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לעילוי נשמת הינדא מרים בת ר' בנימין זאב ע"ה נפטרה במיתה פתאומית ביום ז' טבת תשפ"ה לפ"ק ת' נ' צ' ב' ה'.

The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation. For sponsorship opportunities or to sign up to the weekly newsletter, email weekly@zeraemes.com or visit www.zeraemes.com

Secret Thoughts

Before he passed away, Yaakov gathered his children to bless them. Within the blessings, he also rebuked the first three children. Shimon and Levi were grouped together as “brothers.” Because they perpetrated the violence against the city of Shechem and instigated the sale of Yosef, Yaakov requested that his name not always be associated with their two tribes.

“In their secret (בסודם), I do not enter.” R' Chaim Meir Braun (*Toldos Chaim*) wonders about the usage of the word “secret.”

He explains that even though Yaakov was rebuking his children for the violence against the city of Shechem and the potential sale of Yosef, Yaakov at that moment was hesitant to fully accuse them. Yaakov gave them the benefit of the doubt and assumed that his children were righteous and that their intentions were pure. The violence against the city of Shechem was a potentially justified reaction to the fact that the people of Shechem allowed Dina—Shimon and Levi's sister—to be attacked. They instigated the sale of Yosef because



RAV BRAUN WITH THE CHASAN
RABBI SHIMON EPSTEIN.



THE CHASAN, RAV ZEIDEL EPSTEIN,
AND RAV YISRAEL RABINOWITZ.

they judged Yosef to be a threat to the Jewish future. How much rebuke could Yaakov do, knowing that their intentions were pure? Even if the actions were a transgression, there are scenarios when one is permitted to violate a transgression when his intentions are pure.

R' Chaim Meir cites the *mefarshim's* question on the Mishnah (*Avos* 4:2), which states, “One should run from the transgression, because each transgression leads to another transgression.” The *mefarshim* ask that from the wording of the Mishnah it appears that the first transgression is not an issue by itself; it is only an issue because of what it creates—more transgressions. But why is this so? Isn't the first transgression something

one should run from because of itself, not only for what it can lead to? Among the answers given is that it is referring to one who is committing a transgression with proper intent. This is why there is the letter *hey* in front of it (העבירה), because it is referring to a specific type of transgression—an impressive one—performed with proper intent.

If it is being violated with proper intent, why should it not be permitted? The answer given by the Mishnah is that “the first pure-intent transgression leads to more transgressions.” Meaning, other people will see the physical act of the pure-intent transgression and not realize that there is proper intent behind it, and

they will copy the first person's pure-intent transgression and commit similar transgressions without any proper intent. Therefore, even when one is performing a transgression with proper intent—and Hashem, who knows the intent of the person, certainly will not punish him because there are legitimate reasons to permit it—it cannot be done in public because of what it will lead to.

R' Chaim Meir uses this to explain the entire statement of Yaakov:

“In their secret (בסודם), I do not enter.” Meaning, whatever is within their heart and their thought process—while it appears they were doing something wrong, but maybe they had pure intentions—I do not know.

“In the congregation (בהקלם), my honor should not join.” Meaning, because they performed these transgressions (the violence against the city of Shechem and the sale of Yosef) in a public setting (in front of a congregation), I cannot permit it. This is because if I do so, people might copy their actions without pure intent, which would simply be a transgression.

In today's world, when too many people are walking around with a handheld camera and within seconds everything can be spread across the globe, people should be concerned about “Big Brother” learning from their actions. In a way, we are all in positions of leadership, because in today's society we are all “public” figures. Even our pure intentioned actions should not lead to others committing transgressions.

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ר' חיים מאיר
ב"ר ישראל
ברוך בריון

R' Chaim Meir Braun (26 Cheshvon 1892-19 Iyar 1986). Born near Grosswardein. His father, R' Yisrael Baruch (d. 1940) author of Knesses Yisrael served for a time as a dayan in Sasregen (Romania). In 1916, R' Chaim Meir married Reina Goldberger (1894-1985), daughter of R' Menashe (1855-1919) of Stropkov. In the 1920s, the Brauns moved to London, where he was a Rav. In 1929, they emigrated to the United States. After a brief stint as a Rav in Malden, Massachusetts, he became a Rav in the Bronx. In 1935, he helped launch an association for alumni of Hungarian Yeshivos, which helped support many institutions in Europe. At the end of the 1930s, they moved to Boro Park, opening up a Shul on 11th Avenue. The shul was named Eitz Chaim. In October of 1942, R' Chaim Meir joined Mesivta Chaim Berlin in Brownsville as an executive director, a position he held for several years. During the war years, he was very active in helping to run the American-Hungarian Jewish Federation, efforts that evolved, ultimately, into assisting newly arrived refugees with resettlement.