**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Toldos 5773**

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**Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**Honor Thy Wife**

A sad mood prevailed in the home of Rav Elayahu Dessler in the Jewish month of Kislev, 1951. His rebitzen (wife) had passed away the Friday night before and now he was sorrowfully preparing for his first Shabbos alone. An endless flow of people had come to be menachem avel (comfort the mourner) Rav Dessler during the week of shivah. He was the revered Mashgiach of the Ponevezher Yeshiva in Bnai Brak and was known throughout the Torah world for his piety and the depth of his mussar thoughts (words of rebuke).

The Chazon Ish, Rav Avraham Yeshayah Karelitz (1878-1953) of blessed memory, had gone so far as to refer to Rav Dessler as the gadol hador in kochos hanefesh, the generation's leader in the area of self restraint. Now, an hour before Shabbos, the apartment was nearly empty.

One of Rav Dessler's primary talmidim-students was setting the Shabbos table. As the tablecloth, cutlery, challos, Kiddush cup and Shabbos candles were set on the table, Rav Dessler whispered to his talmid-student, "Put back that Kiddush Cup and take out the other one that is on the shelf."

The talmid was surprised. It seemed like such a mundane matter. What difference did it make what kiddish cup would be used. The talmid knew that this was not the time to ask his rebbi to explain. Nevertheless, he remained curious. He knew that there was a reason for anything his rebbi did. He was the quintessential exacting person and halachic Jew, and he had a rationale for every action. After the shabbos meal the talmid asked the question.

Rav Dessler told the following story. Years later Dayan Ehrentreu heard it from the talmid.

Some history is in order. At the bequest of Rav David Dryan, the shochet in Gateshead, England, Rav Dessler had initially come to that city in Northern England to found the famous kollel, which he led from 1941 until 1948.

When the Ponevezher Rav, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman (1886-1969) met Rav Dessler on one of his fundraising trips to England, he was so impressed that in 1946, when the Mashgiach (Principal) of the Ponevezh yeshiva, Rav Abba Grosbard, passed away, he offered the position to Rav Dessler.

At that time Rav Dessler felt that his many responsibilities in England did not permit him to leave, but shortly after Pesach in 1949, the Desslers indeed settled in Bnei Brak, and he assumed the position as Mashgiach of the yeshiva.

For all the years the Desslers had been married, since the spring of 1920, Rav Dessler always made Kiddush on a kiddish cup that he and his wife had received as a wedding gift from Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky (1863-1940), who had received the kiddish cup as a wedding present from Rav Yisrael (Lipkin) Salanter (1809-1883), Rav Chaim Ozer's first wife's grandfather.

On their first Shabbos in Bnei Brak, Rav Dessler used a different kiddish cup. Noticing that he had not used the familiar family kiddish cup, the rebbetzin asked him about it. Rav Dessler explained that because they now lived in Bnei Brak whose spiritual guide was the Chazon Ish, it was proper to follow his halachic opinions. According to him, a Kiddush kiddish cup had to be larger than the one they had used until now. Rav Dessler therefore wanted to use the larger kiddish cup.

The rebbetzin respectfully disagreed. She maintained that if their kiddish cup had been used by such gedolei hador (Torah giants of a generation) as Rav Yisrael Salanter and Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky, then it should be good enough for them, as well. Rav Dessler acquiesced, and from then on until she passed away, he used the family kiddish cup he had used in England. Only now, after her passing, did Rav Dessler begin to abide by the ruling of the Chazon Ish, so as not to act disrespectfully to his wife. (from, Rav Paysach Krohn, p. 152 Reflections Of The Maggid)

We read about such a concept in last week's Torah portion, which describes at length the preparations that Avrohom Avinu took to find a suitable burial plot for his wife Sorah who unfortunately had predeceased him. It has been taught that "The actions of the Patriarchs is an example to their descendants." This means to say that we can study the ways of the Avos - Patriarchs to learn the proper behavior in life. Thus we learn from Avrohom Avinu how important it is to honor one's wife.

When describing the extent to which a man must honor his wife, the Sages tell us, "one must honor his wife more than he honors his own body." (Yevamos 62b) This means to say that a Jewish husband is obligated to do whatever he can to honor his wife, even if it causes his physical discomfort! For example, if it is cold outside and a wife asks her husband to bring something in from outside, even if it could wait until the next morning, a man is obligated to honor his wife and bring in the object at that time, instead of waiting until day time when it would be warmer.

By remembering the story of Rav Dessler and by learning from the example of Arohom Avinu, we will all merit to live happier, more fulfilled and peaceful lives.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Good Shabbos Everyone.*

**Real Cyclists Don’t Dope**

**By Sara Esther Crispe**

Growing up, my husband dreamed of riding in the Tour de France [the major bicycling race in the world]. He trained for years, investing hours a day, with an incredible focus and dedication. He rode against the best. He lost against the best. And then, in the final race which would determine who would be able to ride in the Tour, he missed the cutoff.

Narrowly.

Fortunately, my husband’s talents are far and wide, and riding was only one of them. Because he didn’t pursue biking professionally, it allowed him to discover a love for philosophy that led to a love for Torah learning, and now he is a world-renowned rabbi and expert on Kabbalah and chassidic philosophy. But every year, until recently, he would watch the Tour and comment on how many of the riders he knew, how many he had raced with, how many he had lost against.

After all these years, the truth finally came out. And then, after all these years, the truth finally came out. It was never a fair competition to begin with. He was racing against dopers. He was racing against some of the fastest riders in the world, who made themselves unbeatable through the use of performance-enhancement drugs.

My husband has never had more than a sip of alcohol in his life. He has never smoked a cigarette. Needless to say, he never, ever would have agreed to doping.

Looking back, it is hard to know if he would have made the cutoff for the Tour had the other riders that did been drug-free. It is impossible to know if they were truly even on drugs during that particular race. But it is a question he will always ask himself.

I am grateful he never made that team. I am grateful that he never became a professional cyclist. If he had, our lives would have gone a very different way. We all know that every decision we make moves us in a certain direction, and wherever one foot goes, the other is going to follow. No matter how we step, there are never guarantees. And we should question if we are moving in the right direction, or if perhaps we should retrace those steps, or even leap somewhere else.

While hindsight is 20/20, our understanding of the present is limited. Our only guide is heading in the direction where we want to eventually land, and making honest choices to get there. The Alter Rebbe, the first rebbe of the Chabad movement, teaches us that in life there are two paths, the shorter longer way or the longer shorter way.

Rarely are there true shortcuts in life. The diet that promises that you will lose 10 pounds in a week is at best false advertisement, and at worse a dangerous starvation method that will likely cause even more weight gain in the future. The great deal on something discounted much more than any other store is most likely not the real deal. We want to get ahead, we want to succeed, we want to win . . . but we need to ensure that we not cheat ourselves or others along the way.

It is hard to know if he would have made the cutoff for the Tour had the other riders that did been drug-free. What is so sad about this systematic doping revelation is that it not only destroys the reputations and records or those who were found guilty, but that we now have to wonder who the real winners were: who were the deserving athletes who trained so hard and never received their recognition? By the “winners” attempting to take the shorter road, they forced everyone else onto the longer road. But the longer road is really the only road. And ultimately, is the truly shorter one.

Nothing can take back what has happened. But the lesson can, hopefully, teach and inspire us to recognize that our long road is really shorter than it seems. And as long as we are being truthful, moral, and ensuring our actions are not hurtful to ourselves or others, we should move ahead confidently and enjoy the view along the way.

And while my husband never did have the chance to ride in the Tour, he now has the chance to ride with our four children . . . and that is most definitely the road he wants to be on!

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Chabad.Org website.*

**Like Rabbi Binyomin**

**Submitted by a Reader of the**

**Shabbos Stories for the Parsha**

In 1951, I was supposed to go to a yeshiva in England from Morocco,

but my mother, a.h, got very ill, She kept telling to me go to the yeshiva. But I asked her “how could I go if you are very ill.”

One day I went to the balcony of my house and davened to Hashem, I said to Him, “Ribono Shel Olam, I want to go to the yeshiva but my mother is very ill. If she dies there is no yeshiva for me.” I was speaking to Hashem and I said to Him, “You know the story of Rabbi Binyomin who was a gabbai of tsedaka.

“One day a widow came to him asking for money and he answered there was no money left. She said to him that she was a widow and her seven children will die of starvation. So he fed them from his own pocket, Later on when he was going to die, the angels came to Hashem and said to Him, “A man who saved eight nefashot (souls) should die?” So Hashem gave Rabbi Binyomin another 22 years of life in this world.

I said “Ribono shel Olam, my mother, a.h, during the war years she fed many poor people from the little we had. No one was ever turned away empty handed. So please give her 22 additional years of life that I can go and learn,” And I said that if she lives Lo Amut Ki echeyeh .(Tehilim 118:7.)

Baruch Hashem, my mother got better and I went to the yeshiva in England. But Hashem was very generous. He did not give her 22 years like Rabbi Binyomin. No, He gave her 44more years and she lived till the age of 94.

*Reprinted from an email sent to us last week by a reader of the Shabbos Stories for the Parsha.*

**Week Two of**

**Hurricane Sandy**

**By David Bibi**

My house may soon get power back. Could be a few days or it could be a few weeks, but when it does and I get to turn real lights on instead of a Home Depot LED Lantern, I better learn to appreciate it. When I have hot water, I better learn to be grateful. And when there is heat, I need to remember to offer thanks. How much do we take for granted? I often speak about Rabbi Abittan telling us how thankful we should be that we have running water and toilets that flush, yet are we? (Take a look at the article that follows by Charlie Harary).

I have to say my nerves are shot. I’ve spent countless hours on the phone with LIPA (In hindsight this was a total waste of time filled with incorrect information and an obvious disconnect between departments – I could testify before the State as to everything that went wrong). I’ve spoken with every government official I know – who also couldn’t do much and are as frustrated with LIPA as I am.

I’ve formed relationships with National Guard members who I will be able to count on as friends in the future. I’ve spoken in person with Assemblymen, soldiers, state troopers, EMT workers and we should be proud that we have such dedicated people.

And I’ve spent time with volunteers; and they truly are amazing. They are bringing food to the hungry, cleaning homes, inviting people to live with them, supplying clothes and doing anything needed. The community has really come together.

I want to thank all of you who have emailed and called. I am so sorry I did not get back to each and every one of you.

On a personal level, we are OK. Eventually we’ll get power back in our home. Unfortunately, Chantelle with Aryana and Moses were struck in their car at an unlit intersection by a speeding vehicle whose driver didn’t look left. It was a scare, but they are OK. Hatzalah as usual was wonderful. I thank Rabbi David Fohrman and hus family for taking them in until we could get them. Everyone, please be careful out there.

Our small Long Beach community has been devastated. People lost their homes and their cars. And it will take time to rebuild. I am getting emails asking what we need. B’H, we are being sent food and its being distributed through the Young Israel which miraculously got power last night. Rabbi Wakslak has been amazing and we are all appreciative. Food is also available at Shaar Yashuv Yeshiva in Far Rockaway along with clothes. Volunteers are coming, especially this Sunday to assist with houses that need to be cleaned and cleared. If you want to bring a crew to help us, please contact Sam Shetrit at [popperservice@gmail.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/8?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000f4G0:001GanfK00001hGk&block=1&msgNature=all&msgStatus=all&count=1352472027&randid=977862951&content=central##). A number of groups of qualified mechanics have arrived from Israel to help. Amazing!

We have at least a hundred families in need of funds. Rabbi Wakslak has been distributing funds to those who find themselves with nowhere else to turn. We are hoping to give a micro loan or a grant of $2000 to each family in need. We are anticipating that many of you out there will each adopt a family or if not at least donate to assist one.

We know everyone is collecting from every organization, but being in the position we are in, we don’t know where the money is going. It’s certainly not making it to our people. We had been asking community members to donate to specific organizations, but out of frustration we think it’s best if we get commitments. The situation is bad and we need to help people now. Whatever you commit to, we’ll front the money and distribute it immediately. This is what we did last week based on your emails.

Let us know what you can send and make the check to “The Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach” and add Storm relief in the memo. Mail it to me: David Bibi, 979 Third Ave. Suite 1705, NYC NY 10022. Email me and let me know what you’ll be sending.

I also need cars. Anyone have an old car they are not using? A car they might be trading in? Let us know. Someone desperately needs it to get to work and put food on the table. We have a company that will assist with the title exchange.

Honored by Rabbi Elie Abadie, I had the pleasure of speaking in the Safra Synagogue in Manhattan last Shabbat where we were joined by Mr. Sheldon Silver, the speaker of the NY Assembly. These parshiot that we are reading are all about doing Chesed, kindness to others. They are not just stories to read. They are actions to mimic. Even if the storm passed you by, we are feeling it. And we need your help.

I noted that Lot last week invites the angels in. They refuse saying they will stay in the street. But he insists and they come in and save him.

You all know someone affected. You have a relative or a friend, or a relative of a relative or a friend of a friend. Reach out to them. And even if they say they are fine. Guess what? They are not. You must do something. And if you can’t help financially or you can’t be there to help physically, then at least help emotionally. Be sure to call. Say, “I am thinking of you!”

This week we read about Rebecca. She sees a man who asks for water and surmises if he can’t get water for himself, he probably can’t get for his camels. So she proceeds to give him to drink and all his camels. This week many of us are Eliezer. We need help, our families need help and our camels need help. Rebecca where are you?

This is a time for all of us to be there for each other. Are you in or are you out?

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace. If you would like to email David Bibi regarding relief to Long Beach, his email address is sephardiccongregation@gmail.com*

**The Right Hat Price**

**By Rabbi Reuben Semah**

“*So now my son, heed my voice to that which I command you*.” (Beresheet 27:8)

Ribkah was listening as Yitzhak Abinu told Esav to prepare a meal in order to receive the all important blessings. Ribkah tells Ya’akob to disguise himself as Esav to receive the blessings.

The Oznayim Latorah says that the pasuk “So now my son, etc.” (27:8), contains both a request and a command. First she asked Ya’akob to accept the blessings for his own good, but he approached the task “bowed with weeping and coerced” (Midrash Rabbahi). As we say in our terminology, “kicking and screaming.”

Ribkah then commanded him to do so out of respect for his father, to prevent him from perverting justice by giving the blessings to the wicked Esav. Thus commanded, he had to go. We see from this discussion how great the trait of truth that Ya’akob Abinu possessed, that he wasn’t ready to go until he had to.

Rabbi Ephraim Nisenbaum tells this story that illustrates this great attribute. A man related to Rabbi Nosson Scherman that he once went to a store to purchase a hat. After he made his selection, he tried to bargain with the storeowner. The owner calmly explained how much profit he made on the hat, and said that he couldn’t charge any less. The customer understood and paid for the hat.

A couple of days later, the storeowner called the customer and said that he had just received the bill from his supplier. He realized that the hat had not cost him as much as he had originally thought. His margin of profit was thus greater than he had supposed, and he wanted to give back to the customer the amount in excess of what he should have charged.

The customer was amazed at the owner’s honesty. But, he shouldn’t be, because we all inherited this level of truth from Ya’akob Abinu.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the Jersey Shore Torah Center.*

**It Once Happened**

**Reb Daniel the “Litvak”**

Reb Daniel was your stereotypical "Litvak" (Jew of Lithuanian extraction) who lived in the holy city of Jerusalem. Reb Daniel's entire life was devoted to Torah study, despite the extreme poverty that had plagued him ever since leaving his native Lomzha. He and his wife were raising their seven children in a dilapidated two-room apartment. Nonetheless, at almost any time of day or night you could find Reb Daniel poring over a thick tome. He rarely went out.

All of Reb Daniel's neighbors were aware of his habits, and recognized him as a great scholar. In fact, Reb Daniel's wife had once told them about the promise her father had extracted from her before he passed away: that she always be a true "helpmate" to her husband, and never disturb his learning.

Reb Daniel's wife was very scrupulous in fulfilling her father's wishes. Her husband was virtually never seen on the street. He never went to the marketplace or ran an errand. Rarely did he even step outside for a breath of fresh air.

Sightings of Reb Daniel were so unusual that when he was spotted one day hurrying through the marketplace with a large sack on his shoulder, everyone took notice. What was Reb Daniel doing outside, of all places?

It turned out that the day before, a peddler had come to the door selling secondhand clothes. Reb Daniel's wife was about to purchase a few garments when her husband reminded her about the mitzva of shatnes, the prohibition against wearing clothes woven of wool and flax. Immediately she ran to fetch her neighbor, Reb Shmuel Zanvil, who was an expert in such matters. When he examined the clothes and found that several did indeed contain shatnes, she declined the purchase and the peddler left.

The next day Reb Daniel happened to ask her about the clothes, as he had been immersed in study in the other room and hadn't overheard how the problem was resolved. "Oh, there was shatnes in them so I gave them back," she replied. "What?!" Reb Daniel cried out rather uncharacteristically. "G-d forbid, another Jew might inadvertently buy them!"

Reb Daniel raced from the house in search of the peddler, and eventually located him in the marketplace trying to sell his wares. When he learned that the peddler hadn't succeeded in selling even one garment, he was so relieved that he purchased the entire lot just to get rid of it. (This, of course, was no small sacrifice, given Reb Daniel's financial state.) That was the type of pious person Reb Daniel was.

Then one day, people began to notice a sudden change in Reb Daniel's habits. Several times he was recognized entering the home of the renowned tzadik Rabbi Elazar Mendel of Lelov. For hours on end the two of them would sit and discuss Torah...and Chasidut! And if that wasn't enough to raise eyebrows, Reb Daniel was observed studying a book written by Rabbi Nachum of Chernobyl, a disciple of the Baal Shem Tov. Tongues began to wag. "What is happening to Reb Daniel?" people asked. "Is our ascetic Litvak suddenly changing into a Chasid?"

Again, it was Reb Daniel's wife who explained what was happening:

A few months previously, Reb Daniel had started to notice that his eyesight was failing. All those years of studying the "tiny letters" were beginning to take their toll. At first he could almost convince himself that it was simple fatigue, but as the days passed he realized that the problem was more serious. Reb Daniel sought the help of several doctors and apothecaries, but none of their remedies helped.

Reb Daniel's wife, who came from a Chasidic background, would have immediately suggested that her husband go to the great Rabbi Elazar Mendel for a blessing, but she was well aware of his attitude toward Chasidim and tzadikim. Thus it wasn't until his eyesight had deteriorated even further that she decided to take matters into her own hands. Without her husband's knowledge she went to the tzadik's house and explained the situation to his Rebbetzin, with whom she was friendly, and asked her to intercede on her husband's behalf.

The Rebbetzin knocked lightly on her husband's door, opened it a crack, and saw that he was in the middle of praying. Apologizing for the interruption, she started to tell him about Reb Daniel's failing eyesight when he nodded his head. "I know already," he told her. "I know."

The next day an emissary from Rabbi Elazar Mendel arrived at Reb Daniel's house with a package. Inside was the sefer Me'or Einayim [literally "Light of One's Eyes"], the work of Rabbi Nachum of Chernobyl. Also enclosed was a short note in Rabbi Elazar Mendel's own hand: "Study a portion of this holy book every day and I promise you that the 'light of your eyes' will return."

At first Reb Daniel was hesitant, but when his eyesight became even more impaired he decided to take the tzadik's advice. A few days later he noticed an improvement. In the course of time his vision was completely restored.

From that day on Reb Daniel's attitude toward Chasidut changed dramatically. He became an ardent follower of Rabbi Elazar Mendel, and always kept a copy of Me'or Einayim on his desk.

*Reprinted from Issue #593 of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY. (Parshal Toldot 5760 (1999).*

Climbing Everest

**By** [**Menucha Chana Levin**](http://www.aish.com/search/?author=126167218)



Meters away from fulfilling his dream of being the youngest Israeli to reach the summit,

Nadav chose to do something even greater.

Nadav Ben Yehuda, aged 24, a law student from Rechovot, loves mountain climbing. His quest was to be the youngest Israeli climber to reach the peak of Mount Everest.

Two hundred climbers were attempting to scale the summit of the 29,035-foot mountain that bitterly cold weekend last May. Still, all was going well for Ben Yehuda who was tantalizingly within reach of the world’s highest peak.

He continued slogging upward, his Sherpa guide behind him, until he suddenly came to a stop just 250 meters away from the summit.

He stumbled across the unconscious body of a Turkish climber, Aydin Irmak, lying in the snow. Nadav had to make an excruciating decision. He could continue to climb and reach the mountain peak, or he could try to save Irmak’s life.

Israeli-Turkish relations have been under heavy strain in recent years, reaching its nadir in May 2010 when Israeli naval commandos prevented the Mavi Marmara flotilla from breaking Israel's legal maritime blockade of Gaza and nine Turks were killed when the Israelis were attacked.

But when Nadav saw Aydin stranded on the mountain, he was not thinking of politics. He saw a fellow human being who was about to die.

“I had already passed two corpses when I found him,” Nadav said. “He was unconscious. He had no gloves. No oxygen. No crampons. No cover… He was waiting for the end. I was certain I could have made it to the summit. But if I had continued climbing, there’s no question Irmak would have died. Other climbers just passed him by and didn’t lift a finger, but I had no second thoughts. I knew that I had to save him.”



***Israeli mountain climber Nadav***

***Ben Yehuda, with Aydin Irmak.***

Nadav tied Irmak to his harness and began the descent, a nine-hour journey to the nearest base. Saving Irmak was probably even more difficult than trying to reach the summit.

“It was very hard to carry him because he was heavy. At times he would gain consciousness, but then faint again. When he woke up he would scream in pain, which made it even more difficult.”

“It was a miracle,” Irmak said. “I remember falling down. I woke up with Nadav standing over me and shouting my name. Nadav did a great thing. He built a bridge between Turkey and Israel, and our leaders can learn a lot from him… I may have missed the summit, but I gained a new brother.”

Four climbers lost their lives on Everest that weekend. Nadav saw the route was “strewn with bodies.” Thanks to him, Irmak was not one of them.

The minus 40-degree Celsius temperatures left both men with severe frostbite and Nadav’s ungloved hand was blackened. Eventually, they made it back to Camp IV where they were safely evacuated by helicopter.

Upon his return to Israel for medical treatment, Nadav received a hero’s accolades. In June he received Israel’s Presidential Medal of Honor at President Shimon Peres’ residence in Jerusalem. However he does not believe his actions deserved such an esteemed award and doesn’t regret his decision.

“Saving a life is a greater priority than being the youngest Israeli to scale Everest,” Nadav said. "You never leave a friend in the field."

The story was also reported in some Turkish newspapers – a rare piece of positive news about Israel.

Asked if he still hoped to scale Everest, Nadav said, “I do want to see the view from the top.” He still plans to make it to the summit one day. The man he saved, Aydin Irmak, hopes they will reach that goal together.

*Reprinted from this week’s website of Aish.com*

**Story #781**

**The Shabbat**

**Desecration Donation**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/8?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000gOG0:001Gcrez000009Cn&block=1&msgNature=all&msgStatus=all&count=1352904445&randid=220458232&content=central##)

Even though great sums of money were deposited in Rabbi Yisroel of Chortkov's hands by those who had been helped by him, the Rebbe was very careful never to use money received from non-kosher sources. This point is illustrated by the following story which was related by Reb Dovid Prever from Antwerp. Reb Dovid, who was a well known Chortkover chassid, lived in Berlin.

One Friday night, Reb Dovid's door bell rang. An assimilated Jew who had heard that Reb Dovid intended to visit his Rebbe soon decided to ask for a blessing for himself. The assimilated Jew took out a note and some money and put them down on Reb Dovid's table, asking please to hand them over to the Rebbe. Reb Dovid, aghast at this open display of Shabbat desecration, thought at first that he would not take the note and money with him.

On second thought however, he decided that since he had been asked to carry out a mission he would do so, and whatever the Rebbe would do with the note and the "redemption money" was none of his business.

When Reb Dovid entered the Rebbe's room he put the two sums of money down on the Rebbe's table, his and the other Jew's. He made no mention of how the money from the other Jew had come into his hands. Normally the Rebbe never looked at the money given to him. He would ignore it, leaving it for one of his attendants to clear away. This time, however, the Rebbe took the money which the assimilated Jew had sent, and put it in his breast pocket. Reb Dovid noticed this sudden change but said nothing. Reb Dovid's money remained lying on the table as usual, awaiting the attendant.

After the conversation came to a close, the Rebbe told Reb Dovid that he had to go somewhere and that he wished Reb Dovid to accompany him. On the way, a priest came over to the Rebbe and asked him for a donation for an orphanage that had just opened.

The Rebbe put his hand into his breast pocket, took out the money that Reb Dovid had been given on Shabbat, and handed it to the priest. Reb Dovid understood that the Rebbe had wanted to show him that he knew the money was not from a kosher source.

**Source:** Excerpted and adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from //nishmas.org.

**Connection:** Weekly Reading (2)--Rashi's comments on 26:12 & 26:13)

**Biographical note:** Rabbi Yisroel Friedman (10 Iyar 1854 â€“ 13 Kislev 1934), the second Chortkover Rebbe,

had chasidim numbering in the tens of thousands. These included quite a few famous Rebbes and Rabbonim. When World War I broke out he moved to Vienna, where he lived for the rest of his life. In the first international convention (˜Knessia Hagedola) of Agudas Yisroel in 1923, he was elected to be the head, along with the Chafetz Chaim and the Gerer Rebbe, both of whom deferred to him. His books, Tiferes Yisroel, Yismach Yisroel, and Ginzei Yisroel, are considered classic works.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed* [www.ascentofsafed.com](http://www.ascentofsafed.com) [ascent@ascentofsafed.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/8?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000gOG0:001Gcrez000009Cn&block=1&msgNature=all&msgStatus=all&count=1352904445&randid=220458232&content=central##)



**Parshat Toldot**

**The Pipeline**

**By Simcha Groffman**

"Mom, is the water okay?"

"I think so, Chaim. Why do you ask?"

"I turned the faucet on and no water came out."

"Let's see. You're right Chaim. I wonder what's wrong?"

"Let's try another faucet. Nope. No water here either."

"What should we do Chaim?"

"I saw Dad look at the main water meter once. Let's go down into the cellar and take a look."

Chaim and his mother venture down into the cellar and find water gushing out onto the floor.

Chaim alertly rushes over to the water meter and turns off the big valve. Thankfully, the water stops.

"Mom, let's call the plumber."

"Yes, Chaim. Here's the number."

Within half an hour, the plumber arrives at the door.

"What seems to be the problem, ma'am?"

"Come into the basement, sir."

"Looks like the main pipe has burst."

"Why was so much water gushing out sir?"

"Son, that pipe provides all of the water for all of the faucets in your whole house. That's a lot of water. When it breaks, all of that water comes out. It will take me about half an hour to fix it. Then I will leave you with just the mop-up work."

"Thank you so much sir. All of the water comes through one pipe. Imagine that. The builder built this house in a similar way that G-d set up the world."

"Chaim, you certainly have a vivid imagination. How does this house resemble the world?"

"All of the water comes through one pipe. What G-d sends to the world comes also comes through one pipe."

"Pipe? Where is this pipe? It must be huge. I would like to go see it."

"The pipe that I am referring to is our prayers, Mom."

"Our prayers are like a pipe?"

"A pipeline would probably be a better comparison. G-d wants to shower this world with endless blessings. He wants to send them down from Heaven."

"What is he waiting for?"

"Us. Our prayers create the pipeline that will carry those blessings down from Heaven to earth."

"Chaim, how do you know this?"

"We learn it from this week's parsha, Mom. Rivkah Emaynu, our Mother Rivkah, did not have children for the first 20 years of her marriage to Yitzchak. Both Yitzchak and Rivkah poured out their hearts in prayer to G-d. Finally, their request was granted. Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that G-d could have given them a child right away. However, He wanted their prayers."

"Why, Chaim?"

"When we pray, Mom, we get closer to G-d. By constantly making requests, we come to realize that He is the one Who provides us with everything. As our relationship grows, the "pipeline" grows wider. That allows Him to send down more blessings."

"Chaim, that is fascinating. Twenty years of praying for a child is a long time."

"G-d never gets tired of hearing our voices. People can get annoyed if you ask too much. G-d is happy to hear our requests. They show Him how much we appreciate Him."

"Chaim, you have added a new dimension to my prayers. I am going to try to keep this in mind when I am praying."

"Mom, it is especially important now, when the Jewish people are facing some real dangers."

"I know, Chaim. We need a very big pipeline filled with blessings."

"May G-d answer all of our prayers, Mom."

"Amen."

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**Appreciating the Value**

**Of Our Blessings**

**By Rabbi M.P. Gilden**

This week's Torah portion begins and ends with discussion of the relationship between the twin brothers Ya'akov (Jacob) and Esav (Esau), from their pre-natal bickering while sharing their mother's womb to Ya'akov's flight from his brother's wrath after taking the blessing Yitzchak (Isaac) intended for Esav.

Esav's rebellion and mocking of things holy started at a very young age. Rashi explains, quoting a Medrash, that Esav's departure to idol worship started immediately after his Bar Mitzvah (Beraishis/Genesis 25:27). Esav was fifteen that day he came in from the field and demanded "the very red stuff" (25:29), the day of his grandfather Avraham's death. He ignored the family's mourning and continued with business as usual; Rashi explains that Esav came back exhausted from a murderous rampage in the fields. Upon his return, he saw Ya'akov cooking lentils and he commanded, "Pour that red stuff into me." Ya'akov understood the value of the birthright, and the very important responsibility and privilege it carried of serving in the Bais HaMikdash (Holy Temple). Recognizing that the evil Esav was not a man intent on a life of G-d's service, he asked, "Sell me your first born birthright." Esav responded, "I am dying; what do I need it for?" and he spurned his birthright.

It almost seems dishonest to trick Esav into selling such a valuable commodity for a mere pot of lentils. Was not Ya'akov's tactic deceptive?

Rabbi Eliyahu Mishkovsky (past Rosh Yeshiva/Dean of Yeshiva Keneses Chizkiyahu in Kefar Chasidim, Israel) answers with a parable. A man, struggling to put together enough money to marry off his daughter, came to his Rebbe, his mentor, for a blessing. The sage blessed him and advised that he should accept the first business offer he receives. On his way home, the man stayed at an inn also attended by a group of businessmen. He observed a group of men heatedly debating various matters. One of the men approached him, offering "I'll sell you my portion in the world to come for a ruble." Remembering his Rebbe's words he accepted without hesitation. Immediately, the merchant pulled out a sheet of paper and wrote out the bill of sale and, with mocking glee, signed it before his fellow merchants. The poor man headed home, a ruble poorer, with contract in hand.

The merchant, still laughing, told his wife the funny story how he sold his portion in the world to come and he even got a ruble out the deal. His wife stiffened; "Go buy it back." The businessman looked at her; "You’re not serious are you?" "You bet I am, I am not living with someone who sold his portion in the world to come!"

Humiliated, but without options, the merchant left to find the man to whom he had made the sale. Once again, he was surprised; the man would not sell it back. "A deal is a deal." The merchant tried raising the price, but the poor man stubbornly held his ground. There was only one solution left. The businessman went to speak to the man's Rebbe. After hearing both sides the Rebbe said, "You know, the man is right. A deal is a deal; there's nothing to be done. However, for the right price perhaps he will sell it back to you. He is about to marry off a daughter. If you were to offer to pay for all the expenses maybe I could convince him to change his mind." The merchant agreed, as did the buyer, and the deal was rescinded.

The merchant was perturbed, "How can this be justified. I sold it to him for a ruble and now I must pay thousands to get it back?" The Rebbe answered, "These are two separate transactions, each done at fair market value. Yesterday when you mocked your world to come, you valued it at a ruble, and that is what you got. Today your married life depends on it; it appreciated in value for you, so it is worth thousands."

With this we gain insight into the transactions between Ya'akov and Esav. There was no trick. Esav knew what was included in his birthright, but he placed no value in it. He even mocked it. Esav sold it for what at the time was to him a fair market value. But after he lost the Divine blessing transmitted by Yitzchak, he began to appreciate the true value of that which he had scorned. The regret he felt was intense, but it was too late.

The Torah's message is timeless and applies directly to us. How often do we undervalue matters of spiritual importance? Do we not trade the eternal, more meaningful pleasure of a Divine relationship for the "happiness" offered by the mundane, finite pleasures of the temporal physical world about us? We need to maintain a focus on what has true value, so we do not sell it off for a "pot of lentils"

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