לברכם כו’.

ומכיון שכן, הרי, כאשר יוסף בא ליעקב (ויעקב מדבר עמו, “ויאמר יעקב אל יוסף וגו’”<sup>4</sup>) בלוויית עוד שניים, הרי, גם אם תמצא לומר שאינו מכיר דמות פניהם (מפני ש”עיני ישראל כבודו מזוקן”) - היה לו להבין שהם בני יוסף, שהתלוו אל אביהם לקבל ברכתו (ומה גם שהזכירם בדבריו, “ועתה שני בניך הנולדים לך גו’”<sup>5</sup>). ואם כן, מה מקום לשאלה “מי אלה”!?



**Student's** This is why Rashi must explain that the simple  
pg. 6 meaning of Jacob's question "who are these"  
isn't literal, that he didn't recognize them.  
Rather, "he wished to bless them, but the  
divine presence departed from him," and this  
caused him to ask "who are these," meaning,  
"where did these children come from that  
they are unworthy of a blessing?"

Jacob knew well that Joseph's sons were on  
a high spiritual level. He knew this about  
Ephraim, who Rashi tells us would frequently  
come to study with him, and also Menashe,  
who certainly would also come to study. So  
when Jacob saw that the divine presence had  
left him he asked in wonder, "where did these  
children come from that they are unworthy  
of a blessing?" Since Jacob knew that they  
were righteous, he was certain that there was  
no problem with them personally that made  
them unworthy of a blessing. He therefore  
suspected that perhaps there was something  
lacking in the sanctity of their conception,  
so he asked "where did these children come  
from?"

*When Jacob was about to bless Joseph's children, the divine presence suddenly left him. He asked himself, why? I know these children, they are good people who study Torah with me! He therefore thought that perhaps there was something immoral about their parent's relationship, so he asked Joseph "where did these children come from that they are unworthy of a blessing?"*

## How Does Divine Inspiration Work?

**Student's** Rashi's addition "since Yeravam and Achav  
pg. 6 would descend from Ephraim, and Yehu  
and his sons would come from Menashe" is  
intended only to explain to the five-year-old  
student why the divine presence indeed left  
Jacob. Jacob himself, however, did not see  
these descendants that would later come -  
G-d wouldn't show this to him so as not to

ולכן, מוכרח רש"י לפרש בפשוטו  
של מקרא ששאלת יעקב "מי  
אלה" אינה כפשוטה (מפני שלא  
הכירם), כי אם, מפני ש"בקש  
לברכם ונסתלקה שכינה ממנו",  
ולכן תמה ושאל "מי אלה", "מהיכן  
יצאו אלו שאינן ראויין לברכה":

יעקב ידע והכיר את מעלתם של  
בני יוסף - הן אפרים, כמפורש  
בפירוש רש"י ש"אפרים היה רגיל  
לפני יעקב בתלמוד", והן מנשה,  
שבוודאי למד גם הוא תורה אצל  
יעקב, וגדלה מעלתו כו', ולכן,  
כשראה יעקב ש"נסתלקה שכינה  
ממנו" - תמה ושאל, "מהיכן יצאו  
אלו שאינן ראויין לברכה", כלומר,  
מכיון שידע את מעלתם, היה  
בטוח שמצדם אין כל סיבה שלא  
יהיו ראויין לברכה, ולכן. נתעורר  
אצלו חשש שמא היה איזה חסרון  
בשלימות הטהרה והקדושה כו'  
בקשר ללידתם, "מהיכן יצאו כו'".

ומה שכתב רש"י "לפי שעתיד  
ירבעם ואחאב לצאת מאפרים  
ויהוא ובניו ממנשה" - אין זה  
אלא לבאר לבן חמש למקרא  
מדוע אמנם "נסתלקה שכינה  
ממנו", אבל יעקב לא ראה ברוח  
הקודש שעתידים ירבעם ואחאב

**Student's** cause him distress. Because Jacob didn't  
pg. 6 see these future generations, he was  
**Student's** perplexed by the departure of the Divine  
pg. 7 presence, and thought that there may be  
a deficiency in his grandsons. This is why  
he asked, "who are these," "where did they  
come from?"

כו' לצאת מהם (ואדרבה, לא הראוהו  
דבר זה ברוח הקודש, כדי שלא לצער  
כו'), ולכן, תמה על שנסתלקה שכינה  
ממנו, וחשש שמא יש איזה חסרון  
בהם, ועל זה שאל "מי אלה", "מהיכן  
יצאו", כנ"ל.

*In addition to explaining Jacob's conclusions from the fact that the Divine spirit had left him, Rashi also explains the hidden reason for this occurrence. Rashi explains that the reason was that both Ephraim and Menashe would have wicked descendants - the wicked Kings of Israel Yeravam and Achav from Ephraim, and Yehu and his sons from Menashe.*

*This raises the question: if the true reason for the departure of the Divine spirit was Ephraim and Menashe's future wicked descendants, why did Jacob suspect that it was the result of a problem with the marriage of their parents, Joseph and Osnat?*

*Between the lines the Rebbe teaches us a little about how Divine inspiration works. When Jacob wished to bless Menashe and Ephraim he didn't get detailed instructions from G-d not to bless them, with any explanation as to why. It doesn't work like this. Jacob felt that the divine presence had left him, and took this as a hint from Heaven that the children weren't worthy of a blessing. But he didn't know why this was the case, so he tried figuring out himself what the issue may be. The problem couldn't be with Ephraim and Menashe themselves - Jacob knew them to be good and righteous people who study Torah with him. So Jacob went a generation back, and surmised that perhaps Joseph's marriage to Osnat, while he was on his own in Egypt, hadn't been proper, and perhaps this was the reason for the problem.*

**Student's** In response to this, Joseph said "They  
pg. 7 are my sons, whom G-d gave me here,"  
which Rashi explains means he "showed  
his father a marriage document and a  
ketubah," as proof that his children's birth  
had been in full sanctity.

ובהתאם לכך, "ויאמר יוסף אל אביו בני  
הם אשר נתן לי אלקים בזה", "הראה  
לו שטר אירוסין ושטר כתובה": לראיה  
והוכחה שלידתם הייתה בשלימות  
הקדושה והטהרה כו'.

In response, Joseph quickly produced proof for his father that his marriage had been conducted properly.

But there is still a problem: the Divine presence left Jacob, and even without knowing the reason, this still remains a negative indication.

Student's  
pg. 7

Rashi continues, "Joseph asked for mercy and the divine spirit rested on Jacob, and Jacob said bring 'them to me and I will bless them.'"

The reason for the departure of the Divine presence wasn't any flaw in the sanctity of their birth, but due to the future wicked people who would arise from their descendants. It is therefore understood that while Joseph's showing Jacob the marriage document and ketubah satisfied Jacob's concern, it didn't address the departure of the Divine presence and bring it back.

This is why Rashi adds that "Joseph asked for mercy and the divine spirit rested on Jacob, and Jacob said bring 'them to me and I will bless them.'"

וממשיך רש"י "ובקש יוסף רחמים על הדבר ונחה עליו רוח הקודש, ויאמר קחם נא אלי ואברכם."

מכיון שהסיבה לכך שנסתלקה שכינה ממנו אינה מפני חסרון חס ושלוה בשלימות הקדושה והטהרה בקשר ללידתם, כי אם מפני סיבה אחרת, "לפי שעתיד ירבעם ואחאב לצאת מאפרים ויהוא ובניו ממנשה" - אם כן, מה שהראה לו שטר אירוסין ושטר כתובה מבטל רק את החשש של יעקב, שירצה ויחפוץ לברכם, אבל, עדיין יש צורך לבטל את הסיבה לסילוק השכינה, כדי שתשרה עליו שכינה ויוכל לברכם.

ולכן מוסיף רש"י "ובקש יוסף רחמים על הדבר ונחה עליו רוח הקודש", ואז, "ויאמר קחם נא אלי ואברכם."

## **A Story** When the Rebbe Saved Prime Minister Ariel Sharon From a Hijacking

Several years ago, Rabbi Yosef Greenberg, the Rebbe's representative in Alaska, met a Jew who was present at the fateful audience the Rebbe held with Ariel Sharon where the Rebbe asked Sharon to delay his flight. Rabbi Greenberg recorded his testimony in writing.

This man who was present at the audience was Avishai Buksenbaum, from Haifa's Carmel neighborhood. From 1970 to 1973, Avishai served as a security officer at New York's Israeli consulate. When Sharon visited New York and wished to meet with the Rebbe, he was pointed to Avishai, the religious member of the staff, to arrange the meeting.

Avishai asked Sharon why he wanted to meet with the Rebbe. Sharon replied, “When I was sitting shivah for my son (his son was killed in a gun accident), to my surprise a rabbi came to visit, followed by another rabbi and yet another rabbi. “To what do I owe the merit?” I asked them. They said that the Rebbe has instructed them to come.

“Look,” Sharon continued. “I am a general. When I issue a command, I need to check 60 times to ensure they’re heeding my command. Here, the general is sitting in New York and issuing commands in Israel—without a military police to enforce them—and they follow all his instructions. This is a general I want to meet.”

Avishai phoned the Rebbe’s secretariat and they scheduled an audience for 1 a.m. Wondering what they’d do until 1 a.m., Avishai suggested hanging out in Manhattan until midnight and then they’d make their way to Brooklyn. Avishai himself served as Sharon’s personal bodyguard.

Arriving at 770 Eastern Parkway, Sharon went into the audience alone, while Avishai waited in the study hall nearby, sitting on the “hard” wooden benches, as he put it. He thought it would take an hour, maybe two, but the hours passed by and Sharon didn’t come out. He couldn’t sit any longer and began pacing back and forth. At daybreak, Sharon finally came out. Avishai recalls that he prayed the morning prayers at 770 and Sharon also put on Tefillin.

Avishai bombarded Sharon with questions. “What happened to you? What were you doing all night?” Sharon shared his experience from inside. “Listen, I sat with the Rebbe for a while and when I looked at the clock, the Rebbe asked ‘Where are you rushing?’ I answered that I have a meeting tomorrow morning at the Pentagon and afterwards I am taking a shuttle back to New York and at 3 p.m. I board an El-Al flight back to Israel.

“The Rebbe said: ‘Why are you rushing? You are a general, they’ll wait for you! And if you don’t come tomorrow, they’ll reschedule for the next day!’ Each time I glanced up at the clock the Rebbe asked again where I was rushing and wouldn’t let me leave. I wasn’t comfortable walking out and I had no choice but to stay in his office.”

Returning to Manhattan, Avishai turned to Sharon: “Listen, Arik, I’m exhausted. I didn’t sleep all night. I’m not going with you to Washington today. I’m going to sleep. If you want to go, find another security officer, I just can’t.” Sharon responded: “You know what, I’m also tired, I’m going to sleep and tomorrow we’ll go to Washington.”

Avishai went to sleep and in the evening he was woken by the ringing of the phone. When he answered, it was the consulate. They told him that the plane Sharon was supposed to fly was hijacked by terrorists and landed in Algeria!

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Rabbi Zev Segal served for 33 years as the rabbi of Young Israel in Newark, N. J. He heard this story at the time and was so stunned by it he decided to verify it with the Rebbe himself.

“When I saw him next,” recalls Rabbi Segal, “I asked him, ‘Is it true that you stopped Sharon from going on the plane that was hijacked?’ He said, ‘Yes.’

“So, of course I had to ask him the next obvious question, ‘Why didn’t you stop the plane from flying?’

“He answered me, ‘Do you really think I knew that they would hijack the plane? I didn’t know. But when Sharon came to see me, I had the sense he should not go. So I told him to stay.’

“This for me was a great revelation into the meaning of mofsim, “wonders.” The Rebbe apparently was able to have tremendous foresight based on an extraordinary intuition.”

## **A Video**

Rabbi Segal relates what the Rebbe told him about the Ariel Sharon story

[To watch the video click here](#)

## B. The Laws of Marriage Practiced by our Forefathers

As noted above, the Rebbe encouraged his audience to ask questions on his addresses and publish them in the weekly Torah journals. After this address, several Chassidim asked for clarification on the type of marriage contract Joseph had with Osnat—the one he showed Jacob as proof of the validity of their marriage. The next week the Rebbe addressed their questions, point by point.

### >> The Rebbe

#### Non-literal

**Student's** On the verse “Joseph said to his father, they  
pg. 8 are my sons, whom G-d gave me here,” Rashi explains that Joseph “showed his father a marriage (eirusin) document and a ketubah.” We should clarify, that the “marriage document” mentioned here isn’t a kidushin document following the biblical laws of marriage which stipulate that one of the methods of effecting a marriage is “writing on a document ‘you are consecrated (mekudeshet) to me’”

על הפסוק ‘וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל אָבִיו בְּנֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לִי אֱלֹקִים בְּזוֹהַ שְׁעָלָיו מִפְּרֶשֶׁת רַשׁׁי, “הִרְאָה לּוֹ שֵׁטֶר אִירוּסִין וְשֵׁטֶר כְּתוּבָה”, יֵשׁ לְהַקְדִּים לְכָל לְרֹאשׁ, שְׁמָה שְׁכַתֵּב רַשׁׁי “שֵׁטֶר אִירוּסִין” - אֵין כּוּוֹנְתּוֹ לְקִידוּשִׁין בְּשֵׁטֶר שֶׁל דִּין תּוֹרָה, “כּוּתֵב עַל הַנִּייר... הִרְי אֶת מְקוּדֶשֶׁת לִי”?

*The Rebbe makes an important clarification: when Rashi writes that Joseph showed his father his marriage document and ketubah he isn’t referring to the halachic documents known by these names.*

The story of Joseph occurred before the giving of the Torah, when the concept of kidushin - consecration as a wife - didn’t exist. Rambam describes the state of affairs during the period “prior to the giving of the Torah, a man would meet a woman on the street, and if they both consented to marry he would bring her to his house . . . and she would be his wife.”

כִּי מְדוּבָר כֹּאן לְפָנֵי מַתָּן תּוֹרָה, שֶׁאֵז לֹא הָיָה עֲנִין שֶׁל קִידוּשִׁין כָּלֵל, כְּמוֹ שְׁכַתֵּב הַרְמַב״ם בְּתַחֲלִילַת הַלְכוֹת אִישׁוֹת: “קוּדֵם מַתָּן תּוֹרָה הָיָה אָדָם פּוֹגַע אִשָּׁה בְּשׂוֹק, אִם רָצָה הוּא וְהִיא לִישָׂא אוֹתָהּ, מְכַנִּיסָה לְתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ... וְתִהְיֶה לּוֹ לְאִשָּׁה”<sup>8</sup>.

(8) ראה גם צפצפ"נ עה"ח ריש פרשתנו.

(6) יודי מזה, ט.  
(7) רמב"ם הל' אישות פ"ג, ה"ג.

Joseph lived prior to the giving of the Torah, and during this period there was no need for an act of *kidushin* or any document. A man could meet a woman, bring her to live in his home, and that was it. It is therefore clear that the marriage document and *ketubah* that Joseph and *Osnat* had weren't the halachic documents known by these names, because they didn't exist at this time.

**Student's** In addition, the five-year-old student has  
pg. 8 never seen a "marriage document" and Rashi can't show him such a document because "it has already become universal Jewish custom to consecrate a marriage bond through the transfer of money or objects that are worth money," not with a document.

ובנוסף לכך, הבן חמש  
למקרא לא ראה מעולם "שטר  
אירוסין", ורש"י אינו יכול  
להראות לו "שטר אירוסין",  
מכיון ש"כבר נהגו כל ישראל  
לקדש בכסף או בשוה כסף"  
(ולא בשטר).

Nowadays, and this was already the established practice in the time of Rashi, we don't use a document to effect the marriage, as we will see in *Maimonides*. so in addition to the fact that *kidushin* documents weren't around during Joseph's era, they also weren't around during Rashi's era.

## Source 2 Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Ishut, chapter 1:2; chapter 3:21

**Student's** This process of acquisition fulfills one of the  
pg. 8 Torah's positive commandments. The process of acquiring a wife is formalized in one of three ways: through the transfer of money, through the transfer of a formal document or through marital relations.

Although this is the law, it has already become universal Jewish custom to consecrate a marriage through the transfer of money or objects of monetary value.

וְלְקוּחֵיךָ אֵלּוּ מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה שֶׁל  
תּוֹרָה הֵם. וּבְאֶחָד מִשְׁלֹשָׁה  
דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ הָאִשָּׁה נִקְנִית. בְּכֶסֶף.  
אוּ בְשֵׁטֶר. אוּ בְבִיאָה.

אִף עַל פִּי שְׁעָקָר הַדְּבָר כִּן הוּא  
כְּבָר נִהְגוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לְקַדֵּשׁ בְּכֶסֶף  
אוּ בְשׁוּה כֶּסֶף.



## >> The Rebbe

**Student's** Although our forefathers observed the entire  
pg. 9 Torah even before it was given, we nevertheless see that they observed marriage laws differently than we do today, after the giving of the Torah. The student recalls episodes that reflect this from previous Torah portions, such as Jacob marrying two sisters, and will later learn that Amram married his aunt, Yocheved. The most relevant example is the description of how Laban deceptively gave Leah to Jacob, and he cohabited with her, with no additional elements to the marriage process. Jacob only protested that Laban acted deceitfully, he didn't challenge the validity of the marriage, and the marriage is still enduring in this Torah portion.

ואף שקיימו האבות כל התורה כולה עד שלא ניתנה<sup>10</sup> - אך בנוגע לדיני קידושין אנו רואים שזה לא היה קיים אצל האבות בצורה שאנו עושים זאת לאחר מתן תורה, כפי שהבן חמש זוכר שלמד בפרשות קודמות שיעקב נשא שתי אחיות, וילמד יותר מאוחר שעמרם נשא דודתו, ועוד. והדוגמה הכי בולטת - בנידון דידן: לָבָן הביא את לאה ליעקב בערב וברמאות, ויבוא אליה, ותו לא ניתוסף בזה כלום (וטענת יעקב הייתה רק "למה רמיתני"), והגישואין קיימים עד עתה!

*One may ask, didn't the forefathers keep all of the Torah before it was given? If so, even though most people in their era got married without any formal process, perhaps the forefathers did conduct their marriages in accordance with halachah. Perhaps Joseph did indeed use the marriage document and ketubah that were instituted following the giving of the Torah.*

*The answer is that the Torah's description of the forefather's marriages proves that they didn't practice this matter in the same way we do, following the giving of the Torah. Even the beginner student knows that Jacob married two sisters and Amram - Moses's father - married his aunt, relationships that are completely forbidden post-giving of the Torah. In addition, in Jacob's own marriage to Leah there is no mention of any marriage document or ketubah.*

**Student's** It is therefore clear that when Rashi writes that  
pg. 10 Joseph "showed his father a marriage document" this doesn't mean a kidushin document in the halachic sense, a document that creates the bond of marriage. Such a document didn't exist pre-giving of the Torah. Rather, this was a document similar to a document attesting to a gift, or another form of transaction. Such

ומכיון שכן, בהכרח לומר שמה שכתב רש"י "הראה לו שטר אירוסין" - אין הכוונה לקידושין בשטר, כדין תורה, שטר שעל ידו נעשה חלות הקידושין (דבר שלא היה במציאות לפני מתן תורה, ובוודאי לא יכתוב רש"י בפשוטו של מקרא דבר שאינו

10) קידושין פב, א - במשנה. וש"נ. וראה פרש"י תולדות כו, ב. שם, יב. כו, ג. שם, ט. וישלח לב, ה. ועוד.



Student's  
pg. 10

documents are intended to serve as evidence to an event, that one person gave another a gift etc. In our case, the "marriage document" was a document attesting to a certain preparatory stage before the marriage.

במציאות, או שיחלוק על הרמב"ם במציאות),  
כי אם, על דרך "שטר מתנה", וכיוצא בזה,  
כלומר, שטר לראיה על מאורע פלוני, שפלוני  
נתן לפלוני מתנה וכיוצא בזה, ובנדון דידן, שטר  
ראיה שהיה ענין מסוים לפני הנישואין בתור  
הכנה לנישואין (לא קידושין ממש, דבר שלא  
היה במציאות לפני מתן תורה).

*It is clear that Joseph's "marriage document" wasn't a halachic document, but rather a pre-marriage declaration about their relationship.*

# C. Holy Marriage

## >> The Rebbe

### Marriage With Preparation And Sanctity

**Student's** To explain the function of this document:  
pg. 11

This marriage document is referred to with the Hebrew word "eirusin." Eirusin refers to a certain stage of the marital relationship that precedes the final stage of nisuin. The verse speaks of a person who "betrothed a woman but didn't marry her," meaning that a relationship was established through eirusin, but he didn't yet "marry her."

The beginner student already learned about the marriage of Issac and Rebecca, which was preceded by multiple preparatory stages - giving nose rings and bracelets, silver and gold vessels, clothing, etc. and only after all of this "Isaac brought her to his tent . . . and she became his wife" - the stage of nisuin.

After the giving of the Torah, eirusin is effected by an act of kidushin, and, when the kidushin is done through a document, there is an eirusin document that creates the kidushin. Before the giving of the Torah, however, there was no concept of kidushin, and eirusin was practiced by the forefathers as a righteous practice instead of just the usual meeting of a woman in the street. This eirusin served as a preparatory stage before bringing the woman to his home.

והביאור בזה:

הפירוש של "אירוסין" הוא - שלב מסוים בקשר שבין איש ואשה לפני ה"נישואין", כלשון הכתוב<sup>11</sup> "ארש אשה ולא לקחה", היינו, שישנו כבר קשר ביניהם, "ארש אשה", אבל עדיין "לא לקחה".

וכפי שלמד הבן חמש למקרא בנוגע לשידוך של יצחק ורבקה, שהיו כמה וכמה עניני הכנה - נתינת הנזם והצמידים, כלי כסף וכלי זהב ובגדים, וכיוצא בזה בנוגע לשאר הפרטים שבפרשה, ורק לאחרי כל זה "ויביאה יצחק האהלה... ותהי לו לאשה"<sup>12</sup> - נישואין.

ובכן, לאחר מתן תורה, ה"אירוסין" הם על ידי קידושין ממש, וכשמקדשים בשטר, ישנו "שטר אירוסין" שעל ידו נעשה חלות הקידושין, אבל לפני מתן תורה, שלא הייתה כל המציאות של קידושין, הרי, ענין האירוסין שניתוסף (אצל האבות וכיוצא בזה) כהידור על ההנהגה הרגילה "פוגע אשה בשוק", הוא - הכנה מיוחדת לפני שמכניסה לביתו כו'.

**Student's** The “marriage (eirusin) document” here  
pg. 12 refers to a document attesting that there was a certain preparatory stage in the relationship before the man took his wife into his home.

ועל פי זה, “שטר אירוסין” פירושו - שטר לראיה שהיה שלב מסוים בקשר שביניהם, הכנה מסוימת כו', לפני שהכניסה לתוך ביתו כו'.

*The concept of eirusin before nisuin is about giving the nisuin dignity and a refined moral framework. It means that the nisuin wasn't just a spur of the moment act that can also end on the spur of a moment. Eirusin before nisuin shows that this is a serious relationship that was carefully considered beforehand. It attests that the relationship between the couple is dignified and serious, and that the nisuin is being entered into sincerely and with sanctity.*

*After the giving of the Torah the period between the eirusin and nisuin had a special halachic status, the nuances of which are beyond the scope of the present discussion. While this halachic status was absent for Joseph, he still wrote a declaratory document before marrying Osnat in order to attest to the same basic idea, that their marriage wasn't just a spur of the moment decision, but something serious and holy.*

## Protection And Dignity For The Wife

**Student's** The same applies to the ketubah mentioned  
pg. 12 by Rashi. This wasn't identical with the ketubah that has existed from Talmudic times through the current era. Rather, this is similar to something mentioned during the episode of Shechem, “impose upon me a large marriage settlement,” which Rashi explains means a “ketubah.” In this context, ketubah means a financial pledge, and a ketubah document is a document attesting that a financial pledge was made.

וכמו כן בנוגע ל"שטר כתובה" - שאין זה שטר כתובה שהיה בזמן הש"ס כו' עד לימינו אלה (דבר שלא היה במציאות לפני מתן תורה), כי אם, על דרך מה שכתוב בסיפור של שכם בן חמור<sup>13</sup> "הרבו עלי מאוד מהר", ומפרש רש"י: "כתובה", כלומר, התחייבות ממון, והפירוש של "שטר כתובה" הוא - שטר ראיה שהייתה התחייבות ממון.

*The ketubah instituted by the Sages is a binding legal document that accompanies the kidushin. This document lists the husband's obligations towards his wife, and most importantly his financial commitment to her in the case of his death or divorce. The goal of this document is to protect the wife's rights in the marriage, and also to provide for her financially in the case of death or divorce G-d forbid.*

The halachic ketubah obviously didn't exist pre-Sinai, but Joseph gave his wife various commitments to protect her in the event of his death or divorce, G-d forbid.

**Student's** The purpose of Joseph showing his father  
pg.12 "a marriage document and a ketubah" was to prove to him that his marriage with Osnat wasn't a "met in the street" scenario. Rather, it had been preceded by a preparatory eirusin stage, and accompanied by a monetary commitment, a ketubah. The marriage was thus a perfect union, both from Joseph's perspective as well as Osnat's.

וזהו הפירוש של "הראה לו שטר אירוסין ושטר כתובה" - להוכיח שנישואיו עם אסנת לא היו באופן של "פוגע אשה בשוק כו", כי אם, לאחר הכנה מסוימת לפני זה ("אירוסין"), ונוסף לזה, התחייבות של ממון ("כתובה"), שלכן, הנישואין הם בתכלית השלימות, הן מצדו של יוסף, והן מצדה של אסנת, כנזכר לעיל בארוכה.

When Jacob said that he sees that the children aren't worthy of a blessing and therefore asked "where did these come from," what form of marriage produced these children, he was expressing doubt regarding the sanctity of Joseph's marriage. As mentioned, Joseph's marriage took place while he was alone in Egypt, without his father or family.

Joseph therefore showed the commitments he made to Osnat before the marriage, and the guarantees he gave her - known today as an eirusin document and ketubah - in order to prove to his father that his marriage was holy and pure, and his children are therefore worthy of a blessing.

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We can learn from this story the importance of marital harmony and sanctity within the marriage.

When Jacob wished to bless his grandsons and the divine presence departed him, his first thought was that there must have been some problem with the marriage of the parents. There were endless possible reasons, but the first thought that entered Jacob's mind was to check the marital status of the parents. Joseph didn't question Jacob's assumption and ask what his marriage would have to do with his sons' worthiness for a blessing. He proved to his father that his marriage was conducted properly and with sanctity.

The Rebbe often addressed the importance of marital harmony and the sanctity of marriage. This is the key to blessings in livelihood and nachas from our children. We see a powerful expression of this in the story of Jacob's blessing to his grandsons.

## G-d's Dignified Relationship With The Jewish People - Optional Section

**Student's** May our discussion of eirusin and nisuin  
pg. 13 lead us to experience very soon the spiritual concept of marriage, the union between G-d and the Jewish people.

Since this relationship is termed a "marriage," G-d is required to provide all of a man's obligations to his wife, "her sustenance, her clothing, and her marital relations should not be diminished."

The text of the tenaim traditionally written before marriage state that the couple "will not flee nor hide one from the other . . . and will dwell together with love and affection as is the societal norm." The ketubah states "I will work, honor, feed and support you in the custom of Jewish men, who work, honor, feed, and support their wives faithfully."

Certainly "the husband must be very careful not to cause his wife distress, because her tear is easily elicited" and "a man must always be careful to respect his wife, more than he respects himself."

All of these obligations also apply to the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. G-d "relates His words to the people of Jacob, His statutes and laws to the House of Israel," and "that which he observes He instructs the Jewish people to observe" -

ויהי רצון שמהדיבור בענין אירוסין ונישואין, נזכה בקרוב ממש לענין הפנימי והרוחני של הנישואין - בנוגע להקב"ה וכנסת ישראל,

ומכיון שכן, צריך הקב"ה למלא את כל ההתחייבויות של איש לאשתו על פי ציווי התורה - "שארה כסותה ועונתה לא יגרע"<sup>14</sup>.

וכמו שמובא בנוסח ה"תנאים" - "ואל יבריחו ואל יעלימו לא זה מזו כו' וידורו ביניהם באהבה וחיבה כאורח כל ארעא" [כדרך כל הארץ], ובנוסח ה"כתובה" - "ואנא אפלה ואוקיר ואיזון ואפרנס כו' כהלכות גוברין יהודאין כו'" [ואני אעבוד ואכבד ואזון ואפרנס כו' כמשפט בני ישראל],

ופשיטא, "ליזהר מאד באונאת אשתו שלא לצערה . . שדמעתי מצויה"<sup>15</sup>, אלא אדרבה, "לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בכבוד אשתו"<sup>16</sup>, יותר מגופו<sup>17</sup>,

אשר, כל החיובים הללו הם גם בנוגע להקב"ה וכנסת ישראל, ואדרבה - מכיון ש"מגיד דבריו ליעקב חוקיו ומשפטיו לישראל"<sup>18</sup>, "מה שהוא עושה הוא אומר לישראל לעשות"<sup>19</sup>

(17) יבמות סב, סע"ב. רמב"ם הל' אישות פט"ו הי"ט.  
(18) תהלים קמז, יט.

(14) משפטים כא, י.  
(15) שו"ע אדה"ד חו"מ סוף הל' אונאה.  
(16) ב"מ נט, סע"א. שו"ע אדה"ד שם.

**Student's** first He observes it and then He instructs  
pg.14 the Jewish people to do the same. Therefore,  
the primary instruction here is regarding  
G-d's conduct with the Jewish people!

משיחות שבת פרשת ויחי, ט"ז טבת,  
ושבת פרשת שמות, כ"ג טבת, מבה"ח שבט, ה'תשמ"ז  
הנחה בלתי מוגה.  
תורת מנחם ה'תשמ"ז חלק ב' עמודים 264-270, עמודים 296-299

("הוא עושה" תחלה, ואחר כך "הוא  
אומר לישראל לעשות"), הרי עיקר  
הציווי הוא - בנוגע לאופן הנהגת  
הקב"ה עם כנסת ישראל!