



Dedicated to a Refuah Shelayma for Mr. Melvin Steinig

The Detective

"Please bring the next defendant in to Beis Din."

"Yes Mr. Krouse. Your trial is about to begin. We will now present the claims against you. On the fourth of Elul, 5755, you were seen entering a non-kosher restaurant."

"I have an explanation."

"On the tenth of Adar 5756, you were heard speaking Loshon Hora about your neighbor."

"I will tell you why."

"On the nineteenth of Sivan 5757, you walked away from the bus station with someone else's suitcase."

"It was all a mistake. Please let me explain."

"You would like to explain yourself. You would like us to judge you favorably. I am sorry we cannot do that. We can only take these events at their face value."

"But why? Why won't you let me explain myself?"

"Because, Mr. Krouse, when you were alive, you did not judge other people favorably. Therefore, we cannot judge you favorably. The Gemora (Shabbos 127b) states, 'One who judges his fellow man favorably will himself be judged favorably.'"

"Oy va voy. What a mistake I made."

"You shall judge your fellow righteously" (Vayikra 19:15). This verse is the source for judging another Jew favorably. The Shelah HaKadosh has a pointed insight into this week's parasha which shows us just how far reaching this mitzvah is. "Yosef would bring evil reports (about his brothers) to his father" (Bereshis 37:2). He would tell Yaakov that they were eating the meat of an animal that was not shechted. How could this be true? The brothers were the Holy Tribes of Israel. It is inconceivable that they would eat something unkosher. Could the report be false? Yosef Hatsaddik would not bring a false report. What was happening here? The Shelah answers by relating that Avraham Avinu had the "Sefer Yetsira", a book that contained the secrets of life. The sefer passed down the generations to the sons of Yaakov. They used it to create a live calf every Erev Shabbos. This calf could be eaten without shechita. Only an animal born from living parents needs shechita. The brothers ate an animal that was not shechted, because it did not require shechita! Yosef should have investigated more carefully before informing Yaakov. He brought "an evil report" because he did not consider this possibility. That is how far the mitzvah of judging favorably goes.

Kinderlach . . .

"I saw him taking someone's book."

There must be a good reason for that.

Maybe the owner did not need it. "She

stepped on my toe." She probably lost

her balance and could not help herself.

"He ate my piece of cake." I am sure that

he thought it was his. There are many

ways to judge people favorably. If your

first reaction is to accuse someone, stop

for a second and think. Is there a zechus

(merit) here? Think a little harder. Be a

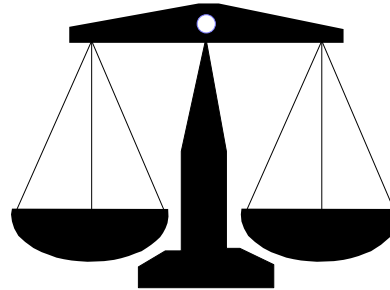
"zechus" detective. Conduct a thorough

investigation, and come up with the

solution. If you think of a zechus, you get

a mitzvah diorayssa – one of the 613.

That is big-time detective work.



The Darkness

"I have a riddle for you, Chaim."

"Go ahead, Avi."

"What is underground, dark, with just a small hole to let in light?"

"Ummm, a pipe?"

"No, bigger."

"A tunnel?"

"No."

"Ummm, I give up."

"A Biblical prison."

"Really? That is fascinating. How do you know that?"

"From this week's parasha. Rabbeinu Bechaye describes the prison into which Yosef was thrown. It was like a house built underground."

"How deep was it?"

"A lot deeper than you think. Rabbeinu Bechaye compares it to the *golus* (exile) of Klal Yisrael."

"That is true even today. We are deep in the darkness."

"Exactly. However, we have much to be thankful for. As the verse states, 'And Hashem was with Yosef' (Bereshis 39:21). Just as the Shechina (Divine Presence) was with Yosef in that prison, so too, Hashem is with us in this deep, dark *golus*."

"Tell me more."

"Rabbeinu Bechaye goes on and describes many parallels between our *golus* and Yosef's interment. His suffering in the prison is similar to our suffering among the nations. Hashem gave Yosef charisma in the eyes of the prison guards (Bereshis 39:21). Similarly, he gives us a charisma in the eyes of the nations. But the best part is the end."

"Where they take Yosef up out of prison."

"Yes. So too, we will be redeemed from this *golus*. That is why we pray, "*yaaleh vi'yavo*" (rise up and come), because the end of this *golus* will be like rising up from a pit."

"Speedily and in our days."

"Amen."

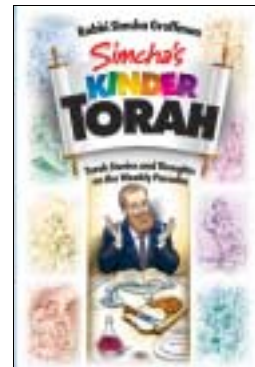
Kinderlach . . .

Don't be afraid of the dark. The golus is very dark. However, we have the light – Hashem. He is with us. He protects us. He gives us charm. He loves us. And He will redeem us. Keep praying to him. Ask Him to bring us up out of the darkness. With His help, we will be in the light . . . very soon.

Parasha Questions

- The brothers could not speak peacefully to Yosef. What was praiseworthy about this? (Rashi 37:4)
- Who was the man that Yosef found wandering in the field? (Rashi 37:15)
- Which brother saved Yosef? (37:21)
- What was in the pit? (Rashi 37:24)
- Who pulled Yosef out of the pit and what did they do with him? (37:28)
- How long did Yaakov mourn for Yosef? (Rashi 37:34)
- What happened to the home of the Egyptian while Yosef was there? (39:5)

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