**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas vayishlach 5776**

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**Story #937**

**Sixty Thousand Descendants**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0001A400:001MGm1O00000UkU&count=1447783662&randid=2064111803&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=2064111803)

 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, the great Chasidic master, recounted the following episode at his grandson's circumcision celebration:

 "This morning I arose very early to prepare myself to perform the *brit mila* (circumcision) of my dear grandchild. At daybreak I opened the window and saw a penetrating darkness in the heavens. As I wondered about the blackness before my eyes, it was made known to me that this very day the holy *tzadik* (righteous person), Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Leib of Sassov, had passed away.

 "As I mourned the loss of that prince of Israel, I heard a voice cry out: 'Make way for Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Leib!'

 "When the Sassover entered the celestial realms, the *tzadikim* and *chasidim* formed a joyous circle around him. Suddenly, Rabbi Moshe heard a voice reaching from one end of the world to the other. Intrigued, he began following it until he found himself at the gates of *Gehinnom*(Purgatory).

 "Without waiting for permission, Rabbi Moshe entered *Gehinnom*. The guards saw him walking back and forth as if looking for somebody. They were certain that he had come there by mistake and they politely asked him to ascend to his proper place in *Gan Eden* (the Garden of Eden).

 "Rabbi Moshe said nothing. The guards repeated their request, but he remained silent and did not move. They didn't know whether to drive him out or permit him to remain. They decided to confer with the Heavenly Court, but even it was puzzled. Never had a *tzadik* descended into *Gehinnom* of his own desire. Rabbi Moshe was summoned before the Throne of Glory where he made his request known.

 "Rabbi Moshe began, 'Master of the World, You know how great is the *mitzvah* of redeeming captives. I have occupied myself with this commandment my entire life, and I have never differentiated between wicked captives and righteous captives. All were equally beloved by me, and I had no peace until I had succeeded in freeing them. Now that I have entered the World of Truth, I find that there are many captives here, too. I wish to fulfill this *mitzvah* here, as well.

 "'I will not leave *Gehinnom* until I have fulfilled this *mitzvah*. So dear are Your commandments to me that I have observed them no matter what the place or time or penalty might be. If I cannot bring these wretched souls to freedom, I would rather remain with them in the fires of *Gehinnom* than to sit with the righteous and bask in the light of the Divine Presence!'

 "Rabbi Moshe's words flew before the Throne of Glory, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, uttered the decision: 'Great are the *tzadikim* who are ready to relinquish their share in *Gan Eden*for the sake of others. In that merit, let it be calculated how many people Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Leib redeemed during his lifetime, both they and their children, and their children's children until the end of time. That number he may redeem here, also.'

 "The Book of Records was immediately brought, opened and read. The names of all those who had been redeemed by Rabbi Moshe were counted and their direct descendents. The final figure was 60,000 souls, the number that could now be released from *Gehinnom* to *Gan Eden.*

 "Rabbi Moshe began to walk through *Gehinnom*, looking into countless pits and caves where he found souls who had suffered for a long time. One by one he gathered them and when he was finished, he found their number to be exactly 60,000. Column after column emerged from *Gehinnom*, marching with him at their head, until they arrived at *Gan Eden*.

 "When all 60,000 souls had entered, the gates were closed."

 After recounting this story, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak instructed to name his little grandson Moshe Yehuda Leib and blessed him to grow up to emulate the holy tzadik, Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Leib of Sassov.

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***Source*:** Adapted and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the version that was first printed in *The Crown of Creation* by Chana Weisberg (Mosaic Press).

**Biographic notes:** Rabbi Levi Yitzchak (Deberamdiger) of Berditchev (1740-25 Tishrei 1809) is one of the most popular rebbes in chasidic history. He was a close disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch. He is best known for his love for every Jew and his active efforts to intercede for them against (seemingly) adverse heavenly decrees. Many of his teachings are contained in the posthumously published, *Kedushat Levi*.

Rabbi Moshe-Leib of Sassov (1745 - 4 Shvat 1807) was the leading disciple of Reb Shmelke of Nicholsburg. He also received from the Maggid of Mezritch and from Rabbi Elimelech of Lyzhinsk. Subsequently a Rebbe in his own right with many followers, he was famous primarily for his love of his fellow Jews and his creative musical talent. His teachings are contained in the books, *Likutei RaMal,Toras ReMaL Hashalem*, and *Chidushei RaMal*.

***Connection*:** The weekly reading, Toldot, begins, "These are the offspring..."

*Reprinted from the Parshas Toldos email of KabbalahOnline.com, a project of Ascent Institute of Safed.*

**A Rav Guides a Yeshiva Bachur to Someone Else Who Can Help**



 Rav Shimshon Pincus, zt”l, once wrote a letter to a Yeshivah Bachur in response to the letter he received from this boy. He wrote, “To the precious student, I received and read your letter. I must say that I have not reached a level where I can give advice to people and advise them as to exactly what to do. However, I will reply and respond to your remarks according to my limited understanding.

 It seems to me that you are trying very hard to grow in Torah and Yiras Shamayim, and that you are certainly fulfilling your required efforts and hishtadlus, diligence and work, in this regard. However, you now find yourself in a position where you simply need help from outside. The logical explanation for this, is simply because all lofty and spiritual pursuits requires special assistance above and beyond our physical capabilities.

 Therefore, I am providing you with the name and address of someone who can surely help you. They call Him G-d, Hashem. He is very strong, since in truth, He created everything! I also have the authority to tell you that He loves you personally, very much, and that He especially desires that you should turn to Him. You will have no problem finding Him, since Hashem is everywhere, in the simplest form of understanding.

 In fact, even now as you read this letter, you can simply turn to Hashem. I write this because many people mistakenly think that this understanding is only attained through davening, performing good deeds, and by attaining exalted levels, and this is all true. However, it is not the main requirement to find Hashem.

 Rather, the main requirement is to understand that Hashem is not a “concept”, Chas V’Shalom. Rather, Hashem is real, alive, and eternal, and we can forge a personal relationship with Him! The more that we realize this, the more we will turn to Him, and the stronger our relationship with Him will become. We will simply share our problems with Him and ask Him to help us over and over. Whoever will give you different advice, it is only a waste of your time to pursue it. Simply turn to the One who can truly help you, Hashem Yisbarach, and grab hold of Him and never let go until you achieve that which your heart desires! I sign with honor for a Ben Torah who is searching for the truth, but simply doesn’t know where to look! Shimshon Dovid Pincus” (Nefesh Shimshon, Letters of Rav Shimshon Pincus)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5776 email of “Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights” compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**Who’s the Thief?**

**By** [**Mendy Kaminker**](http://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/12111/jewish/Mendy-Kaminker.htm)

 Three angry men presented themselves in King Solomon’s court.

 “Your Majesty,” said the first, “the three of us are business partners. We went together on a business trip with a large sum of money.”

 The second picked up the story. “Shortly before Shabbat, we hid the money in a pit we’d dug, planning to dig it up right after Shabbat.”

 King Solomon listened attentively.It was gone!

 “But when we went for it, it was gone!” said the third. “No one knew about it but us. One of us is a thief! My lord, I’d like for you to have each of us swear that he didn’t steal the money. That way we’ll find out which of us is the thief!”

 But King Solomon was in no hurry to do that. He knew that the man who stole the money would also lie and swear falsely. How could he find out which of them was guilty?

 “Return to me tomorrow,” he told the three.

 When the partners presented themselves the next day, King Solomon said, “I can see that you three are wise men. Before we discuss your case, I would like your opinion about a different matter.”

 King Solomon’s flattery worked like magic, and they waited eagerly to hear his problem.

 “A boy and a girl grew up together, and swore to each other that when they were old enough, they would become husband and wife. At very least, they decided, they’d ask the other’s permission before marrying anyone else.

 “Years passed. The girl, forgetting her oath, married someone else. Immediately after the wedding, she remembered her earlier commitment and told her husband about it. He said, ‘We can’t live as husband and wife until we find that boy and ask him to annul the oath that you swore to each other!’

 “They took a large sum of money and set out to find her childhood friend. They found him and offered to pay him to annul the oath, but he was a good man, so he wished them a hearty *mazal tov* and refused the money.

 “On their way home, the happy new couple was robbed. ‘Please give us back the money,’ the woman pleaded. She told the robber about how good her husband was, being so patient as to let her take care of her oath before they moved in together, and how good the boy she’d grown up with was for refusing to take the money. The robber was touched, and returned the purse.”

 King Solomon looked at the three men, who couldn’t understand where all this was leading.

 “My question is, which of the people in this story was the most praiseworthy?” asked the king.

 (Stop for a moment and think. Reach your own conclusion before you read further.)

 One of the partners said, “The wife is the most admirable. She kept an oath she made when she was just a girl!”

 The second partner said, “Her husband is the most praiseworthy. Although he loved his wife, he left home right after his wedding to find that boy, and allowed himself to act as a husband to her only after she was released from her oath.”

 The last partner said, “It’s true, both of them behaved in an exemplary fashion. But the boy was a fool! Why didn’t he take the money when they offered it to him?”

 “You are the thief!”  King Solomon bellowed, pointing to the last partner. “When you talk that way about the boy, you show that you have an appetite for money even if you have no right to it. I’m convinced that you stole the money from your partners.”

 The last partner admitted his guilt, and the other two went home satisfied and impressed by the wisdom of King Solomon.

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

**L’Maaseh… A Tale to Remember**

**Visiting Day at Camp**

 Rav Yechiel Spiro relates a story that took place on visiting day one summer. All the kids in camp were excited to see their parents visit them and to show them around camp. There was one boy, Chaim, sitting on a rock near the parking lot, on the lookout for his parents. The head counselor noticed him sitting there for a while and asked him if his parents were coming. Chaim answered that they were, and they should be there soon. He added that they probably got stuck in traffic.

 Chaim sat there and waited, and the head counselor would come check on him every 15 minutes to invite him to his bungalow, trying to find something that Chaim would like to do to keep him busy and distracted while he waited, but Chaim just wanted to sit and wait. He even offered to take Chaim out for pizza or to go bowling, but Chaim refused.

 Eventually, Chaim gave up waiting and made his way back to his bunk. The head counselor would check on Chaim as he lay on his bed, just to make sure he was ok. After two hours of checking on Chaim, the head counselor finally noticed that Chaim had left the bunk. He felt relieved that maybe Chaim was looking for something to do, but then he saw something that really disturbed him— he saw another boy, Avromi, standing next to Chaim’s bed with his hand under Chaim’s pillow.

 The head counselor rushed into the bunk, and asked Avromi why he was taking something from Chaim’s bed? The head counselor was feeling so bad for Chaim all day, he couldn’t let someone start up with him and take his things. Avromi turned red and said he wasn’t stealing from Chaim. The head counselor saw that Avromi was holding a package, and he asked to see it, thinking Avromi took it from Chaim. On the package was written, “For Chaim. Sorry we couldn’t make it today. We love you. From, Mommy and Daddy.”

 Surprisingly, the handwriting on the package was messy, as if it were written by a 10 year old boy. The head counselor realized what was going on and asked Avromi to tell him what happened. Avromi said that he left that morning with his parents, and he saw Chaim sitting on the side of the road. When he came back later that day, Chaim was still sitting there. Avromi said that he realized Chaim’s parents must not have come, and he made a package for him and signed the note from his parents.

 The head counselor was stunned at the giving and thoughtful behavior from this 10 year old child, and he helped Avromi put the package under Chaim’s pillow. He told Avromi, “I’m sure you are going to make Chaim very happy, and we can only imagine how happy you have made Hashem!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Chaya Sarah 5776 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insight compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**Alone and the Oneness of G-d**

 And Jacob was left alone (Gen. 32:25)

 This concept of "alone," of the absolute unity and Oneness of G-d, was bequeathed by Jacob to his descendants forever. For whenever the Jewish people would be forced to do battle with Esau, they would yearn for the time when G-d's Oneness will be manifested openly, i.e., the era of Moshiach. *(Rabbi Boruch of Mezhibozh)*

 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him (Gen. 33:4)

 When a small flame is brought close to a burning torch, the smaller fire is nullified within the larger one. So too was it with Jacob and Esau. Jacob was the great light, whereas Esau contained tiny, hidden sparks of holiness. When Esau spotted Jacob these sparks were aroused, prompting him to run over and be nullified in the greater holiness.

*(Torat Chaim)*

*Reprinted from the archives of L’Chaim Weekly (Parshat Vayishlach 5775)*

**A Kosher Rescue Mission for El Al Travelers Stuck in Montana**

**By Carin M. Smilk**

**Plane Makes an Emergency Landing, and Emissaries Make an Emergency Delivery**

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 They were stuck in a Montana airport with no end in sight to their wait and no kosher food to eat. That’s what happened today to some 300 passengers on an El Al airlines flight Tel Aviv to Los Angeles. The Boeing 777 made an emergency landing in Billings, Mont., when a reported fire in one of the engines made it unsafe to continue.

 Passengers disembarked the plane and were bused to a terminal, where they waited for another plane to take them to their final destination—Los Angeles International Airport. There they sat as the hours ticked away and the food supplies—in particular, the kosher food—dwindled.

 Hillel Fuld of Beit Shemesh, Israel, says that somehow, Rabbi Chaim and Chavie Bruk—co-directors of Chabad-Lubavitch of Montana in Bozeman—got news of the situation and set about immediately to offer assistance. With her three young children in tow, Chavie Bruk drove a car full of kosher food 150 miles to Billings Logan International Airport, where passengers had been waiting for nearly 10 hours.

 “She showed up and instantly put a smile on hundreds of faces. She did it with utter grace and never stopped smiling for a second,” says Fuld, 37, who works in technology. “Based on the constant smile on her face, she is happier to be here than we are to have her here.

 “It was a tremendous *kiddush Hashem—*amazing and inspiring!”

 Fuld, who is traveling with his wife and 11-year-old son to Los Angeles, enjoyed kosher bagels, cold cuts, chips and cake. Heaps of hummus, fresh fruit and other goods were also available.



**Hundreds of people enjoyed bagels, cold meats, hummus, fresh fruit,**

**chips and more as they lingered in the terminal. (Photo: Hillel Fuld)**

 Rabbi Chaim Bruk recounts that the rabbi at El Al in Israel called him this morning and apprised him of the plane trouble. Bruk himself was on a flight to Minneapolis, but his wife snapped into action. She gathered as much ready-to-eat food as she could—they had just received a kosher shipment the night before—piled her children into the car and drove two hours to the airport.

 “She was welcomed like a heroine,” says the rabbi.

 Meanwhile, the group of tired (but not hungry) passengers remain in the airport two hours later—a half-day now—waiting for the next leg of their journey.

*Reprinted from the November 15, 2015 Chabad.Org News.*

**It Once Happened**

**The Story of Shvartze**

**Volf (Black Wolf)**

 Many years ago, after the rabbi of Tchentzikov had been married for eighteen years without having been blessed with children, he travelled to the Kozhnitzer Maggid to obtain the tzadik's (holy person's) blessing.

 When the Kozhnitzer Maggid listened to the man's request he uttered a sigh from deep within his being. "The gates of heaven are closed to your petition!" he cried.

 "No, no! Please, you must help me!" the man wept desperately.

 "I cannot help you," said the Kozhnitzer. "But I will send you to someone else who will be able to help. You must go to a certain person who is called 'Shvartze Volf - Black Wolf,' and he will be the one to help."

 "Yes, I know him," the rabbi said, "He lives in my village, and a more coarse, miserable person you could never find."

 At first the Kozhnitzer Maggid did not respond. The rabbi realized that if the Kozhnitzer Maggid was sending him to Shvartze Volf, he must have a good reason. The Kozhnitzer Maggid then quietly revealed, "Shvartze Volf is head of the 36 hidden saints whose merits sustain the world."

 The rabbi sought out Shvartze Volf in the forest hut which was his home. Though cognizant of Shvartze Volf's true identity, the rabbi was still frightened to approach him. He devised a ruse by which to gain admittance to his hut. He would go into the forest just before Shabbat and when he found Shvartze Volf's house, would pretend that he had lost his way. He would beg to spend the holy Shabbat there, and under the circumstances, Black Wolf could hardly refuse a fellow Jew that favor.

 Friday afternoon he set out and as planned reached Shvartze Volf's hut. He knocked on the door and the man's wife answered. Her horrible appearance marked her as a true equal to her husband, for never had a more hideous and unpleasant woman been seen. Nevertheless, the rabbi begged her to allow him to stay over Shabbat.

 "Very well," she finally relented. "But if my husband finds you here, he'll tear you apart with his bare hands. You can't stay in here, but go into the stable if you want," she croaked.

 Soon Shvartze Volf arrived home and entered the stable, his eyes blazing with hatred. "How dare you come here! If you set foot outside of this stable, I'll rip you apart with my bare hands!"

 The frightened Jew shivered in his boots as he beheld the terrible visage of Shvartze Volf.

 Suddenly the thought came to the rabbi that a tzadik is so pure that he acts as a mirror, reflecting the image of the person who is looking upon him.

 Thus, what he saw in the appearance of Shvartze Volf was nothing more or less than a picture of his own spiritual impurity. With that, he searched into his soul, and prayed from the deepest part of his being. He poured out his soul and in those few moments returned wholeheartedly to his Maker. He felt himself suffused with a warm, peaceful feeling.

 Suddenly he was shaken from his reverie by the unexpected sensation of a soft hand being laid on his shoulder. He looked up, not quite sure what he would see, a shiver of fear passing through him. There stood Shvartze Volf, but instead of his accustomed fierce exterior, he had a refined and peaceful visage.

 The visitor was ushered into the hut, which no longer appeared rough and tumble-down, but warm and inviting. Shvartze Volf's wife entered with her children, and their appearance, too, was beautiful and serene.

 Shvartze Volf turned to his guest and said in a quiet voice, "I know why you have come here. I know, I know. You and your wife will rejoice in the birth of a boy. But you must name him Schvartze Volf."

 The rabbi wondered to himself, "How can I name my son after him? It is not our custom to name after the living," but he remained silent.

 The following morning Shvartze Volf passed away.

 After Shabbat, the rabbi of Tchentzikov returned home. In time, he revealed to his congregation the hidden identity of the hated Shvartze Volf.

 True to his word, a baby boy was born and he was given the strange name "Shvartze Volf."

 In the year 1945 Jews who had survived the horrors of the Holocaust began streaming into the Land of Israel. When the Belzer Rebbe held his first Melave Malka (Saturday night meal taking leave of the Sabbath Queen) in the Holy Land many Chasidim came and introduced themselves to the Rebbe.

 This story was one of those related at that first Melave Malka of the Belzer Rebbe. And at that memorable occasion one man stood before the assembled and said, "My name is Shvartze Volf ben Chana, and I am a descendant of that child who is spoken about in the story."

*Reprinted from the Parshas Toldos 5776 edition of “L’Chaim Weekly,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.*

**On A Dream and a Prayer**

**By Linda Feinberg**

 The chossid received the official looking letter with trembling hands. Notices from the Czarist government never brought good tidings. As he couldn’t read Russian himself, the chossid brought the letter to someone who could. This Yid read the letter to himself first. Then he considered for a few minutes how best to break the news.

 “You have two sons, don’t you?”

 “Boruch Hashem,” replied the chossid. “Bli eyen hora, they are both good learners.”

 “I’m glad to hear that,” said the Yid, “because this is a draft notice for one of your sons. At least your other son can stay in the bais medrash.”

 The *chossid* turned pale. He had heard stories about what happened to *bochurim* who were forced to serve in the Czar’s army. It was like a death sentence. The army officers loved to harass and torture the Jewish recruits, in their attempt to make the boys forsake their *Yiddishkeit*.

 The *chossid* could not accept such a fate for either of his beloved sons. When he couldn’t get an exemption from the recruiting office located in his own town, Chassnick, he went straight to Lubavitch to speak with his *rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel, known as the Tzemach Tzedek, and ask for his *brochah*.

 “Why have you come to me?” asked the Tzemach Tzedek. “I don’t work for the government.”

 “Please don’t turn me away emptyhanded,” said the dazed *chossid*. “I’ve been a faithful follower of yours for years!”

 The Tzemach Tzedek wasn’t satisfied with just words. He tested the *chossid*, probing the breadth and depth of the *chossid*’s knowledge and commitment to *Chossidus*. It was only after the *chossid*had answered every question with fluency and clarity that the Tzemach Tzedek agreed to assist him.

 “Go to Liepl,” said the Rebbe. “There you will find a *Yid* who is an expert in these matters. He will help you. Just be sure to go to his house as soon as you reach the town.”

 “How will he know who I am? Can I have a letter from you?”

 Rav Menachem Mendel waved away the question. “He will know who you are.”

 From Lubavitch, the *chossid* went straight to Liepl. He arrived at the man’s house very early in the morning. There were no signs of life at the house, but that didn’t stop the *chossid* from knocking on the front door. If the Rebbe told him to speak with this man as soon as he reached Liepl, this was what he intended to do.

 A servant answered the door, looking none too pleased to be disturbed at such an early hour. “Who are you? What do you want?”

 “I want to speak to your master.”

 “He’s sleeping.”

 “It’s urgent.”

 The servant hesitated. Then he opened the door and told the *chossid* to come inside. The *chossid* followed the servant into a spacious room, but he was too anxious to remain seated in the chair that was offered to him. At last, he heard the sound of footsteps coming down the stairs. The *chossid* looked eagerly to the door, but his heart fell at the sight of the man who entered the room.

 The man’s eyes were dark and swollen, as though he hadn’t slept in days. Indeed, his whole appearance resembled that of someone who had spent the night in a ditch by the road. How on earth would such a person be able to help? the *chossid* wondered.

 The man greeted the *chossid* and asked how he could be of assistance.

 “I’m from Chassnick,” the *chossid*began to explain, “and I have ...”

 “Did you say Chassnick?”

 “Yes. Why?”

 “*Boruch Hashem*, I’m not going crazy after all!”

 The man then explained the reason for his relief. When he went to sleep the night before, the Tzemach Tzedek appeared to him in a dream and told him to help a Jew from Chassnick. He then woke up, sure this was just some crazy dream. But when he fell asleep again, he had the same dream. And so it went throughout the night, until the word Chassnick was ringing in his ears.

 “So, *nu*? What do you want?”

 The *chossid* showed him his son’s draft notice. The man frowned. “This isn’t going to be easy,” he said. “But if the Tzemach Tzedek sent you to me, *be’ezras Hashem* I’ll succeed.”

 And so it was. When the man returned from the recruiting office, he came with good news. “Neither of your sons will be called up for many years. By that time, the army won’t want them. They’ll be too old!”

*Reprinted from the November 18, 2015 edition of the Yated Ne’eman.*

**How to be a Good Rebbe/Shepherd**



**Rabbi Aryeh Levin**

 Rabbi Aryeh Levin, of blessed memory, was once standing outside his yeshiva in Jerusalem while the children were on a 15 minute recess break. His son, Chaim, a teacher in the yeshiva, was standing and observing, when suddenly his father turned to him. "What do you see my son?" asked Rav Aryeh.

 "Why," he answered, "children playing!"

 "Tell me about them," said Reb Aryeh.

 "Well," answered Reb Chaim, "Dovid is standing near the door of the school, with his hands in his pockets; he probably is no athlete. Moishie is playing wildly; he probably is undisciplined. Yankel is analyzing how the clouds are drifting. I guess he was not counted in the game. But all in all they are just a bunch of children playing."

 Reb Aryeh turned to him and exclaimed, "No, my son. You don't know how to watch the children. "Dovid is near the door with his hands in his pockets because he has no sweater. His parents can't afford winter clothes for him. Moishie is wild because his Rebbe scolded him and he is frustrated. And Yankel is moping because his mother is ill and he bears the responsibility to help with the entire household. In order to be a Rebbe you must know each boy's needs and make sure to give him the proper attention to fulfill those needs."

 Comment: Why is there such a long narrative about sheep in last week’s portion (twenty verses)? Rabbi Mordechai Kaminetzky explains that Yaakov Avinu (as well as Moshe Rabbeinu and Dovid Hamelech) were tasked with setting up the Jewish people for success in their respective eras and beyond.

 A true visionary and leader needs to take into account all the various skills and tendencies of his “flock.” Recognizing and cultivating the diversity in his sons and future shepherds - the Twelve Tribes - was a job Yaakov Aivnu was well-equipped for, given his extensive care for even the lowly sheep. What a lesson for parents, teachers, and communal leaders to consider when making all sorts of decisions!

*Reprinted from last week’s (Parshas Toldos) email of Torah Sweet’s Weekly.*