



In short, Yehudah was saying you cannot rely on Pharaoh because he didn't adhere to his own laws. However, asks Rabbi Henschel Lebowitz zt"l, it seems that Yehudah's logic is flawed, because the reason Pharaoh lied and went around his own law was for the benefit of Yosef. How does this show that he will lie to hurt Yosef?

The answer is that Yehudah is proving Pharaoh a liar from the fact that he didn't even bother to change the law nor did he show any regret that he lies. This shows that Pharaoh is a liar by nature and therefore it's possible that at any time he will lie and hurt even the ones he loves.

The lesson is awesome. We learn from here that it's possible for a man to do someone a favor and that favor itself is a cause and a sign that afterwards he will hurt him. For this is what was feared regarding Pharaoh. From the fact that he helped Yosef in violation of his laws showed he lacked the trait of honesty. If he lacked honesty he cannot be trusted.

Honesty is the foundation of all of our relationships with our fellow man.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

---

### *A Refreshing Attitude*

After Yosef made the dramatic admission to his brothers, telling them who he was, he told them "And now, be not distressed, do not reproach yourselves for having sold me here, for it was as a supporter of life that G-d sent me ahead of you." Yosef tried to put them at ease and convince them that he did not harbor resentment against them, by assuring them that what happened to him was all part of Hashem's Grand Plan.

If we were to put ourselves in Yosef's position, we might not have been so generous. Yosef had suffered horribly because of what his brothers did to him. We might expect that when Yosef makes this emotional revelation and tells his brothers "I am Yosef" that he would sit there, wait, and say "Okay. Now let me hear your profuse apology." "I want you to get down on your knees and beg for forgiveness." Yet Yosef does not do this. Yosef takes a very gracious approach to them and tells them not to be upset. "Everything came out for the best. G-d sent me here to provide food for you."

How does a person have the capacity to do that? After all, Yosef is human. He is entitled to human feelings and emotions. It is perfectly understandable for a normal human being to maintain a legitimate grudge in such a situation. Not only does Yosef not bear a grudge, but also he is so gracious about it.

The answer is that Yosef is teaching us a secret about how we need to deal with people who may have harmed us in the course of our lives. If a person has a sincere and profound belief in *Hasgachah Peratit* [Personal Divine Providence] and believes that Hashem rules the world then there is really no reason to be angry with a person who may have done you harm.

Those are precisely Yosef's words. I do not have a complaint against you, because this was obviously the Almighty's plan. Had this not all have happened, the world would have starved.

"I look at all of this," Yosef implied, "as if we are all puppets in a Grand Plan in which the Master of the Universe is the puppeteer and He is literally pulling the strings". With such an outlook, a wronged individual can sincerely say to the one who harmed him "I have no complaint against you, because this was all *Hasgachah Peratit*."

The *Baal HaTanya* interprets the Rabbinic statement "Anyone who gets angry is as if he worshipped idols" as follows: We get angry because we think things are not going our way. If a person had a true belief in *Hasgachah Peratit*, he would realize that when things do not go our way, it is because Hashem wants it that way. When we get angry,

we are denying that Hashem rules the world. This is exactly the philosophy of *Abodah Zarah* - the belief that there are other forces in this world besides Hashem.

This is obviously much easier said than done. However, fundamentally, philosophically, that is what is happening. "Why are you getting angry? This is what Hashem wants!"

The *Sefer HaHinuch* expresses the same idea. If we would all take his words to heart it would do a lot to improve the complaints people have about one another. In *Misvah 241* – the prohibition against taking revenge (*Lo Tikom*) – the *Hinuch* writes: "The reason for the *misvah* is that a person should know and take to heart that everything that happens to him whether good or bad comes upon him from Hashem.

"Therefore, when a person causes you pain or anguish – you should know in your soul that your own sins are the cause and Hashem decreed upon you that this should happen. You should not let your thoughts be misplaced to take revenge against the person who harmed you, because he is not the cause of your misfortune, rather sin is the cause."

The analogy we should think of is that if someone hits us with a stick, we do not get angry at the stick. We realize the stick is not the cause of our pain, but rather the one who swings the stick. So too – even the one who swings the stick is not the ultimate cause of our pain. Ultimately, Hashem punishes us for our sins. Hashem just uses certain individuals on earth as His "stick".

Certainly, the person who harms you is responsible for his actions and has his own *Teshubah* to do. This is not a *carte blanche* to say, "I can get away with whatever I want – It's G-d's Will!" No. The "stick" too will have to face Divine Judgement for his deeds; but we should not direct the anger at him. It is a mistake to take out our anger upon that person.

Admittedly, this is not an easy level of self-control to achieve, but if we had that attitude, we would get into far fewer fights with people. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

---

### *Precious Life*

"וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-יֹסֵף אֲמוֹתָהּ הִנֵּנִי אֹתְךָ מֵת וְעַתָּה חַי וְקַי  
"And Yisrael said to Yosef, 'Now I can die; after I have seen your face that you are still alive.'" (*Beresheet* 46:30)

Regarding this *pasuk*, I heard a beautiful explanation from my Rebbe, Harav Shlomo Breuer, in Frankfurt. When Ya'akov *Abinu* finally met his beloved son Yosef after twenty-two years, during which period he thought Yosef had died, the Torah, in describing their first meeting, tells us (*Beresheet* 46:29): "He fell on his neck, and he continued to cry on his neck." *Rashi*, quoting *Hazal*, explains that it was only Yosef who hugged and kissed his father, but Ya'akov at that moment, instead of embracing his son, was saying *Keriat Shema*. And then Ya'akov speaks (46:30): "Now I can die; after I have seen your face."

To explain this remarkable *Hazal*, Rav Breuer said as follows: During the twenty-two years when Ya'akov *Abinu*, dressed in sackcloth, mourned and cried over what he thought was the loss of his beloved son Yosef, his life was not worth much to him. Like the other *Abot*, Ya'akov kept all the *misvot* before they were given, including the daily saying of *Keriat Shema*. And when he said the words, "*Ve'ahabta et Hashem Elokecha bechol...nafshecha*," it was not very difficult for him to offer his life for Hashem. In this state, he would not be giving up very much, as life was almost worthless to him. However, after seeing that Yosef was not only alive, but wearing the Egyptian crown on his head, surrounded by the trappings of royalty, Ya'akov's life

took on new meaning. Now that he was reunited with his beloved son, his life had become precious again. And it was precisely at that exalted moment, when his life had taken on such great value, that he offered to give it to Hashem, if the need arose. Now he was really offering his most precious possession: his life in its most exalted state! It was therefore necessary for him to recite *Keriat Shema* at that moment, and say,