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With  
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ב"ה

Parshas Vayeishev

26th of Kislev 5784

## Holy Haughtiness

The entire story of Yosef going down to Mitzrayim, the brothers following him there, Yaakov settling there and subsequently the Jewish people living there for hundreds of years, can all be traced back to a single action. One action that caused it all: Yaakov's decision to give Yosef a special coat, a uniquely majestic suit that Yosef wore. This caused the brothers to be jealous of Yosef. Which led to the brothers sending Yosef to Mitzrayim. Which led to his becoming second in command. Which led the other brothers to need him. Etc.

The overwhelmingly obvious question is, what was Yaakov thinking? Doesn't every parenting booklet, pamphlet, course and seminar preach to refrain from demonstrating favoritism amongst one's children? Why would Yaakov give Yosef a special coat knowing the other brothers would find out about it?

Perhaps Yaakov knew that one day Yosef would stare in the face of sin and need an extra dose of confidence to overcome it. Perhaps Yaakov felt that it was so necessary for Yosef to develop what mussar sefarim call *Gayva d'Kedushah*, confidence in holiness, that it was worth giving him this royal coat, despite the potential rivalry it would cause. Perhaps Yaakov saw, in his *Ruach HaKodesh*, that there would be a day when Yosef would need every ounce of confidence he could muster to overcome the challenges and temptations his life would throw at him. Perhaps this coat would give him that.

And how right Yaakov was. For what is the approach Yosef takes when he is approached by the wife of Potiphar to commit a sin with her? He says to her, "Do you know who I am? Do you know what I represent? I am not a moral-free janitor. I am not a scoundrel from the street. I am the second in command of this house! This sin you speak of is beneath me." Yosef didn't say I can't sin because I'll get fired, or even because it's bad. He said, "I can't sin because the sin is beneath me."

Sometimes when we face sin or temptation, or the naysayers, or the peanut gallery, we need to tell ourselves that we are majestic. We are royal. It is beneath us.

## The Agudah Installation

At the Agudah convention that was dedicated to installing Reb Moshe Feinstein as the Nasi of Agudas Yisroel, Reb Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchonon, was asked to introduce Reb Moshe. He said the following: "It says in Eiruvim (18b) that it is proper to say some of one's praise in front of him, but not all, for doing so will lead to *ga'avah* – haughtiness. Now why is it even proper to say some praises?" asked Reb Soloveitchik. "Why aren't we concerned that he will get a little *ga'ava'dig*? Isn't a little *ga'avah* also bad?"

He answered that sometimes, when a person is so many levels higher than the rest of his surroundings, when someone is in a completely different stratosphere of greatness, the simpletons on earth do not understand him. They begin to get confused. Their confusion leads to resentment and they begin questioning the decision-making of the leader. This in turn runs the risk of forcing the leader himself to question his own ability to make proper decisions. Hence, we say **some** of his praises in front of him, reminding him that he is great. Reminding him that the peanut gallery is beneath him. Reminding him that the world of the naysayers and the confusion mongers is below him.

Sometimes even the greatest of the great need reminders that we are all too great to sin. We are all too holy to be impure. We are all too big to be small.