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without another word, turned and left the barracks. The prisoners were shocked. They all wondered the same thing: Who was this officer? And why did he come to them at such an unusual hour and ask about the candles? R' Asher understood, however, and was careful to keep this "Russian" officer's secret safe.

TORAH GEMS

àì ààà íéòá-æ íá éé áéóá ìëî óñáé úà áàà ìàøùéá
 (â-æì) 'àèà íéñò úóáúé àì àùòà

The *gemara* (:é úáù) says, "*Rav said: One should never show favoritism toward one son over another. For the paltry sum of two selah coins weight of silk, Yosef's brothers became jealous of him, and this resulted in our forefathers' descending to Egypt.*" Could it be that *Yaakov Avinu* erred in so great a manner and did not see what was happening until it was too late?!

It is written in the name of the *tzadik*, **R' Nochum'ke of Horodna ZT"l**, an explanation as follows: The *gemara* (:âé÷ íéçñô) says that *Hashem* hates one who sees a wrong action done by his friend and testifies as a lone witness. Yosef had done this, as the *posuk* states *úà óñáé ááéá* "íäéáà àà äð íúáã. This was viewed very negatively by Yaakov, and the *posuk* may be translated as such - "íäéáà àà äð" - "*Bad to (the eyes of) their father.*" It was considered bad in Yaakov's eyes that Yosef was a lone witness.

Thus, Yosef should have been admonished in a direct manner. However, *"Yaakov loved Yosef more than all his sons,"* and this somewhat covered over Yosef's wrongdoing. Instead, Yaakov chose to admonish him indirectly. *Chazal* say (çê âîêâî), *"If speech is worth one selah, then remaining quiet is worth two."* In the spirit of quiet criticism, Yaakov therefore, gave Yosef a garment whose weight was that of two *selah* to hint that Yosef must refrain from speaking against another (êøúá ä÷êúù). In the end, though, Yosef did not grasp the message. Because Yaakov treated Yosef differently from his brothers, and did not give him direct admonition, our forefathers' descent to Egypt evolved.

(í éñěä ìò úìéôú) 'ăă í éùìç ãéá í éøääá úøñ î

One of the wonders of the miracle of *Chanukah* is what we say in davening אָוֶה יְהוָה הָאֶחָד לְיָמֵינוּ "יְהוָה יִתֵּן - *"You gave over the strong (warriors) by the hand of the weak."* Were the *Chashmonaim* weak? The *Sefer Yosefun* tells us that in fact they were extremely strong, robust and physically powerful soldiers in their own right!

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev ZT"l clarifies this issue in a penetrating manner that reaches to the core of the *Yom Tov* of *Chanukah*, and why it is different from all the others. *Pesach*, *Sukkos*, and even *Purim* to an extent - the miracles that were performed to save the Jewish people were Divinely inspired and carried out without obvious human intervention. *Chanukah* on the other hand, was a hard fought war, with pitched battles involving legions of Jewish soldiers led by the great military might of the *Chashmonaim*. In the manner in which it unfolded, the salvation and eventual restoration of the *Bais Hamikdosh* could not have occurred without human involvement. Thus, when human involvement is part of the equation, the human mind will tend to play up its part in the effort, often leading to a point where it takes full credit for the wondrous act of salvation. The *Chashmonaim*, however, did not think this way and attributed the clever battle plans and military victory in the face of enormous odds, to the One, true source, *Hashem Yisborach*. In this respect, they considered themselves "יְעִוִּלִּץ" - "*Weak*," as if their own great strength really had nothing to do with the victory. It was this total acceptance of the 'אֱלֹהִים in the defeat of the Hellenists, that firmly implanted *Chanukah* as a *Yom Tov* celebration.

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מעשה אבות... סימן לבנים

(íēñéä ìò úìéôú) 'ááá ìáääâ êîùì ììäìá úáääâì àìà äëäðç éîé úðâîù àòá÷â êùã÷ úåðöçá úåðð á÷éìãää

Life in the Siberian labor camps was always difficult for the Jewish prisoners, but during the *Yomim Tovim* it was even more so, because it was nearly impossible to perform the *mitzvos* of each holiday under those terrible conditions. **R' Asher Sosonkin ZT"l** was exiled to Siberia for the "crime" of spreading *Torah* throughout Russia. Even under the harsh conditions of the work camp, he did his best to continue to observe the *Torah* and *mitzvos*. With him was a Jew by the name of Nachman Rosemann. He was an ardent communist who had risen in the ranks of the Russian army. He was arrested for illegal business dealings, and was sentenced to twenty-five years of hard labor in Siberia. It was there in the work camp that Nachman felt a renewed interest in Judaism, and he befriended the devout R' Asher. Nachman was determined to learn all he could from R' Asher, and do the *mitzvos* as carefully as possible.

Chanukah was approaching, and R' Asher asked Nachman to get a tin can to use as a *menorah*, in order to fulfill the *mitzva* of kindling the *Chanukah* lights. R' Asher emphasized that it should be small, so that their activities wouldn't be noticed by any of the labor camp officials. R' Asher was amazed at his friend's determination. Nachman found a prisoner who happened to be a tinsmith and paid him several rubles to make a beautiful *menorah*. He did this knowing that if the authorities found out, he would be punished severely. On the day before *Chanukah*, Nachman approached R' Asher with a big smile. In one hand he held a *menorah*, and in the other hand he held a bottle filled with oil.

On the first night of *Chanukah*, R' Asher and Nachman placed the *menorah* discreetly by the doorpost of their barrack and prepared a cotton wick. The other prisoners watched curiously as the two men commenced this "dangerous" act. R' Asher recited the three blessings over the lighting of the *menorah*, and lit the wick with tears of joy and gratitude. They continued to light the *menorah* in this way until the fifth night of *Chanukah*. Just as R' Asher and Nachman had lit the *menorah*, an armed guard appeared at the entrance of the barracks, announcing roll call. The prisoners were stunned. Roll call had never been announced at this hour before! R' Asher and Nachman were sure that someone must have reported them, which would explain the unusual roll call.

When the dreaded Russian officer entered the barrack, everyone stood still, anticipating the worst. He walked around slowly looking at each inmate as he counted them off. Then, he noticed the *menorah*. He stared at it for a moment and then looked right at R' Asher. "Five?" he said in an inquisitive voice. No answer. R' Asher was too nervous and in shock to reply. "Five?" the officer asked again, this time a bit more urgently. "F-Five," stammered R' Asher in a confused reply. The officer nodded his head, and