

"And he went into the house to do his work." (39:11)

Potiphar's wife made every attempt to entice Yosef to sin. *Chazal* comment that it was the appearance of his father's image which ultimately saved him from falling prey to her enticements. We may suggest a novel approach to the narrative of Yosef and Potiphar's wife, which has its roots in Yosef's whole approach to service of Hashem. Yaakov taught his children that one should be "a simple scholarly man dwelling in tents" and to simply maintain a low profile when associating with the rest of the world. This outlook mandates one to refrain from any form of assimilation, such as dressing in the same fashion, or following in the customs of their gentile neighbors. In contrast to this, Yosef felt that one should avail himself of the opportunity to intensify his personal trials before Hashem. One should not be apprehensive of exposure to society; on the contrary, the more difficult the test, the greater the reward and satisfaction. Until the moment that he was confronted by Potiphar's wife, Yosef led a life based upon this misguided philosophy. However, when Potiphar's wife attempted to entice him, he was shocked by her audacity in thinking that he was the "type" to be so easily persuaded to sin. It was this rude awakening which made Yosef conscious of his father's image. He saw the saintly appearance of his father, and realized that his father had been correct. The only protection from sin was to distance oneself from the opportunities and situations which would entice one into sin.