

# UNDER THE RADAR

*by Rabbi Raymond Beyda*

*And Yaakov said to his sons: "Why do you make yourselves conspicuous?" (Beresheet 42:1)*

When Yaakov's sons were about to leave to purchase food in Egypt he offered his sage advice, "Enter Egypt through separate gates. Do not all enter together because you will be noticed." The Gemara (Taaneet 10a) elaborates. "Don't show yourselves as satisfied and healthy in front of Esav and Yishmael for they will become envious" Rashi adds that Yaakov was fearful of the evil eye that may fall upon them if they were seen together as an impressive group of strong healthy men entering the city together.

Yaakov taught us the destructive power of jealousy from personal experience. He had given some special amenities to Yosef his son from Rachel and it created jealousies amongst the brothers that lead to the sale of Yosef to a caravan to Egypt. The Gemara says: A person should never treat one child different from another and describes the chain of events that followed Yaakov's special favors to Yosef. (Shabbat 10b) The Rabbis went further and say that one should avoid any behavior that will create jealousy between two people. For example: One should not praise a person in front of another who dislikes him.

A man was fortunate to be blessed with twin boys. He invited Rav Shach zt'l -Rosh Yeshivat Ponovetz - to serve as Sandak (The one upon whose lap an infant is placed for the circumcision ceremony). When twins are circumcised each gets his own berit milah ceremony. Tradition has it that the sandak for each should be a different person. After the first was done Rav Shach remained in his seat and sat for the second boy as well - not in keeping with the custom to have someone else sit for the second child. After the circumcision Rav Shach explained his break with tradition. "I imagined these boys 15 or 20 years from now and thought perhaps one may taunt the other saying, "My sandak was Rav Shach - who held you? I did not want to be the vehicle to create jealousy between the brothers."

A person should try to blend in with the scenery as Yaakov Avinu a'h suggested. In our times too many strive to out do others in dress, automobiles, homes and parties. This competitive spirit can breed envy which can result in being subjected to the dangers of the evil eye.

One of the greats of the last generation was Rav Yaakov Kanievsky zt'l - known as the Steipler. His vast Torah knowledge and his uncanny ability to see beyond what the eye can see are legendary. In his old age he fell ill. A colleague visited and told the Rav, "Tomorrow is Rosh Hodesh - I intend to go

to the graves of tzadikim - the righteous - and pray on behalf of your recovery."

"Don't bother going" replied the weak patient, "I know why I am ill. You see there is a Rabbi in America who has written several books and he praises me in them. I told him it is better not to write about me but he insists that it will encourage others to go in the ways of our Torah. Even though his intentions are pure -THE PUBLICITY IS NOT HEALTHY FOR ME"

The lesson Yaakov Avinu taught his sons is a timeless one that all should heed. Don't try to stand out and impress. In fact, the opposite is recommended. Keep a low profile in all that you do. "Why make yourself conspicuous?" Jealousy is a powerful negative force that can cause great harm. The less publicity - the better. Text Copyright &copy 2006 by [Rabbi Raymond Beyda](#) and **[Torah.org](#)**.