**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas ki seitzei 5776**

Volume 7, Issue 55 14 Elul 5776/ September 17, 2016

**Printed L’illuy nishmas Nechama bas R’ Noach, a”h**

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**The Two Small Miracles**

**That Saved My Life on 9/11**

**By Ari Schonbrun**



 “Did you do the book order with Baruch?” This is what my wife yelled down to me as I was walking out the door, on my way to work, at 6:45 AM, Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001.

 Baruch was my fourth grader. Knowing that I did not do the book order, I turned around and came back into the house to sit with him to help him with his book order. The whole exercise took about twenty minutes. Those 20 minutes saved my life.

 I got to the lobby of One World Trade Center at about 8:40 (twenty minutes later than usual) and waited in the lobby for an elevator to the 78th floor. When I got off on the 78th floor I had to walk across the 78th floor lobby in order to get to the bank of elevators that would take me up to the 101st floor where my office was located. The time was approximately 8:45.

 I must have been about fifteen feet from my bank of elevators when all of a sudden there was an explosion. The building shook, the lights went out, I was thrown to the ground and there was smoke everywhere. I remember screaming, “What happened?” but there was no answer. I saw an emergency light in a hall between the two main banks of elevator and I crawled over there.

**Photo by Getty Images of September 11, 2001 at the World Trade Center**

 I stood up and walked to the end of the hallway that I was in and to the right I saw that there was an office with the door ajar. I walked into that office and saw people in different states. Some were hysterical some were calm and some were just numb. I went back into the hall to see what was going on and that’s when I found Virginia, my co-worker.

 She had third degree burns. She kept telling me that she was in pain and she kept pleading with me not to leave her. I promised her that I would not leave her until she was safe. We ultimately found a stairwell and headed down.

 As we got out of the building we headed across Church Street to a waiting ambulance. Once the ambulance was full with casualties and ready to leave Virginia turned to me and said, “Ari, you’re coming with us.” I had no choice given her insistence that I come with her and I got into the ambulance. We were one of only a few ambulances that got away from the scene that day.

 Virginia thanks me every day for saving her life and I keep telling her “you got it all wrong.” Who saved whose life? If she hadn’t have insisted that I get into that ambulance I would have been standing at the base of the building when it collapsed and I would have been killed. No doubt in my mind.

 I have been playing that scene over and over again in my mind for the past 15 years. A day does not go by that I don’t think about it. Since that day, my life has changed. I have been traveling the world, telling my story, talking about the miracles that happened to me that day. I have been trying to make people understand that G-d runs the world no matter what we might think.

 I try to make people understand that the world is going in the wrong direction and there is only one being that we can turn to for help. Since 9/11 we had the blackout in 2003 that put 50 million people into the dark. I was trying to figure out why. Then it hit me.

 We are in a state of spiritual darkness and we don’t even know it. So G-d put 50 million people in the dark to tell us “this is the spiritual darkness that you are in.” Then we had the economic meltdown. Then we had Bernie Madoff. Then ISIS. There is a pattern here. G-d is telling us that he is not very happy with us and that we have to wake up and start turning to Him. He is the only one that can help us. As we approach Rosh Hashana, let us all take upon ourselves to pray better, to stop talking in synagogue, to do good deeds with more compassion, and to care about both sides of the Torah, those mitzvos between man and G-d and the mitzvos between man and his fellow man. This year let us not give G-d lip service but rather let us tell Him from the bottom of our hearts that enough is enough.

*Reprinted from the September 11, 2016 email of the Forward.*

**Story #979**

**Elul: the Month of No Visitors**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[editor@ascentofsafed.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/5?userinfo=eff1e795994608ed6885dfdeac88e827&count=1472652896&type=no%2Dmagic&session_redirect=true&userinfo=eff1e795994608ed6885dfdeac88e827&count=1449696053&randid=171491294)

 The Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk would not accept visitors during the month of Elul. Throughout the year, his door was open and people would go to him for salvations, but during the month of Elul he required time for himself.

 People understood this, and they respected the rebbe's stated boundaries. One year, however, a wealthy person who felt desperate decided that he would travel to speak privately with the rebbe even during Elul. His problem was indeed serious; his son had become insane!

 As he and his son were traveling to the rebbe, they met a pauper, collecting money. The boy said to his father: "Give this man a generous donation."

 The father was startled; this was the first sane sentence he heard from his son in a long time. Since he was so pleased with his son's improvement, he gave a half-golden coin, to the pauper. The pauper asked them, "Where are you headed?"

 The father told him that his son had become insane, so they were going to the Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk for a blessing.

 The pauper replied, "But don't you see that your son is healed? Why should you bother the *tzadik*? You probably heard that he asked not to be disturbed during Elul."

 Nevertheless, the father decided that since he had already traveled a long way, he would continue.

 When he arrived at Lizhensk he went directly with his son to speak with the Rebbe Elimelech, and as soon as he was admitted into the rebbe's room, he gave him twelve golden coins.

 Said the Rebbe Elimelech: "Am I more special than Eliyahu Hanavi? To Eliyahu you only gave a half-golden coin."

 Only then did the father understand that the pauper he met was Elijah the Prophet.

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 Reb Yisrael-Avraham Tchernostrau (the son of Rebbe Zusha of Honipoli and nephew of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk) would often tell this story, and he would conclude by saying, "Notice how precious Rebbe Elimelech's Elul was to The One Above. From heaven they sent Eliyahu Hanavi to heal the wealthy man's insane son, solely to prevent him from disturbing Rebbe Elimelech's holy prayers and meditations during Elul."

*Source*: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from Torah Wellsprings - Rav Biderman, Shoftim 5775.

*Biographical note:* Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk [of blessed memory:5477 - 21 Adar 5547 (1717 - March 1787 C.E.)], was a leading disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch, successor to the Baal Shem Tov, and the leading Rebbe of the subsequent generation in Poland-Galitzia. Most of the great Chassidic dynasties stem from his disciples. His book, *Noam Elimelech*, is one of the most popular of all Chassidic works.

Connection: Seasonal - The climactic month of Elul begins this Shabbat.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Re’eh 5776 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.* [www.ascentofsafed.com](http://www.ascentofsafed.com)

**Thoughts that Count**

 You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep driven away and hide yourself from them; surely you shall bring them back to your brother (Deut. 22:1)

 G-d has implanted within us a wonderful character trait: a willingness and urge to be kind to another Jew that is even stronger than the desire to be kind to ourselves. We can always find reasons why we deserve our own suffering, G-d forbid, but when it comes to another's distress, it is absolutely impossible. *(Hayom Yom)*

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5775 edition of L’Chaim Weekly.*

**The Skeptic, the Baal Shem Tov and the Paralyzed Girl**

[**From the Chassidic Masters**](http://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/4216/jewish/Rephael-Nachman-Kahan.htm)



 He was a skeptic. To be sure, he lived punctiliously according to the commandments, and made sure to study Torah regularly, but tales of miracle-working rabbis were foreign to him. Even when some of his own relatives traveled to the Baal Shem Tov to receive his blessings, he remained behind, cold and unbelieving.

 So things would have remained indefinitely, if not for his daughter. The sweet, beloved girl, the apple of his eye and the joy of his old age, was stricken with paralysis. The village healer tried all her remedies, the big-city doctor prescribed a regimen of healthy foods, but the poor girl remained unable to move.

 Time passed, and the girl’s situation did not improve. “Why don’t you travel to the Baal Shem Tov?” his friends asked. “You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.”

 Finally, he conceded.

 One sunny summer day, he took a small bundle of money and gently packed his daughter into his cart, and the two set off together.

 Upon arrival, the father left his daughter in the wagon and went directly to the rabbi’s study.

 “Rebbe,” he blurted out, proffering his gift. “They say you can heal people. Here, take this, and make my daughter healthy again. She is outside in the wagon.”

 “Go in peace. I have no need for your money,” said the Baal Shem Tov curtly. He then took the man’s offering and flung it out the open window.

 Landing in the courtyard, the pouch burst open, and “I have no need for your money!” coins scattered in all directions. From her perch on the wagon, the girl saw the money flying about. Instinctively, she jumped down to gather the coins into her skirt.

 When the father came out and saw what had happened, he said to his daughter: “Quick, get into the wagon. Let’s get out of here before he claims to have healed you!”

***Source:*** *Shemuot V’Sippurim, vol. 1, p. 20.* From Shemuot V’Sippurim by Rabbi Rephael Nachman Kahan; translation/adaptation by Yanki Tauber.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Balak email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**The Difference in the Brocha on a Beautiful Apple Made by a Rebbe**

 Once, a man brought his ten-year-old son to visit Rav Aharon Karlin, zt”l. As they were sitting and talking, Rav Aharon asked for a bowl of apples to be brought in. Rav Aharon and his guests each took an apple, and with great Kavanah Rav Aharon said the Brachah of Borei Pri HaEitz, and he began to eat.

 The boy thought to himself, ‘What is the difference between me and the Rebbe? He eats apples and also I eat apples. He says a Brachah, and so do I. Even I could be the Rebbe someday!’

 Rav Aharon, almost as if he were aware of the boy’s thoughts, turned to the child and said, “You know, my son, there is a big difference between the two of us. When you wake up in the morning and look out the window, you can see that there is a beautiful apple tree in your yard. You can see the juicy, red apples growing on it and all you can think of is when you can eat those apples.

 You run to wash your hands, get dressed as quickly as possible, and run out to the apple tree. You quickly decide which apple is going to be for your breakfast, and you open your mouth for that first delicious bite. You almost take that bite of the apple until you remember, just in time, that you must say a Brachah before eating an apple. So you say the Brachah in order to eat.”

 The boy and his father listened, captivated to the words of the great Rebbe. Rav Aharon continued, “However, my son, when I wake up in the morning, it is different. When I look out the window, I also see a beautiful apple tree, and it makes me think about the wonder of Hashem’s creation. I contemplate how this apple tree began as a small seed in the ground, and how it slowly grew year by year until one day blossoms began to flower and then apples appeared.

 I run to wash my hands before I quickly go outside to take a closer look at this amazing creation. In awe of Hashem and His Creation, the apple tree, I want to say a Brachah on the apple tree and its fruits. I begin to say the Brachah of Borei Pri HaEitz, but then I remember, in order to say a Brachah, I need an apple!”

 Rav Aharon took the young boy’s hand. “The Gemara in Bava Kamma (30b) teaches us, ‘One who wants to be a true Chassid, a pious Jew, must fulfill the Halachos of Brachos.’ Saying Brachos the proper way and with the proper Kavanah is the correct way to become righteous. Every Brachah we say represents one more step forward in growing closer to Hashem!”

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

**To Drink the Milk**

**Or Offend the King**

 There is a famous incident that happened in the time of the Chassam Sofer, that a harsh decree was issued on the Jews, and they had to appeal to the government to nullify it. As a result, the Jewish communities in the province of the government held a vote and decided to send a delegation of respected individuals to go before the king in order to appease him and request of him to nullify the decree.

 And so they were forced to send a number of respected men. Amongst those chosen for the delegation was one man hand-picked by the Chassam Sofer himself who served him as his attendant. This was in the category of the messenger literally taking the place of one sending, as he was not able to go himself. This messenger saw how the Chassam Sofer conducted himself, and he was not of the common folk, rather, he was steeped in awe.

 When the honorable delegation arrived at the palace of the king they were offered a drink of milk, which according to Halacha one is prohibited to drink as long as a Jew has not seen the gentile milk the cow.

 The members of the delegation were concerned that if they refused the offered beverage this would anger the king, and all their effort would be for nothing. Therefore, they allowed themselves to drink it as they thought that since the whole prohibition was only a gezeira [a Rabbinical preventive barrier] they felt that it would be permissible at a time like this. Additionally, they were also inclined to say that they would surely not be made to stumble by drinking something prohibited when the purpose of the meeting with the king was a matter of a mitzvah and they were fulfilling (Pesachim 8a). Messengers involved in a mitzvah are not harmed.

 However, the messenger of the Chassam Sofer thought differently, he refused this heter – permissiveness, and he did not drink with them. The king saw what was taking place and was interested in finding out the reason why he abstained from the milk, and even now did not try to avoid the issue with false pretexts, and he answered that the truth of the matter is that according to the Shulchan Aruch it is prohibited to drink milk of a gentile, unless a Jew saw how he milked the cow.

 As they were speaking, the attendant of the king entered. The king turned to him and said: “Today I sense that the milk tastes better than usual. Why is today different?” The attendant did not hesitate and immediately responded that today he was able to obtain special milk – milk of a camel.

 When the king saw how this Jew was spared from a prohibition in the Torah by the power of his devotion to fulfilling the Torah, he decided to appoint him as the officer in charge of all Jewish affairs in all the provinces of his kingdom for he knew that he would always stand by the truth until the end without compromising at all.

 We derive from here that a person cannot make calculations as to what is good for him or not. Just the opposite! It is precisely this that in the beginning seemed to turn off their hope and this ultimately brought them salvation, apart from when the Jews let themselves down regarding their religious beliefs because of the government.

 Therefore, a person should always see to fulfill mitzvos by way of – 'You shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d’ (18:13) and fulfill what is incumbent upon him without making any calculations, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu, with His guidance, will guard him with a merciful eye.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shoftim 5776 email of Tiv HaKehlla, the parsha sheet of Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz’s shul in Yerushalayim.*

**Why Honoring Your Wife Will Make You Wealthy**

 Rava said to the people of Mechuza, "Honor your wives, and you will become wealthy" (Bava Metzia 59). What is the connection between honoring one's wife and becoming wealthy?

 Belashon tzachus, we can explain that after the sin of eitz hadaas [Tree of Knowledge] both man was cursed, לחם תאכל אפיך בזעת" ,By the sweat of your face, you will eat bread" (Bereishis 3:19). He must work hard for his parnassah.

 One of the woman's curses is, והוא בך ימשל]" ,The husband] will rule over his wife" (3:16). When the husband honors his wife, he frees her from her curse [since he isn't ruling over her].

 Heaven will say, "If you are lenient with your wife's curse, we will be lenient with your curse too, and you can earn your parnassah easily." This is the reason Rava said, "Honor your wives, and you will become wealthy."

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 The Sefer Chassidim (650) relates, “There was once a son who excelled in kibud av. Before his death, the father said to his son, ‘You honored me in my lifetime; I want you to also honor me after my death. My request to you is that whenever you become angry, allow a night to pass before reacting. Control yourself for the night, and wait until the next day.’

 The son traveled overseas for business while his wife was left behind. He didn’t know that she was carrying a child. He remained overseas for several years. It was nighttime when he finally returned to his hometown. From outside the window of his home, he heard the voice of a young man speaking with his wife. He thought it was a stranger, and he became angry. He drew his sword, ready to kill them both.

 Right then he remembered his father’s request, that he must control his anger and wait a night before reacting, so he returned the sword to its sheath. It was then that he heard his wife say to the young man: "My son, many years have passed since your father left. If he would know that he has a son, he would certainly return to find you a bride…."

 When he heard this, he said, "Open the door for me, my wife. Baruch Hashem, I controlled my anger, and blessed is my father who told me to control my anger, because otherwise, I would have killed both you and my son." They were very joyous and they made a celebration for the entire community.

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 Reb Yaakov was the father of Rebbe Aharon HaGadol of Karlin zy'a. He was a tzaddik and a mekubal. One year, Reb Yaakov was the chazzan for Maariv on Yom Kippur, and he davened an extra-long Shemonah Esrei. When he finally took the three steps back, one of the wealthy members of the beis medresh came forward and smacked him on his face. (According to another version of this story, before Kol Nidrei, Reb Yaakov was distributing the Yom Kippur machzorim, and he gave machzorim to some people before he gave one to this wealthy individual. The wealthy person was insulted, because he thought that he should receive the machzor first, and therefore he hit Reb Yaakov.)

 Reb Yaakov didn’t respond to his disgrace. After the tefillah, he greeted everyone happily, and wished them a gut Yom Tov. There was no inference of anger in his bearings. Some members of the beis medresh tried to appease Reb Yaakov.

 "You know that he respects you. It must be that he was having a hard day…" Reb Yaakov told them that there was no need for these conversations, since he had no hard feelings and no anger towards this wealthy person. In this merit, it is said, he became the father of Rebbe Aharon HaGadol of Karlin.

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 Rebbe Mottel Slonimer zy'a writes (Maamar Mordechai p.342): Two tzaddikim made a pact that whoever dies first would come to his friend in a dream and tell him what happened in his judgment. One of them was niftar, and soon afterwards, he came to his friend in a dream to reveal what happened to him in heaven.

 He said, "When the court reviewed my deeds, they saw that everything was perfect. But I had one sin, the sin of shochad (taking bribes). Because once, when I was serving as the head of the beis din, one of the parties placed money into my pocket without me knowing. For this, I was told that I would need to go to Gehinom.

 I told the court that I don’t want to go there, so they brought me to a very large building, gave me a small hammer, and said, 'Demolish this building with the hammer. When you finish, you will go to Gan Eden.'

 "I was devastated. It seemed that I would be working on knocking down the building for many years. It was a very large building and I only had a small hammer to work with. "

 But then I thought: Why did I wear tallis and tefillin every day, during my lifetime? Why did I study Torah and keep the mitzvos? Wasn't it because I chose to do Hashem' will? Well, right now, it is Hashem's will that I break this large building with this hammer. So why should I be upset? This is Hashem's will, and I will do it with joy – even if it would take me many years.

 With a joyous heart, I raised the hammer and hit the building with all my might. The entire building collapsed, and I was swiftly brought to my place in Gan Eden."

 This story reminds us that sometimes, it seems that it will take forever to achieve a certain deed, but we may discover that it can be accomplished quickly. The same will occur when we put up a fight against the yetzer hara. It seems impossible, but it isn't. It is very likely that one strong blow against the yetzer hara won't be enough, but if one is persistent, he will see that overcoming the yetzer hara and change isn't as hard as it originally seemed.

 Try, Try, Try, Try, Again The difficulties related to change are only in the beginning. As Chazal tell us "all beginnings are hard." But eventually the new behaviors will become his second nature and easy to perform.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shoftim 5776 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**Thoughts that Count**

 You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep driven away and hide yourself from them; surely you shall bring them back to your brother (Deut. 22:1)

 G-d has implanted within us a wonderful character trait: a willingness and urge to be kind to another Jew that is even stronger than the desire to be kind to ourselves. We can always find reasons why we deserve our own suffering, G-d forbid, but when it comes to another's distress, it is absolutely impossible. *(Hayom Yom)*

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5775 edition of L’Chaim Weekly.*

**Student Wins After Mitzvah**

**Ruslan Belousov, a student joining the National Jewish Retreat, made a good resolution to put on Tefillin daily... and was rewarded for his effort.**


**Ruslan Belousov, a student joining the National Jewish Retreat, made a good resolution to put on Tefillin daily... and was rewarded for his effort.**

 In an effort to inspire and strengthen Jewish leadership and involvement on university campuses throughout North America, Sinai Scholars Society, a project of Chabad on Campus International and the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute gathered 150 students to hear from prominent Jewish thinkers, address topics of Jewish identity, and facilitate increased commitment in their lives.

 150 Jewish students and 21 Chabad on Campus directors from across the country gathered this week for the Sinai Scholars National Jewish Retreat in Palm Springs, California.

 One of these students, 22 year-old Ruslan Belousov, grew up as an only child in Moscow before immigrating to the United States in 2010.

 Upon his arrival to S. Monica College, he connected with Rabbi Eli Moshe Levitansky, the Director of Chabad on Campus at the college, and joined the Sinai Scholars Society. This brought him to the retreat, where he experienced a sequence of serendipitous and deeply moving events.

 During a farbrengen (a chassidic gathering where people connect with one another and share words of inspiration), Belousov spoke of his past and how his sense of Jewish belonging did not extend further than the fact that he had two Jewish parents.

 He shared how moving it was to have discovered a shared identity with so many new people. "Before the retreat I was an only child," said a moved Belousov, "but now I have so many brothers and sisters."

 During the program, students were encouraged to make resolutions related to Jewish life and commitment to carry back with them to their college campuses. Inspired by the many lectures and activities, Belousov resolved to begin wrapping tefillin six days a week. In a meaningful and emotional turn of events, he won the grand prize in the raffle shortly thereafter, which happened to be a brand new pair of his own tefillin.

*Reprinted from the September 7, 2016 website of COLLIVE.*

**The Importance of**

**Knowing When to Cry**

**By David Bibi**

 As we enter the month of Elul, I recall Rabbi Abittan reminding us that the wise person always prepares before an event, while the fool who neglected to prepare laments afterwards over his misfortune. In our class last week we talked about the roads a person can choose in life. Most often choosing the difficult path at the beginning secures a rich and rewarding destination while those that look for the easy path at the outset often find themselves locked in a never ending entanglement of thorns and difficulties later on.

 I was reminded of a story that the Rabbi would tell after reading a column by Rabbi Yisrael Pesach Feinhandler this week. Two American Jews who were business partners once complained to Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandel that their sons were about to marry gentile girls. Although not observant, they were distraught, since they knew that marrying gentiles meant that their sons would be lost to Judaism.

 Rabbi Weissmandel asked them, "Where did you educate your sons?"

 "We lived in a remote town," answered the two partners, "and there was no shul or Hebrew school, so we had to send them to public school."

 Rabbi Weissmandel sighed and said to them, "Your sons learned with gentiles, and now you come to complain that they wish to marry gentile girls? Let me tell you about something that happened after the First World War, and perhaps this story will shed light on your own situation.

 "As we know, after the War new boundaries were drawn for many countries. In one Jewish village, the new border separated the village from the Jewish cemetery, so that the village was in Poland, while the cemetery was in Russia. Every time it was necessary to bury someone, they had to ask for a permit to cross the border.

 "This caused great inconvenience and delayed each burial for several days until the proper papers could be arranged. The Jews wished to remedy this intolerable situation, and sent a delegation to the regional governor with the request that he exempt the Chevra Kaddisha from all the red tape so that they could bury their dead quickly. The governor listened to their plea and agreed to grant them a permit to cross the border whenever necessary.

 "Once the Chevra Kaddisha had this permit, they decided to utilize it for other purposes as well, such as to smuggle goods across the border. They would fill a coffin with smuggled goods, cover it with a tallis, and pretend that they were carrying a corpse. On the other side of the border, they had people waiting to receive the smuggled goods. In this way they developed a successful trade for themselves.

 "Once one of the border policemen noticed that at the time the funeral procession was crossing the border with the coffin everyone was laughing. He became suspicious and suspected that perhaps this was not a funeral at all. He approached them and asked them to open the coffin so that he could see the dead body. They immediately refused, claiming that this would be against Jewish law.

 "But the policeman would not relent, and demanded that they open the coffin.

 "Now the Chevra Kaddisha realized they were in deep trouble, since if they were caught, not only would their lucrative trade come to an end, but they were also in danger of being exiled to Siberia. Knowing that they were trapped, they burst into tears.

 "The policeman said to them, 'You fools! NOW you are crying? If you would have cried when you were carrying the coffin, it would not be necessary for you to cry now.'

 "The same applies to you," concluded Rabbi Weissmandel."If you would have cried when you sent your sons to learn with gentiles, then you would not have reached this situation, and you would not be crying now."

 Rabbi Weissmandel knew and Rabbi Abittan always tried to caution us that one can educate a child only when he is still young and willing to listen, but when that opportunity passes and he reaches adulthood, it is usually too late. We must utilize the early years to train our children to know the difference between truth and falsehood and between right and wrong. We must instill in them the concept of “Who is a wise man, One who can see what the results of his actions will be”.

 A child who learns that taking the tough road now, working in school, studying, exercising, and developing proper midot, requires work. The child needs to understand that the thorny path often leads to roses, while the rosy path often leads to thorns.

 As we mentioned last week, Hashem tells us that he sets before us a blessing and a curse, and a life and death, and we should choose life. We asked, “isn’t this obvious”? But the answer lies in the fact that to arrive at blessings and life, we must be willing to work, to sacrifice, to sweat and to cry. If we do that now, then we wont have to later!

*Reprinted from the Parashat Shoftim email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*

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Remember what Amalek did to you *(Deut. 25:17)*

 Why does the Torah use the singular form of the word "you" instead of the plural?

 The early Chasidim explained: Amalek, or the Evil Inclination, gains a stronghold only in an individual who is stand-offish and reclusive from the rest of the Jewish People. He who considers himself part of the larger whole and stands in unity with his brethren cannot be harmed by Amalek. *(Maayanei Hachasidut)*

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5775 edition of L’Chaim Weekly.*