

The Visage Appeared to Yosef in the Window Facing Yerushalayim Where He Prayed

We will begin to shed some light on the matter by introducing an explanation from our master, Rabbi Aharon of Belz, zy" a, citing his father, our master, Rabbi Yischar Dov of Belz, zy" a. He explains why the visage of his father appeared to Yosef **"in the window."** We have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 34b): **"אל יתפלל אדם אלא בבית שיש שם חלונות, שנאמר וכיון פתיחן ליה בעליתה—נגד ירושלם—a person should only pray in a house that has windows, as it states (Daniel 6, 11): "He had windows open toward Yerushalayim."** This, in fact, is the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch (90, 4): **It is imperative to open apertures or windows facing Yerushalayim, in order to pray in their direction.**

Furthermore, the Gemara (Berachos 30a) teaches us that when davening, one should direct one's heart toward Eretz Yisrael, toward Yerushalayim, toward the Beis HaMikdash, toward the Kodesh HaKodashim and toward the Kaporet: **נמצאו—כל ישראל מכוונין את לבם למקום אחד—thus, it turns out that all of Yisrael are directing their hearts to a single location.** We can deduce from this that Yosef HaTzaddik davened regularly by this one specific window in his master's house that faced in the direction of Yerushalayim, the Beis HaMikdash, the Kodesh HaKodashim and the Kaporet. Therefore, the image of his father's face appeared to him in that very window, where he always davened. This concludes his enlightening remarks.

In one of my lectures to our brothers in "chutz la'aretz," I expanded on this enlightening idea. Even in this day and age, every one of us can learn a valuable lesson from Yosef's actions. Yosef HaTzaddik, the pillar of the world, found himself in Mitzrayim, the most immoral place on earth, and he was overcome with fear and anxiety. He wondered how he could maintain his kedushah in such an impure environment, so far away from his father Yaakov and his righteous brothers.

Therefore, he decided to designate a permanent place for his prayers, facing Yerushalayim and the site of the Beis HaMikdash. As we have learned, all three of the holy Avos prayed to Hashem there. By doing so, he intended to connect with their kedushah, so that he could maintain his own kedushah even in Mitzrayim. Let us cite the pertinent ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 98, 1):

"המתפלל צריך שיכוין בלבו פירוש המילות שמוציא בשפתיו, ויחשוב כאילו שכינה כנגדו, ויסיר כל המחשבות הטורדות אותו, עד שתישאר מחשבתו וכוננתו"

זכה בתפלתו. ויחשוב כאילו היה מדבר לפני מלך בשר ודם, היה מסדר דבריו ומכוין בהם יפה לבל ישל, קל וחומר לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה, שהוא חוקר כל המחשבות, וכך היו עושים חסידים ואנשי מעשה, שהיו מתבודדים ומכוונין בתפלתם, עד שהיו מגיעים להתפשטות הגשמיות ולהתגברות כח השכלי, עד שהיו מגיעים קרוב למעלת הנבואה."

While praying, a person must focus on the meaning of the words he is uttering. He should imagine that he is in the presence of the Shechinah and should eliminate all thoughts that are bothering and distracting him. Ultimately, his mind should be pure and focused solely on his tefilah. He should organize his thoughts and consider what he would say to a human king of flesh and blood to avoid failure. All the more so, when directing one's words to the HKB" H, the King of Kings, Who perceives all of our innermost thoughts. This is what the chassidim and men of preeminence did. They isolated themselves, so that they could focus entirely on their tefilah. Thus, they freed themselves of material concerns and empowered their intellects, thereby achieving a level akin to "nevuah."

"Observing through the windows, peering through the lattices"

Let us try to imagine Yosef HaTzaddik's predicament. He was busy most of the day, loyally serving his Egyptian master. Three times a day, he anxiously waited and planned to go to the window that faced Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdash. While praying, he stood in isolation and freed himself of all worldly concerns; he transported himself mentally to the holy city of Yerushalayim, where he imagined himself ascending to the site of the Mikdash to pour out his heart in tefilah before Hashem. In this manner, he maintained his kedushah in Mitzrayim, even after returning to his physical reality.

Therefore, when enduring the unbelievably difficult ordeal with his master's wife, fighting a bitter, life-threatening battle with the yetzer and its legions struggling to bring him down, his father's visage appeared to him **"in the window"**--in the very same window that faced the Beis HaMikdash and where he prayed regularly, so that he could maintain his kedushah. This provided him the assistance and moral support necessary to withstand the yetzer and to maintain his kedushah. Thus, he paved the way for all of Yisrael in Mitzrayim and all future generations in galus, to pray somewhere with a window directed toward Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdash—to maintain their kedushah wherever they might find themselves.

We can suggest that this is the message conveyed by Shlomo HaMelech in the Holy of Holies of songs (Shir HaShirim 2, 8): "קול דודי הנה זה בא מדלג על ההרים מקפץ על הגבעות, דומה דודי לצבי או לעופר האילים, הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן החרכים." **The voice of my Beloved! Behold, it came suddenly to redeem me, as if leaping over mountains, skipping over hills. In His swiftness to redeem me, My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. I thought I would be forever alone, but behold! He was standing behind our wall, observing through the windows, peering through the lattices.** Here he describes the situation of galus metaphorically. Bnei Yisrael are dispersed throughout the countries of the goyim, and they are unable to ascend, be seen and bow down before Hashem in the Beis HaMikdash. Therefore, just as Yosef HaTzaddik did, they also designate a special window, facing Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdash, so that they can draw upon the kedushah of the Shechinah and the holy Avos.

This is Shlomo HaMelech's message: **"The voice of my Beloved! Behold, it came suddenly to redeem me, as if leaping over mountains, skipping over hills. In His swiftness to redeem me, My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart."** HKB"H is "my Uncle," "my Beloved." He leaps over the mountains and hills of Yerushalayim to hear the tefilos of Yisrael in all of their dwellings in galus. **"He was standing behind our wall, observing through the windows."** HKB"H stands behind our walls, watching over us through our windows that face Yerushalayim, accepting our tefilos gladly and mercifully. Even if those windows become dirty, chas v'shalom, with the soot and smoke generated by the goyim's tumah: **"peering through the lattices"**—nevertheless, HKB"H peers in to see if we have at least left small, unobstructed cracks directed toward Yerushalayim. In other words, He is checking to see if we still long and miss the connection we once had with HKB"H in the Beis HaMikdash.

Yaakov Avinu Prayed at the Site of the Mikdash that Yosef HaTzaddik Would Maintain His Kedushah

Following this line of reasoning, let us proceed to explain why the visage of Yaakov appeared to Yosef specifically in the window. We will rely on a precious interpretation of a passuk in parshas Vayeitzei (Bereishis 28, 20) from the great Rabbi Pinchas Hager, ztz"l, the head of the Beis-Din of Borsha, hy"d. It states: **זהו יודר יעקב נדר לאמר, אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך, ונתן לי לחם לאכול ובגד ללבוש, ושבתו בשלום אל בית אבי**

ואתאמר שרה צחוק עשה לי אלקים: "זהו יהיה ה' לי לאלקים" Yaakov took a vow, saying, **"If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way that I am going; and He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear; and I will return in peace to my father's house, and Hashem will be a G-d to me."** Regarding the phrase: **"And Hashem will be a G-d to me,"** Rashi comments: **That His name will rest upon me from beginning to end, that no defect should be found in my offspring.** At first glance, Rashi's comment appears enigmatic. Where do we find an allusion in the words **"זהו יהיה ה' לי לאלקים"** indicating that he prayed that HKB"H's name would rest upon him from beginning to end and that no defect should be found in his offspring?

We can suggest an answer based on a concept explained in our sacred sefarim. The Avos are the chariot; they allude to the four letters of the holy name **Havaya**. The first **"hei"** is alluded to in the name **אברהם**. Originally, his name was simply **אברם**; then HKB"H added the letter **"hei"** to his name. The letter **"yud"** is alluded to in the name **יצחק**. His name reflects the fact that Sarah Imeinu laughed with incredulity, as it is written (ibid. 21, 6): **"ותאמר שרה צחוק עשה לי אלקים:—Sarah said, "G-d has made laughter for me."** The letter **"yud"** was added to the Hebrew word for laughter. The letter **"vav"** is alluded to in the name **יעקוב**. Occasionally, his name is spelled in its full form, including the **"vav,"** as it appears in parshas Bechukotai (Vayikra 26, 42): **"וזכרתי את בריתי יעקוב"**. The final **"hei"** of Havaya is alluded to by the name **יהוסף**. As the Gemara (Sotah 36b) explains, after Yosef withstood his ordeal, the letter **"hei"** was added to his name. This is how his name is written in the passuk (Tehillim 81, 5): **"עדות ביהוסף שמו בצאתו על ארץ מצרים"**.

It turns out, therefore, that had Yosef not withstood his ordeal, and the letter **"hei"** had not been added to his name, the name Havaya would not have been complete with all four of its letters. This then is what Yaakov prayed for: **"זהו יהיה ה' לי לאלקים"**. He wanted to have the merit of completing the four letters of the holy name. This is indicated by Rashi's comment: **"שיחול שמו עלי מתחילה ועד סוף"**--**that His name will rest upon me from beginning to end.** In other words, **"from the beginning"** refers to Avraham Avinu; following him were Yitzchak Avinu and Yaakov Avinu. **"To the end"** refers to Yosef HaTzaddik, whose **"hei"** completed the name Havaya. Therefore, Yaakov concludes his tefilah: **"שלא ימצא פסול בזרעי"**--**that no defect should be found in my offspring.** In other words, he prayed that Yosef would not be found blameworthy or lacking, so that he would complete the holy name. This concludes his magnificent explanation.

Yosef Prayed in the Window Facing toward the Mikdash Where Yaakov Prayed that Yosef Would Not Fail

Let us address an important point. Yaakov Avinu prayed: “שלא ימצא פסול בזרעי”. So, why did he pray only for Yosef and not for all of his children? The simple answer is that he sensed via “ruach hakodesh” that Yosef in Mitzrayim would require more protection than his siblings. Yet, we can provide a more profound explanation based on the following Midrash (V.R. 32, 5): “יוסף ירד למצרים וגדר עצמו מן הערוה ונגדרו ישראל בזכותו. אמר: יוסף רבי חייה בר אבא, כדאי היה גדר ערוה בעצמו שנגאלו ישראל על ידו.” **Yosef went down to Mitzrayim and guarded himself against sexual immorality; in his merit, Yisrael were able to guard themselves. Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said: The guarding against immorality alone was sufficient cause for Yisrael to be redeemed. Furthermore, Yosef succeeded in gathering together all of the beloved sparks in Mitzrayim.**

We learn from this Midrash the importance of Yosef’s ordeal in Mitzrayim. By being sold into slavery and withstanding this extreme ordeal with Potiphar’s wife, Yosef paved the way for all of Yisrael in Mitzrayim. In his merit, they maintained their kedushah and purity and did not intermingle or assimilate with the Egyptians. For resisting sexual immorality, they deserved to be redeemed.

This sheds some light for us on the enormity of Yosef’s ordeal. Due to its enormity, the image of his father appeared in the window, in order to help him defeat the yetzer and maintain his kedushah. As explained, the kedushah of Yisrael’s six-hundred thousand in Mitzrayim hung in the balance. Thus, we can say that the forces of all of Yisrael’s six-hundred-thousand’s collective yetzer rallied to induce Yosef HaTzaddik to sin. For, they knew that if they succeeded in bringing Yosef down, they would ultimately succeed in causing all of Yisrael to sin during their sojourn in Mitzrayim. Conversely, if Yosef successfully maintained his level of kedushah, he would pave the way for all of Yisrael to withstand their yetzers.

Viewed from this perspective, it is obvious why Yaakov Avinu prayed the following, unique tefilah related to Yosef when he was at the site of the Beis HaMikdash: “והיה ה' לי לאלקים” —“שיחול שמו עלי מתחילה ועד סוף”—that I should merit completing all four letters of the holy name; “שלא ימצא פסול בזרעי”—that feat will be accomplished if Yosef remains free of any defects. In reality, all of my offspring will be found to be free of defects during the galus in Mitzrayim, as a result. For, Yosef paved the way for all of Yisrael by maintaining his level of kedushah.

We can suggest that this is why the Torah repeatedly mentions that the name **Havaya** was with Yosef. It is written (Bereishis 39, 2): “ויהי ה' את יוסף ויהי איש מצליח ויהי בבית אדוניו המצרי, וירא אדוניו: **Hashem was with Yosef, and he became a successful man; and he remained in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that Hashem was with him, and all that he would do Hashem would make it succeed through his hand.** Similarly, another passuk states (ibid. 23): “אין שר בית הסוהר רואה את כל מאומה בידו באשר ה' אתו ואשר הוא: **the prison warden did not scrutinize anything that was in his custody, because Hashem was with him; and whatever he would do Hashem would make successful.** These pesukim teach us that Yosef merited special protection from the name **Havaya**. Thus, Hashem ensured his success, so that he could complete the four letters of the holy name.

This explains very nicely Yosef’s remark to his master’s wife (ibid. 9): “ואיך אעשה הרעה הגדולה הזאת וחטאתי לאלקים”—**how then can I perpetrate this great evil; I will have sinned against Elokim!** As explained, Yaakov prayed on Yosef’s behalf: “והיה ה' לי לאלקים”—that he should be worthy of completing the holy name. We can interpret this tefilah as a request that he would be able to mitigate the force of the name **Elokim** by means of the four letters of the name **Havaya**. This then is the implication of Yosef’s remark: “**I will have sinned against Elokim!**” If he sins and fails to complete his mission of completing the holy name, then he will have sinned “**against Elokim,**” for failing to diminish it. Consequently, he will suffer a severe punishment from the “din” of Elokim that was not diminished.

In summary, Yaakov Avinu formulated a special tefilah relating to Yosef when he was at the site of the Mikdash: “והיה ה' לי לאלקים”—**let my offspring be flawless.** We can now rejoice for this enlightens us as to why Yosef designated the window facing toward Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdash as his place of prayer. For, he prayed there to Hashem on a regular basis that he would be instrumental in fulfilling his father’s tefilah at the site of the Mikdash—that he should not be found wanting or flawed.

Therefore, when Yosef was subjected to the difficult ordeal that was liable to cause his fall from kedushah, the visage of Yaakov appeared to him in the very same window where he always prayed—the window facing Yerushalayim and the site of the Mikdash. The appearance of Yaakov’s image helped him withstand his yetzer and ensured that Yaakov’s offspring remained flawless.

Yaakov Avinu Appeared to Yosef to Remind Him to Overcome the Yetzer HaRa with the Name of "אנא בכח"

I was struck by a fascinating idea that I would like to present to our esteemed audience concerning the appearance of Yaakov's visage to Yosef in Mitzrayim. Let us refer to the writings of the Sifsei Kohen—one of the young disciples of the Arizal. On this week's parsha, he writes that Yosef HaTzaddik employed the power of the forty-two-letter name—"shem 'mem-Beis"—to overcome the yetzer hara. This name is derived from the tefilah "אנא בכח גדולת ימינך", which we recite every morning during Shacharit. It is comprised of seven names corresponding to the seven days of the week. Each name is comprised of six letters. All together, they are forty-two letters: אב-ג-ית-ץ, קר-ע-שט"ן, נג-ד-יכ"ש, בט"ר-צת"ג, חק-ב-טנ"ע, יג-ל-פז"ק, שק"ו-צי"ת.

Anyone who focuses on this holy name properly is capable of overcoming the yetzer hara and subduing all the forces of tumah. We can suggest that the Torah attributes this power to Yosef (Bereishis. 39, 3): "וירא אדוניו כי ה' אתו וכל אשר הוא עושה ה'": "מ'צליח בידו". In describing Yosef's G-d-given success, the Torah employs the phrase "מ'צליח בידו"; note that the first letters of these two words are מ"ב—an allusion to the name of forty-two letters. Here is a summary of his holy words:

The Midrash (B.R. 86, 5) expounds on the words: "His master saw that Hashem was with him." His master saw him whisper and enter, whisper and leave. His master would request boiling water and almost magically the water boiled. What he whispered was the "shem 'mem-Beis" that his father taught him; he used it as necessary. Hence, the first letters of the words מ'צליח בידו are מ"ב—forty two. Similarly, in the passuk describing the prison warden's lenient attitude with regards to Yosef, the words מ'אוימה בידו are used; once again, their first letters are מ"ב—alluding to Yosef's use of the forty-two-letter name.

Here is what he writes regarding the passuk (Bereishis 39, 7). It states: "His master's wife cast her eyes upon Yosef." Had she not noticed him until that momentous day? In truth, the malach that accompanied him blocked him from view, safeguarding him from the "ayin hara." This was facilitated by the name of forty-two letters. However, when he became self-indulgent—eating, drinking and curling his hair--HKB"H intervened. HKB"H said, "Your father mourns you and you are curling your hair?! Hence, He caused the master's wife to take an interest in Yosef. She saw what was previously hidden from her eyes and attempted to seduce him.

Thus, we learn from the Sifsei Kohen that the "shem 'mem-Beis" enables a person to overcome the yetzer hara and annul all sorts of sorcery. Yosef HaTzaddik was taught this powerful name when his father Yaakov bestowed upon him the wisdom that he had acquired in the Beis Midrash of Shem and Eiver. Notwithstanding, he was subjected to this difficult ordeal, because he became self-indulgent and forgot his father's misery. Hence, it isn't far-fetched to suggest that this is the reason his father's image appeared to him in the window. It came to remind him of the forty-two-letter name that he had taught him. By recalling that powerful name, Yosef was able to withstand his yetzer.

I thank Hashem for showing me that this name is alluded to in the passuk that describes Yosef's refusal of his master's wife's seduction (ibid. 8): "וימאן ויאמר אל אשת אדניו ה'ן אדני ל'א יד'ע את'י מ'ה בבית'י וכל' אשר י'ש ל'ו נת'ן ביד'י": **he refused; he said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know anything that is with me in the house, and all that he has he placed in my custody."** This entire passuk, exactly as it's written in the Torah, has the exact same gematria as the "shem 'mem-Beis": אב-ג-ית-ץ, קר-ע-שט"ן, נג-ד-יכ"ש, בט"ר-צת"ג, חק-ב-טנ"ע, יג-ל-פז"ק, שק"ו-צי"ת. Furthermore, the first letters of the two words מ'ה בבית'י are מ"ב—indicating that his master was ignorant of the fact that his protection was attributable to the name of forty-two letters.

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