



Bein Adam Li'chaveyro

“**C**lass, the subject of today’s shiur is the sin of *‘mechiras Yosef’* (the sale of Yosef into slavery). Before we begin, I must make the following introduction. Yosef’s brothers, who committed the sin, were the *shevatim* – the sons of Yaakov Avinu. They were all spiritual giants, on a *madrayga* (spiritual level) that is beyond our comprehension. They received prophesy from Hashem. We ourselves are not capable of criticizing their actions. However, our sages and Torah giants throughout the generations have spoken about the sin. Therefore, we may relate their interpretation of the events. Now, let us begin. Who knows the basic facts of the story?”

“I do, Rebbe.”

“Go ahead, Chaim.”

“Yaakov sent Yosef to Dosan, where his brothers were tending their sheep. The brothers saw him and wanted to kill him. The *meforshim* cite various reasons for this, however, it is not necessary to delve into it at this point. It is sufficient to say that our great ancestors felt their plan was justified. Reuven convinced the other brothers to put Yosef into a pit, instead of killing him on the spot. They did so, and sat down to eat bread. A caravan of Ishmaelites passed by, and Yehuda persuaded the brothers to sell him as a slave. They drew Yosef out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who sold him to the Midyanites, who sold him as a slave in Mitzrayim. He was there in Mitzrayim for 22 years until he saw his father again (Rashi Bereshis 28:9).”

“**E**xcellent, Chaim. Rav Meir Simcha of Divinsk wrote a classic peirush on the Chumash entitled *Meshech Chochma*. He cites the *Medrash Mishlei* (Chapter 1) which relates that the ten *‘harugei malchus’* (leading sages who were tortured and killed by the Romans) died for the sin of *‘mechiras Yosef.’* In every generation, this sin still stands. Rav Meir Simcha explains that every time an *aveyra* (sin) *bein adam li’chaveyro* (between man and his fellow man) is committed in Klal Yisrael, Hashem recalls the *aveyra* of *‘mechiras Yosef.’*”

“That is frightening, Rebbe.”

“It truly is, Avi. Now, let us try to analyze *‘mechiras Yosef.’* Let us first begin with understanding the concept of *aveyros bein adam li’chaveyro*. Hillel summarized it one sentence. ‘What you find hateful, do not do to your friend’ (Gemora Shab-

bos 31a). name the bad things were done to Yosef and Yaakov?”

“Yosef was put into a pit with snakes and scorpions, where he would almost certainly die. That must have been extremely traumatic.”

“Very good, Shlomo.”

“**H**e was then sold as a slave to gentiles. They would almost certainly strip him of his Yiddishkeit and his Olam Habbo, by not allowing him to keep the mitzvos. They would likely give him hard, demeaning work. He would not have a wife or children, and thus be deprived of all nachas in his life. He would never see his family again. Instead, he would be surrounded by pagan idol worshippers, and would likely become one of them. His heart and spirit would be broken. That is a truly horrible fate.”

“Correct and well put, Yitzy.”

Who can bad things

forget. You must ask yourself, ‘If I were him, would it bother me?’ Sometimes the other person is more sensitive than you. Things that annoy him might not faze you. He may be poorer than you, or not as smart as you are. All this must be taken into consideration.”

“I see, Rebbe.”

“**W**hat we have spoken about now is in the area of not hurting your fellow man. There is another aspect of *bein adam li’chaveyro* called *chessed* – doing good things for him. This involves carefully thinking about what the other person needs, and then providing it for him. Both sides of *bein adam li’chaveyro* – avoiding the bad and doing the good – begin with thinking about the other person. Who is he? What makes him tick? What does he need? What does he enjoy? What bothers him? That is the key. Put yourself in the other person’s place, and act towards him as you would want him to behave towards you. Class, may Hashem bless us all with tremendous success in this area.”

“Amen!”



Kinderlach . . .

Pick a close friend or family member and think about him. What is he like? Quiet or outgoing? Sensitive, or easygoing? What is he sensitive about? When you speak to him, do not bring up the sensitive subjects that may hurt his feelings. That is Hillel’s rule of bein adam li’chaveyro. There are certain

things that bother almost everyone. Do not push ahead of people, bang into them, or step on their toes. Insulting them, damaging them or their property, are terrible aveyros bein adam li’chaveyro. Let us return to your close friend. Does he prefer good food or a good book? What is his favorite food? Does he appreciate a wake-up call in the morning? Do chessed for him. Give him what is good for him – what he likes. Kinderlach, make it your project to excel at bein adam li’chaveyro. Think about other people do the best that you can for them!

“What about Yaakov Avinu? He was broken hearted for twenty-two years. He was told that Yosef was killed, and he did not recover from that news. He was so sad, that he did not receive *nevuah* (prophesy) for the entire period of separation. How could sons do such a cruel thing to their father?”

“That is a very good question, Nochum. We are all beginning to appreciate the magnitude of this *aveyra*. It is no wonder that it is still with us.”

“Yes, however, it is very inspirational, Rebbe.”

“In what way, Dovid?”

“After contemplating the devastating effects of this *aveyra*, I have resolved to strengthen my mitzvos and relationships *‘bein adam li’chaveyro.’* I will pay special attention to Hillel’s rule. Before I say or do something to someone, I must think, ‘How would I feel if he said or did that to me?’ That will be my guide.”

“That is a good start, Dovid; however there is subtle detail which you must not

Parasha Questions:

- What were the sins of the Sar Ha’mashkim and the Sar Ha’ofim? (Rashi 40:1)
- How long were they in the dungeon before they dreamed their dreams? (Rashi 40:4)
- What was Yosef’s request from the Sar Ha’mashkim? (40:14 and Rashi)