

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 187

**Toldot** | The Changing Periods of Divine Service

# MESILOT

## *Pathways to the Soul*

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha  
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son  
**Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita**

# ...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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## Parashat Toldot

### Seeing the World from Another's Eyes

Rav Go'el Elkreef Shlita shared the following story:<sup>1</sup>

In the United States, there is a large chesed organization that has been operating for many years. The organization's activities span a wide range of areas, including ensuring that Jews have money for Shabbat necessities, helping new mothers, supporting brides and grooms, and much more.

As time went by, the head of the organization aged. One day, during a staff meeting with all the officials present, the elderly head of the organization stood up and announced:

"My strength has waned, and I am no longer capable of continuing! Therefore, I am expressing my desire to resign."

The announcement fell like thunder on a clear day, sending a shudder through all who heard it. "The head of the organization, this remarkable Jew who has managed, with tremendous *Siyata Di'shmaya*, to uplift thousands of Jews, wants to resign?"

A voice was heard: "We understand the difficulty, but where will we find someone like you?"

The head responded: "I have thought about it a lot, and finally, an idea came to mind. We will publish an announcement that we are looking for a new director, and each candidate who comes for an interview will receive a questionnaire, which will include the following scenario:

'A storm is raging, heavy rain is pouring down, and bone-chilling

cold fills the air. The tops of the trees sway in the wind like a wooden plank in a stormy sea. At a desolate and abandoned bus stop, three people huddle together.

As you pass by in your car, you notice the three figures. You look at them closely and see an elderly man who has turned blue from the cold, shaking uncontrollably... You understand that if he remains in this state for just a few more minutes, he might lose his life.

Next to him stands a professor, renowned worldwide for his expertise, who has saved thousands of people during his lifetime. Among those saved, you were also one.

The third person is your best friend, your closest confidant.

But to your dismay, there is only one seat in the car. Who will you take?

Expressions of amazement were heard throughout the room: "The director, as always, there's no match for your originality."

The next day, every Jewish newspaper was covered with the

announcement from the chesed organization: "Wanted: A Director for a Chesed Organization. Applications will be accepted only during the upcoming week."

Throughout the week, dozens of people came and filled out the questionnaire.

Afterward, all the officials gathered once more to hear from the head of the committee. The official rose from his seat, adjusted his tie, cleared his throat, and said:

"As expected, all possible options were written:

Some of the respondents wrote that they would take the friend, for there is nothing like true friendship.

Others wrote that they would take the elderly man, as he certainly wouldn't survive, while the professor and friend are young and might manage until help arrives.

The third group wrote: Gratitude is the foundation of Judaism. The professor saved thousands of people, including myself, and therefore, I must repay his kindness.

The face of the retiring director darkened with sadness, and with a voice that was broken and full of tears, he asked: "Is this it? Among all those who answered the questionnaire, was there no one who answered differently?"

The head of the committee replied: "Oh... yes... no. There was one person who gave a very interesting answer, and here is what he wrote:

"I would get out of the car, let the professor take the elderly man and heal him, and I would stay behind with my friend to keep him company until help arrived."

The director's eyes lit up... "Oh! Finally, a person! He is worthy of being the director!"

If you didn't understand, let me explain:

To be the director of a chesed organization, one must truly feel

the reality of others. As long as someone is deeply immersed in their own world, it is impossible.

All those who answered were stuck in their own worlds, and therefore it seemed simple to them: I stay in the car, and whoever is lucky can join. But this last individual, unique among them, managed to transcend his own material existence, leave his personal bubble, and view others as they see themselves!

When we look at others as they see themselves, we suddenly discover that the other is a real being, a living and existing entity, and as a result, we must help them.<sup>2</sup>

And now," concluded the retiring director, "I can resign with peace of mind.

We must recognize that others are real people with their own experiences and feelings. And that will be the focus of our discussion...

*~* Wellsprings of Wisdom *~*

2. Sometimes, a person is a decent human being, but for some reason, he temporarily forgets that the person standing in front of

him is a real being with intellect and emotions, and thus allows himself to hurt them.

## Parashat Toldot - Seeing the World from Another's Eyes

But that doesn't matter at all! It doesn't matter if the offense was due to a lack of recognition of the other's existence...

Regarding this, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l (Rab Yaakov - Page 962) told two stories:

## The First Story:

Rabbi David Tev'el zt"l, author of Nachalat David, was a candidate for the rabbinate of the city of Brisk. As part of his candidacy, he came to the city to deliver a lecture and announced in advance the sources he planned to quote in his discourse.

Certain individuals in the city, who opposed his candidacy, requested that the local prodigy, Dadel Friedman (known as the "Kafiner"), who was just a young boy at the time, study the sources and try to challenge Rabbi David Tev'el's words.

Dadel was too young and naive to understand their motives, and he assumed that they merely wished to uncover the truth that emerges from the "bottle of Torah."

During the lecture, he repeatedly interrupted Rabbi David Tev'el with questions until he managed to undermine the foundation of his discourse.

Rabbi David Tev'el turned to him and said, "As you have diminished my stature, so too shall you remain small."

Afterward, Rabbi David Tev'el approached the young prodigy, and with great affection, told him that while his questions were indeed correct, it was not

proper etiquette to publicly challenge his words in front of the entire congregation.

And indeed, the great Rabbi David Kaffner zt"l, who grew to become one of the leading scholars of his generation, remained physically short due to the statement and reprimand of the Nachalat David.

## The Second Story (Page 260):

As a young scholar, the Malchin came to Pressburg to visit the Chofetz Sofer. Despite being in his twenties, his reputation was already widespread throughout Europe, and the Chofetz Sofer invited him to give a lecture at the main synagogue on Shabbat.

The Malchin spoke for over three hours, taking the congregation on a journey through the Talmud.

At the conclusion of his speech, exhausted, he accidentally sat in the seat of the Chofetz Sofer and remained there, lost in thought, until the time for the Mincha prayer.

When the Chofetz Sofer entered the synagogue for Mincha and approached his place, the Malchin noticed that he had taken the rabbi's seat, and in alarm, he wanted to move. But the Chofetz Sofer said to him, "Young scholar, remain in your place..."

From the moment the Malchin heard those words, he felt that he could no longer ascend in Torah, and he was unable to complete his work *Artzt HaChaim* on the *Shulchan Aruch*. The book remained incomplete...

### Two Different Individuals...

This week's parasha, Parashat Toldot, begins with the verse (the second verse of the parasha): "And Yitzchak was forty years old when he took Rivka, the daughter of Betuel the Aramean of Padan-Aram, the sister of Lavan the Aramean, to be his wife" (Bereishit 25:20). When Yitzchak Avinu was forty years old, he married Rivka, and from that time many years passed without them being blessed with children.

Yitzchak and Rivka knew that all of a person's needs are solely in the hands of the Creator of the world. Therefore, they

poured out their hearts like water before Hashem, asking that He have mercy on them and bless them with holy offspring.

This is how Yitzchak's prayer is described: "And Yitzchak prayed to Hashem opposite his wife, for she was barren" (Bereishit 25:21). Our Sages explained that Yitzchak Avinu's prayer transformed reality and altered all systems. Their prayer was answered—"Hashem accepted his prayer, and Rivka his wife conceived" (ibid.).<sup>3</sup>

Rivka's pregnancy was strange and concerning, as it says: "The

### *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

3. When the holy Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai (the Chofetz) zt"l studied this verse, he raised the following question:

Why does it initially say "And Yitzchak entreated Hashem on behalf of his wife" (Bereishit 25:21), without mentioning Rivka's name? But when the prayer is accepted, it says, "and Rivka his wife conceived" (ibid.), specifically mentioning her name?

He explained as follows: When Yitzchak approached to pray, he thought: My parents, Avram and Sarah, were barren for

seventy-five years! Only after Hashem changed their names from "Avram" to "Avraham" and from "Sarah" to "Sarai" were they able to conceive.

Now, my name cannot be changed, for Hashem chose it, as it says: "And Hashem said: Indeed, Sarai your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Yitzchak" (Bereishit 17:15)...

However, perhaps my wife's name needs to be changed. Therefore, Yitzchak decided not to pray specifically that Rivka would

## Parashat Toldot - Two Different Individuals...

children struggled within her"  
(Bereishit 25:22).

Our Sages described what Rivka experienced during those days. They said (Bereishit Rabbah, Parasha 63:6) that when Rivka passed by synagogues and study halls, the child (Yaakov) would struggle to get out, and when she passed by places of idol worship, the other child (Esav) would run and try to exit.

Rivka went to the Beit Midrash of Shem to inquire... "And Hashem

said to her: Two nations are in your womb" (Bereishit 25:23).

"Know," Shem revealed to Rivka, "that you have twins—two sons who are entirely different from each other! Indeed, physically they are just two children, but in essence, they are two separate worlds, two complete worlds, each filled with its own tastes, fragrances, melodies, and areas of interest... They will never be able to get along together!"<sup>4</sup>

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*Wellsprings of Wisdom*


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conceive, since perhaps she too needed a name change. Instead, he prayed "on behalf of his wife"—simply that his wife would conceive, whatever her name might be.

But "Hashem answered him"—Hashem listened to his prayer, and "Rivka his wife conceived"—she became pregnant with her original name, without any change!

4. The holy Rabbi Yehosiel Yehuda Halberstam z"l raised the following question (as cited in "Tosafot HaTorah" on Bereishit, page 206, by the Gaon Rabbi Abaon Peretz):

Esav spent his entire life trying to present himself to his parents as a righteous person and God-fearing. To strengthen this image, he would ask his father questions on halacha (Jewish law), such as: "Father, how does one take stew and eat?"

If so, why did he reveal his true nature while still in his mother's womb, desiring to go to idol worship places?

He answered: Specifically because Esav wanted to create an image of a God-fearing individual, he tried to go to places of idol worship! He wanted to come out of his mother's womb, enter these idol temples, destroy and shatter all the idols, and smash the teeth of anyone found there!

However, our holy Sages understood that this was all merely an outward show, while Esav's true personality, hidden beneath the mask, was entirely wicked. Therefore, they applied to him the verse: "The wicked are exchanged from the womb" (Tehillim 58:6).

**Parashat Toldot - Perfect Education...**

One clear day, the sound of crying was heard, and the two

infants, Yaakov and Esav, were born into the world...

**Perfect Education...**

Yaakov and Esav were born into an extraordinary environment of calm and tranquility, to parents whose entire essence was pure and simple faith in Hashem.

They had parents who truly felt, every moment, with every fiber of their being, that the only one guiding their personal reality was Hashem alone, leading them according to His will. This clear faith created within them an atmosphere of calm, serenity, humility, and modesty.

Around them spread a pure, holy air, an atmosphere that made everyone breathing it feel as if their blood was being purified—feeling as if new, refined blood flowed through their veins. They felt all their organs become lighter, as if something new had entered their bodies and their blood...

From the moment they emerged from their mother's womb, Yaakov and Esav filled

their lungs with this wondrous, holy, and awesome air.

When they grew a little older, Yitzchak their father sent them to study Torah at the best Beit Midrash in the world—the Beit Midrash of Shem.

There, they studied with great diligence for thirteen years, until they received the terrible news of the passing of their holy grandfather, Avraham Avinu.

On that day, as the world seemed to darken, Esav fell into the trap of corruption...

The great Rabbi Mordechai Cohen z"l (The "Shach") described (Sifsei Kohen Bereishit 25:27):

When they were young, they went to school, to the Beit Midrash of Shem and Ever. But when Avraham died, the study ceased, as our Sages said (Moed Katan 27b): "When a sage dies, study halls are closed."

## Parashat Toldot - Pesach Eve, Year 1712 from Creation

From that day, Esav began to deteriorate.

From that terrible day, Esav continued to decline until he became an idol worshiper. As Rashi comments: "And the boys grew, and Esav became..." (Bereishit 25:27) – As long as they were young, their deeds were not apparent, and no one scrutinized them. But when they turned thirteen, one went to study halls, and the other to idol worship.

Yitzchak and Rivka noticed Esav's spiritual decline and tried their best to help him and guide him back to the right path.

However, all efforts to correct him were in vain. This was a decree from the Creator of the world, who guides His world according to His will. Esav's corruption was part of the secrets of creation and the hidden aspects of Divine governance. The early and later kabbalists have partially revealed the Divine purpose behind this, explaining how it was part of the process of rectifying the world in the kingdom of Hashem.

We won't delve into their words now; instead, let's continue forward.

## Pesach Eve, Year 1712 from Creation

The fourteenth of Nissan, Year 1712 from the creation of the world, was an especially turbulent day, marked by significant events that left an impression for generations.

The holy Torah details the events of that day, and this is what it records:<sup>5</sup>

AS Yitzchak grew old and his eyes became dim (for when Avraham

bound him upon the altar, Yitzchak gazed at the Divine Throne, and from that time his eyes began to weaken), Yitzchak called Esav, his elder son, on the fourteenth of Nissan. He said to him, "My son, behold, tonight (the fifteenth of Nissan-Lail HaSeder) the heavenly beings praise the Master of the Universe, and treasures of dew and bounty are opened.

—Wellsprings of Wisdom—

5. See Targum Yonatan ben Uzziel (Bereishit 27:1-7).

"Since I have grown old and do not know the day of my death, I wish to bless you. Therefore, I ask you—take your weapons, your bow and your arrows, and go out to the field to hunt game for me, and make me delicacies such as I love. Bring them to me, and I will eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die."

Rav Shalom Meir Wallach *shlita* writes:<sup>6</sup>

This parasha presents us with a mystery—the giving of the blessings. Yitzchak Avim had two sons: one was a man who knew how to "hunt",—a spiller of human blood, a person without restraint, ruled by unchecked desires. The other was an innocent and perfect man, dwelling in tents, pure and holy, the chosen of the forefathers.

Yitzchak Avim, a prophet of Hashem, a man with much *hakodesh*, whose home was graced with the Shechina, seemed to be mistaken. He believed Esav

was worthy, righteous, and pious, and sought to give him the blessings. How could this be?

But what would one say? That Yitzchak was blind and did not see? As if these angelic beings needed physical eyes to see. As if everything was not fully known and revealed to their holy spirit.

Did the author of "Chovot HaLevavot" not write (*Sha'ar Chesbon HaNefesh*, Chapter 3):

"When a person reaches the highest level of the righteous and the loftiest rank of the devout, he sees without eyes, hears without ears, and senses without physical senses."<sup>7</sup>

A story is told of a yeshiva student who expressed to Rav Moshe Tikochinsky *zt"l*, the *mashgiach* of the Slabodka Yeshiva, his assumption that Yitzchak Avim erred regarding Esav and did not recognize his true nature.

The *mashgiach* fixed his eyes on him and asked, "Do you believe

**Parashat Toldot - Fitting Him to Wear the Garments**

in the writings of the Arizal?"

"Certainly," the student responded fervently.

"There is 'Sefer HaGilgulim,' which contains the roots of the souls of prophets, kings, Tanna'im, and Amora'im. Do you believe in all these?!"

"Certainly," answered the student.

"But the Arizal did not know them; they lived generations before him," the mashgiach reminded him.

"True, but to him, all secrets were revealed," the student replied with conviction.

"And Yitzchak Avim, you think he did not reach the level of the Arizal, and did not know what was before him?" the mashgiach challenged.

Of course, Yitzchak knew who Esav was. Nevertheless, he believed (at first) that it was necessary to give the blessings to Esav. We will not delve further into this matter, instead, let us tell another story...

**Fitting Him to Wear the Garments**

The eldest son of the holy Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk was Rabbi Elazar of Lizhensk.

Rav Mordechai Gerditz shlita tells:<sup>7</sup>

As Rabbi Elazar approached his Bar Mitzvah age, the holy Rabbi Elimelech invited a Jewish tailor-pious and upright-to his home, asking him to sew the garments for his son Rabbi

Elazar. Before the beginning, Rabbi Elimelech stipulated that the tailor should focus his heart on the honor of the Creator at every stage of the work.

With reverence and awe, the tailor approached the task, and the fabric was cut on the holy table of Rabbi Elimelech. The tailor marked the parts of the garment, and before cutting each piece,

—*Wellsprings of Wisdom*—

7. Tzemerot HaZahav (Volume 4, page 335).

**Parashat Toldot - Fitting Him to Wear the Garments**

Rabbi Elimelech stood beside him and instructed him on what to say.

When he was about to cut the fabric for the shoulders, Rabbi Elimelech instructed the tailor to say aloud:

"I am cutting this fabric for the shoulders of Elazar, so that he will be able to lift his shoulders only for the sake of serving the Creator!"

When the time came to cut the fabric for the loins, Rabbi Elimelech instructed again:

"I am cutting this fabric for the loins of Elazar, so that he will be able to move his loins only for the sake of serving the Creator!"

Similarly, when cutting the sleeves, Rabbi Elimelech instructed:

"I am cutting this fabric for the sleeves of Elazar, so that he will be able to move his hands only for the sake of serving the Creator!"

And thus, with every part of the fabric, until the task was complete.

On the morning of the Bar Mitzvah, after returning

from immersing in a mikveh of purity, and before donning tefillin, Rabbi Elimelech dressed his son Rabbi Elazar with the new garment-sewn with deep intentions and unifications-with awe and reverence. To the amazement of all present, it was apparent that immediately upon wearing the garment, a spirit of holiness from Heaven rested upon the boy, and the spirit of Hashem began to inspire him-even before putting on the tefillin.

From that moment, the child began to ascend in the paths of holiness and awe. He became closely attached to his holy father, always observing his sacred conduct.

His immense diligence in Torah study became renowned, his spiritual attainments soared to the heavens, and he was crowned with holiness and purity at every step. Thus, he ascended, refined as one of the seraphim, acquiring noble and pure attributes along with the qualities of royalty.

And for our discussion: If Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk

**Parashat Toldot - Fitting Him to Wear the Garments**

knew how to achieve this, it's simple that Yitzchak Avinu also

knew...<sup>8</sup> Yet, he still did not succeed, for this story with Esav

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*Wellsprings of Wisdom*

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**8.** Regarding the greatness of Yitzchak, we find in the Holy Gemara (*Shabbat 89a*) a wondrous matter, and it is as follows:

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Yonatan, what is meant by the verse: "For You are our Father, for Avraham did not know us, and Yitzrael did not recognize us; You, Hashem, are our Father, our Redeemer; Your name is from eternity" (*Yeshayahu 63:16*)?

In the future, the Holy One, blessed be He, will say to Avraham, "Your children have sinned." He will respond, "Master of the Universe, let them be wiped out for the sanctification of Your Name." Hashem said, "I will ask Yashov, who had the pain of raising children, and perhaps due to this he will plead for mercy for them." Hashem said to Yashov, "Your children have sinned." He responded, "Master of the Universe, let them be wiped out for the sanctification of Your Name." Hashem then said, "Salvation will not come from the elders nor from the young ones. Let us go to Yitzchak."

He said to Yitzchak, "Your children have sinned." Yitzchak responded, "Master of the Universe, they are my children and not Your children? When they preceded saying *Na'aseh ve'Nishama* (We will do and we will hear), You called them 'My firstborn son' (*Shmor 4:22*). Now they are my children and not Your children? And besides, how much have they

sinned? How many years does a person live—seventy years, etc.?" And Yitzchak managed to defend the people of Israel!

My Father, teacher and master, Rabbi Yoram Michael Abergel z"l, explained:

In the future, the attribute of judgment will emerge from its sheath and wish to consume everything with the flames of judgment. Amid this fiery operation, it will approach the forefathers of the world and inform them: "Your children have sinned."

Hearing this message will cause immense pressure, a pressure that no created being can withstand. It will be the embodiment of the attribute of judgment!

It will first be revealed to Avraham... And Avraham, whose main service to Hashem was with the attribute of chesed (loving-kindness), will be unable to withstand the pressure and will give in!

Then it will turn to Yashov, whose primary service was Torah study, and he too will succumb to the pressure of the attribute of judgment.

But when it approaches Yitzchak Avinu, a Jew who served his Creator all his days through prayer—who merited to enter into the innermost chambers and unite with his Creator in true attachment, without any barrier or separation—the attribute of

**Parashat Toldot - Do Not Be a Donkey**

was among the mysteries of creation and the hidden aspects of Divine governance...

For those struggling to understand, we will write one more sentence...

**Do Not Be a Donkey**

Our holy Sages established a fact (Shabbat 112b): "If the earlier ones were like angels, we are like humans. And if they were like humans, we are like donkeys."

As long as we dwell in this world, wrapped and concealed within our physical bodies, we are incapable of understanding what an "angel" is. A Jew who understands that he cannot comprehend who the Torah scholars of previous generations were, and recognizes his inability to grasp the sanctity of their deeds and the intensity of the holy feelings that animated them—that person is worthy of being called a "human being."

However, if the Jew is crude and coarse, and he "merits" to be among those described as "covering the heavens with clouds"—and due to his coarseness, he "understands" that the tzaddikim were just ordinary people, and dares to criticize them, especially if he opens his mouth in public to mock the tzaddikim of previous generations—he should know that he is a donkey! A "donkey of donkeys" with a certificate from the holy Talmudic Sages!

It is well-known that the Vilna Gaon said: "I can imagine in my mind how a Torah scholar from the time of the Rishonim appeared,

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judgment surrenders, raising its hands in defeat! Because the power of prayer is the strongest force in the world. Nothing in the world can break a person of prayer! No one in the world can conquer a person of prayer! Not even the attribute of judgment!

This is expressed in "Hayom Yom" (25<sup>th</sup> of Nissan): "The Baal HaTanya opened the channel of self-sacrifice for the service of Hashem through prayer, to connect with the essence of the Infinite. Chassidut places a chassid face to face with the essence of the Infinite!"

**Parashat Toldot - Our Torah is a Torah of Life**

and I can understand how the Amoraim and Tannaim looked, even how a prophet appeared-but I cannot comprehend how a simple Jew appeared during the time of the Beit HaMikdash."

If that is how we must regard the tzaddikim of previous generations, how must we regard

**Our Torah is a Torah of Life**

We have already written several times, quoting the holy Rashash, that there are three million interpretations for every verse in our holy Torah. Each person learns the holy Torah according to the root of his soul and his unique portion within the Torah.

However, there is one interpretation common to all learners of the Torah, and that is the interpretation called "Eiha D'Nafsheh" - meaning, the learner himself! That is, when a person learns Torah, he must find his personal life circumstances within the holy Torah. From it, he learns how to act, in what way to correct

our holy forefathers-Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov-all of whose actions operated within the world of Atzilut, as is known to anyone who has tread in the Beit Midrash!

After this long introduction, and after the repeated warnings, we will begin our discussion...

himself, and how to illuminate his soul.

This is what the holy Gaon, Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna, wrote:

"Everything that happened with the Avot (patriarchs), Moshe, and Israel occurs in every generation. All their sparks reincarnate in each generation, as is known.

And all their deeds, from Adam HaRishon until the end of the Torah, exist in every generation, as is known to the knowledgeable.

And so it is for every individual person."

**Parashat Toldot - The Vision of Baba Sali**

Rabbi Yaakov Azkes shlita wrote:<sup>9</sup>

The above words of the Gr"a that everything written in the Torah repeats in every generation and in every person-are a great principle in studying the events written in the Five Books of Torah. Besides the inherent Torah learning in them, they also explain events that occur in a person's life in all aspects of his affairs.

Of course, the Gr"a does not mean that externally, everything written in the Torah occurs in this world to a person, for many people have never seen the splitting of the sea, for instance. Rather, the intent is regarding the inner essence of the matters...

Now, after this introduction, let us journey on the wings of imagination and focus on this week's parasha-focusing on it "Eliba D'Nafsheh."

**The Vision of Baba Sali**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan in the year 5720 (November 11, 1959), Shaul and Ruchama were married, and they built their home in a small, forgotten town in the northern Negev-Netivot. In those days, Netivot was a small and united town, almost like one big family. Everyone knew their neighbor, shared in their troubles, and rejoiced in their joys. Shaul and Ruchama became well integrated into the town's life, and their days passed in peace and contentment...

Let us skip all the descriptions and mention only the bare fact: twenty years of marriage passed, and they had still not merited to hold a child in their arms...

One day, they felt a suffocating sense of pain more intense than anything they had ever experienced... as if someone had gathered all the accumulated pain of those many years into a single pill and given it to them to swallow...



9. Divrei Yaakov - (page 2).

**Parashat Toldot - Similar or Different Twins?**

That pill shattered their hearts, crushed them, and broke them into pieces...

Shaul rose from his place, walked to the corner of the room, and stood before his Creator... Many years later, he would describe what he felt at that moment: "I felt as if I were standing face to face with Hashem, without any barrier, and Hashem, so to speak, was standing right next to me, listening to me..."

Ruchama also rose from her place, walked to the other corner of the room, and covered herself entirely with burning, thick tears that poured from her eyes without stopping: "Master of the World, give us a son from whom we may derive joy in this world and the next..."

No one counted the hours, but many tears were shed then, and

their heartfelt prayers, full of simple faith, pierced the gates of heaven...

A few months later, Ruchama began to feel strange sensations in her womb... continuous movements, jumping at a frenetic pace...

Unable to bear it any longer, Ruchama went to the house of Baba Sali...

Baba Sali said to her: "Ruchama, know that you have twins in your womb. But despite being twins, they are entirely different from each other. They are simply opposites! Therefore, they are already fighting with each other..."

"And with your permission, I will reveal something else to you: one of the boys will be a great tzaddik, while the other... well, may Hashem help."

**Similar or Different Twins?**

During her pregnancy, thoughts filled Ruchama's mind: "Twins that are so opposite that they cannot stand each other?! Very strange."

"I wonder," she continued to spin her thoughts, "what do they look like? If one is righteous and the other is not, surely they will have different physical features."

**Parashat Toldot - Similar or Different Twins?**

What kind of difference could there be? Perhaps one will be full-figured and the other thin? One tall and the other short?..."

And the thoughts continued to sway...

And then the twins were born, and Shaul and Ruchama were completely surprised! The physical build of the twins was entirely identical; they looked exactly the same, except for one detail—one baby had more hair.<sup>10</sup>

Ruchama walked around her room joyfully, "Baruch Hashem, after twenty years, I merited two sweet babies who look exactly alike..."

But it turned out that following outward appearances was a mistake.

After Baba Sali had revealed their divergent paths to her, she should have drawn the attention of the boys' educators to this matter. It was their responsibility to recognize that the root of the future difference lay deep beneath the surface, hidden within the depths of their personalities. They needed to carefully examine, from a very early stage, the personal qualities of the boys, so different in their inner essence.

Because she did not reveal that there was a difference between the

...*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...

10. "And her days to give birth were fulfilled, and behold, there were twins in her womb" (Bereshit 25:24). The holy Rabbi Shimon Hirsch z"l explained:

"And behold, there were twins in her womb"—the word 'behold' (*vahin*) always serves as an introduction to something unexpected. But here it was already known that there were two children in her womb. Therefore, when this fact was now revealed to all, it should not have been unexpected. Hence, it is impossible that the word

'behold' refers merely to the birth of twins. It appears that the meaning is the opposite:

After she heard about the stark contrast between the two children who would be born, everyone assumed that the two would not look alike, as often happens with twins. The surprise was that the twins indeed resembled each other... They bore a striking external similarity, appearing identical."

(Later in the discussion, we will incorporate certain elements from his interpretation without using each instance).

## Parashat Toldot - What is Education?

boys because she did not disclose that one son's soul was already ready to absorb the light of Torah, while the other's vessels were still undeveloped... the teachers gave them exactly the same education!

In the end, both the parents and educators failed in the education of the second son.

The second son, whose spiritual vessels were still undeveloped, stopped putting on tefillin, Heaven forbid.

And the truth is that one can judge them favorably after all, "Pathways to the Soul" Parashat Toldot had not yet been printed.

At this point, we pause to focus on the Divine command: "Train a child according to his way, even when he grows old, he will not turn away from it" (Mishlei 22:6).

And we begin to explain the concept of "Church" (education).

## What is Education?

One of the giants of Chassidut, a leader who illuminated the skies of Polish Jewry during its days of splendor and greatness, was the holy Rebbe Kalonymus Kalman Shapira of Piaseczna, author of the book "Chovat HaTalmidim" (The Students' Obligation).

Thousands of Chassidim and students sheltered in his shadow and warmed themselves in his

light. He carried them in his mind and engraved them in his heart.<sup>11</sup>

Rebbe Kalonymus invested tremendous efforts in education, both for children and for adults, for students and for teachers. He put the essence of his soul into education, all the wealth of his spiritual treasures. Through this dedication, he stood out and was elevated above the other members of his generation.

...*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...

11. A story is told about one of the students, a young man of strong and muscular build, who received a draft notice to the Russian

army. The student understood that there was no natural way he could avoid service, so he prepared himself mentally for it.

**Parashat Toldot - What is Education?**

There were many righteous individuals and leaders of Chassidut who mainly worked in lofty areas for the sake of the Jewish people and constantly dealt with matters of Heaven. Some focused on Torah or prayer, others on acts of kindness and mercy. But Rebbe Kalonymus was unique in that he performed great feats in the field of education.

Thus, he explained the concept of 'education' (at the beginning of his book "Chovot HaTalmidim"):

Education does not mean giving orders, instructions, and commands!

Education does not mean training and practicing the student in certain actions!

Education does not mean passing information to a child and filling his head with data about the world and its contents.

Education is not about commands, practice, or knowledge...

Education is a beginning, as explained by Rashi in the verse: "Who is the man who has built a new house and has not inaugurated it (Deuteronomy 20:5) - 'and has not inaugurated it' means he has not yet lived in it.

Education means initiation.

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

Before he went to report at the draft office, he approached his rebbe, Rabbi Kalonymus, and said, "Rebbe, I deeply desire to continue studying, but I have no choice," and salty tears soaked into the ground.

Rabbi Kalonymus dipped his finger in soot from the stove and wrote something on the student's forehead. He then took a piece of paper and wiped off the writing. In addition, Rabbi Kalonymus warned him that on his way to the draft office, he should not look directly at any non-Jew until his return.

When he entered the office to meet with the doctors, to everyone's great astonishment, they all looked at him with amazement, as if he were some kind of monster. Immediately, they granted him an exemption certificate. When he returned to Rabbi Kalonymus to share the news of his release, the student innocently asked, "Rebbe, what did you write on my forehead?"

The rebbe replied with a smile, "a writing that the ministering angels use..."

(Source: Feldheim Publishers, "Chovot HaTalmidim" - p. 243).

## Parashat Toldot - What is Education?

Rashi further elaborates (Bereshit 14:14): "Chinuch (education) means the beginning of an individual or an object's entry into the work for which it is destined." Similarly, 'Educate the youth,' 'inauguration of the altar,' and 'inauguration of the house'...

Thus, education is the beginning of fulfilling the purpose of the one being educated.

After there is a house, it is inaugurated once people begin to dwell in it - this is the inauguration of the house.'

After the altar is built and begins to function, it is inaugurated with the commencement of its role as an altar - this is 'the inauguration of the altar.'

The same applies precisely to a person. After there is a child, he is educated by being gradually introduced to fulfilling his unique purpose in revealing the honor of Hashem in the world - this is 'educate the youth.'

We will now quote the sacred words of Rebbe Kalonymus:

"When this term (education) is used concerning the education of children, it means to cultivate and develop the nature and potential abilities that are present within the child in a small measure or in a hidden state, to bring them to the surface."

Since the Jewish person, even in childhood, has within him the spirit of Hashem, the soul of G-d, concealed and hidden, we must nurture and educate him to bring it out, reveal it, and make it flourish. Thus, he will become a faithful Jew who serves Hashem, desiring the Torah on his own, and from his path, he will not stray even in old age. About this, King Solomon commanded: "Educate the youth according to his way; even when he grows old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

'Educate the youth' - educate him, penetrate into his heart, and reveal the hidden sanctity of Israel within him. Only then, 'even when he grows old, he will not depart from it'...

For this is a great principle: every person has his unique path

Parashat Toldot - What is Education?

in serving Hashem. A special path has been paved for each individual, and only in that path must he walk and tread,

through which he will reveal the honor of Hashem in the world!<sup>12</sup>

Let us continue further...

~*~* Wellsprings of Wisdom *~*~

12. Every child is a real individual, a complete personality, endowed with intellect and emotion. We are tasked with guiding and directing them according to the path specifically meant for them, leading them along a way that fits the qualities and tendencies hidden deep within their personality.

Let us rehearse:

The great Jewish mission is fundamentally one, but the ways to fulfill it are many and diverse. Therefore, we are tasked with guiding each child according to his own path and educating him towards the one great purpose, according to his unique way and in accordance with his strengths.

In the book *Luvei Eliyahu* (*Education*, page 422) by Rabbi Eliyahu Moyal shlif"a, we find the following parable:

Yossi was overjoyed when he purchased 200 dunams of land. In his imagination, he saw himself sowing wheat... a large combine passing through and harvesting the wheat... bundles of money in his hand...

He shook himself out of his daydreams and went to the plot of land, and to his dismay, he discovered that his field was unfenced, allowing anyone to enter and

do as they pleased.

After some thought, he decided to surround his entire field with cypress trees. Efficient workers planted the saplings and assured him that within a year, they would grow tall.

Yossi watched their growth and saw that all the saplings grew perfectly straight, except for one tree that, from the moment it started growing, began to grow crooked.

Yossi was alarmed and immediately ran to the shed, took a straight stick, and tied it to the trunk, but it did not help, and the trunk continued growing crooked.

Yossi began to prune the branches that strayed from the straight path, but even that did not help. He tried all kinds of solutions, but none worked—the branches continued to grow in all directions.

In his despair, Yossi turned to an expert gardener who specialized in these types of trees and asked about the phenomenon—why, out of all the straight-growing trees, did this particular one, for some reason, grow crooked?

The gardener approached the tree, looked at it, then turned angrily to Yossi and said, "Fool, can't you see that this

**Parashat Toldot - "Educate a child according to his way."**

**"Educate a child according to his way."**

With divine assistance, Hashem has blessed us to release a new book based on the wonderful Torah teachings of our father and teacher, Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l, called *B'tzur Yerum - Chinnch Katan (small Education)*.

On page 11, it is written as follows:

King Shlomo was entirely dedicated to Hashem. He was exceedingly wise, even more so than Moshe Rabbeinu (in wisdom, not in prophecy), as the verse testifies: "And he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol" (Melachim I, 5:11). And the sages said in Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah, Parshat 19, section 3): 'Heman' refers to Moshe, as it says about him: "In all My house he is trusted" (Bamidbar 12:7).

If so, the status of Shlomo was immense, and he taught us a very fundamental lesson in educating children: "Educate a

child according to his way, even when he grows old, he will not depart from it" (Mishlei 22:6).

There are people who, with Hashem's blessing, succeed greatly in their roles—they become great generals, successful mayors, or even highly successful prime ministers. There are others who succeed in business, becoming sharp real estate agents or brilliant brokers, and so forth.

All of these are considered 'successes,' yet they are only illusions of success because, for example, if a person 'merits' to become prime minister, there could suddenly arise a diplomatic or economic crisis, and he will have to step down. Or if the general makes a failed military move or a serious mistake, he will be dismissed. If the broker makes a few wrong investments, he could collapse overnight.

All these efforts, even if a person sees success, are only imagined

—*Wellsprings of Wisdom*—

isn't a cypress tree but a coral tree with broad leaves, whose beauty lies in its

wide-spreading branches? By trying to straighten it, you've ruined it!"

**Parashat Toldot - "Educate a child according to his way."**

because they are not guaranteed at all, except for one investment. If one invests in it and succeeds, it is forever; if he fails, it is forever. This investment is called child education.

In all matters, it's okay to win or lose—it's not a big deal! If you lose today, you might win tomorrow, don't despair! But in child education, you cannot afford to lose. More precisely, it's forbidden to reach a point of loss! Rather, you must do everything in your power and fight until your last drop of strength to succeed, and cry out to Hashem for help so you don't lose this precious matter called child education.

Giving birth to children is relatively easy, and it doesn't depend so much on a person; most married couples are blessed with children, and you don't need many mystical efforts to achieve this. But how the child grows up, his standing, and his spiritual status—that requires many, many prayers to Hashem and cries to the Heavenly Throne so that, with Hashem's help, parents' door will open to properly educate their children.

'What will come of the child?' - this is the ultimate question!

Therefore, King Shlomo gives you a way to eliminate any doubts by saying: "Educate a child according to his way," and consequently, "even when he grows old, he will not depart from it."

King David, in Tehillim, compares children to small saplings, as it says: "Your children are like olive saplings" (Tehillim 128:3). Maran, Rav Ovadiah Yosef zt"l, asks why King David compares children specifically to 'saplings.' Wouldn't it have been better to compare them to mature olive trees, each of which can yield 60 or 70 kilograms of olives in a season, as opposed to an olive sapling, which provides no shade or fruit?

Rav Ovadiah explains that a sapling has one great quality: it's flexible. If you see that the sapling is leaning slightly to the right or left, you can easily straighten it by placing a stick next to it and tying it to the stick. Slowly, it will take shape, and over time it will grow straight.

**Parashat Toldot - "Educate a child according to his way."**

In other words, it is easy to straighten a sapling, but once it becomes a tree, if it grows crooked, it can no longer be straightened. If you try to force it, it might simply break.

Therefore, as long as children are like 'small saplings,' one must tend to them, nurture them, and straighten their paths, rather than waiting until they grow older and develop 'hunchbacks,' at which point it becomes difficult to correct anything.

Shlomo HaMelech teaches us a method for successful education: "Educate a child according to his way." He explains that education is not a one-size-fits-all approach but must follow the soul structure of each child. Some children understand on the first try, others only after the tenth, and some not at all.

If you start getting angry at those who don't understand, even those who are capable of understanding will stop trying because you become a "person of anger" - (*Man D'riga*).

As a teacher, you must know how to differentiate. This boy is

sharp and quick to understand, while another needs personal attention. Some need to spend many hours to grasp something, and others must put in more effort. You must feel each child and understand where his difficulty lies, and treat each one according to his soul's makeup. If you work in this way, you will 'save' them all.

A good shepherd works similarly. When he takes the flock to pasture, he first lets out the small lambs that can barely eat so that they can graze on the soft grass. Then he lets out the older sheep to graze on the medium grass, and finally, he releases the young, strong sheep that can eat the tougher grass, as they have the strength, as it says, 'like the licking of the ox.' This is how King David acted when he tended the sheep—he knew how to give the right attention to each sheep.

Maram Rav Ovadiah Yosef *z"l* says the hint here is that since among the people there are those who are very weak, they must be given priority and attended to first, then the intermediates, and the strong can be left for the end because they can 'survive.'

**Parashat Toldot - A Miracle Cure...**

Similarly, in child education at home, each child must be educated according to his way, i.e., according to his personal path. Some children are very calm, while others are hyperactive. Some are very lazy—they don't cause problems, but they just sit quietly and don't move from their chair. However, this is a disadvantage because they don't absorb what is being said to them. Another child is very sharp but cannot sit still for a moment; he jumps around like a spring. Some children are sharp, witty, and well-mannered.

King Shlomo tells you—don't think that one approach fits all. You need to understand who your child is, recognize the gifts Hashem has granted him, and what he still needs to develop, so you can maximize your success in his education.

For example, there's a child who is rude and arrogant, unwilling

to accept any criticism. If you offer him any comment, he won't speak to you for a month. Another child easily accepts criticism—if you say, 'Don't do this again!' he immediately apologizes, 'Sorry, sorry, Abba... forgive me, forgive me,' and he walks away, and after a minute, he's back to himself.

Some children don't understand what you're saying to them—they're very apathetic and behave like they've come from another world. There's a child who is always calm, never gets angry. And then there's a very aggressive child—if you even accidentally touch him, he immediately shouts and hits the one who touched him.

Therefore, you need to understand how to help your children by deeply understanding the mindset of your son or daughter and seeing how to work with them...

**A Miracle Cure...**

However, Shaul and Ruchama failed to understand everything we've written. They didn't understand that each child needs to be guided and directed according

to the way that is specifically suited for him, the path that matches the traits and tendencies buried deep within his personality.

Therefore, they failed...

**Parashat Toldot - A Miracle Cure...**

Shaul and Rochama approached their rabbi and told him about their failure. He said to them:

'To be a parent'-this is the aspiration of every Jewish man and woman. Many books have been written on this subject, and new workshops are being advertised daily.

But one must know that the foundation of 'parenting' is 'love,' and it is not enough to have love in the heart; it must be revealed through one's behavior toward the child. You need to show a cheerful face, give encouragement, and speak kind words.

This way, you can connect the hearts of the children to yours and succeed in the mission of raising children with strength and without internal conflict or strife.

However, when it's not like this (Heaven forbid), and parents think that their only role is to bring children into the world and then... let them manage on their own, grow up as they please, and do whatever they want, as long as they don't bother the parents...

Such parents cause tremendous harm to their children's souls. They shrink their children's spirits, conceal their strengths, and cover their talents...

And when they finally do make an effort to engage with their child, it's only by giving commands: 'Do this, bring me that...'

I knew several couples who, after their wedding, had many dark issues surface... Lack of communication, mistrust, fears, and many other problems, and after investigating, it turned out that the parents were to blame for all of it.

When parents do not know how to put a barrier on their mouths, speaking to their children however they wish without limits, without consideration... they end up taking the most beautiful flower in the world and turning it into a withered leaf, a passing shadow!

Therefore, if you want him ever to return to the right path, you must take responsibility-set a fixed time for yourselves, in which you will talk with him and truly show interest in him!

### Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. While there are many successes in life, such as business achievements, high-status roles, and so on, all of these accomplishments, no matter how great or significant, are nothing compared to the true success in life—raising and educating children successfully.

2. In any business, it is acceptable to profit, and even to lose. If losses occur, one can potentially make double the profit the next day. However, in the education of children, it is not advisable, and in practice, it is forbidden to accept failure. One must do everything in their power to succeed in educating their children, even to the point of self-sacrifice if necessary. Equally important is to cry out to Hashem for help in not losing this precious endeavor called "the education of children."

3. Giving birth to children is relatively easy and does not depend much on the individual. Most married couples are blessed with children, and for this, no significant efforts are required. But how the child will grow, what their standing will be, and their spiritual state—that requires a great deal of prayer to Hashem and cries to the Heavenly Throne. Only with such dedication will parents open the door to the proper education of their children. The real question is: "What will become of the child?"

4. The education one gives should not be uniform for all. Every father must recognize who his child is, understand the strengths Hashem has granted them, and know what areas still need development to achieve maximum success in their upbringing. For example, some children are proud and defiant, refusing to accept any criticism. Others are more receptive, apologizing immediately after being corrected. Some children seem indifferent, as if they're from another world, while others are easily agitated. It's crucial to understand the soul of each child, grasp their mindset, and learn how to work with them accordingly.

5. There are two main phases in a child's upbringing. The first phase is up to the age of thirteen, before the yetzer tov (good inclination) fully emerges, when "the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth." During this time, the primary educational goal is to discipline the child, train them to overcome their will and accustom them to a life aligned with Jewish values.

The second period is adolescence, the years that shape a child's spiritual future for life. During these turbulent years, the yetzer tov begins to demand that the child follow righteous paths, while the yetzer hara intensifies its efforts to lead

## Parashat Toldot - Summary and Practical Conclusions

them astray. This period can be extremely challenging, filled with many spiritual dangers. The key advice during this phase is for the child to have a dedicated educator or mentor whom they trust fully and who can guide them through these difficulties.

6. Every child is a complete individual, with intellect and emotions. Our responsibility is to guide and direct them according to the path that is especially suited to them, leading them in a way that fits their inner traits and tendencies. The great task of Jewish education has one ultimate goal, but the paths to achieving it are numerous. Thus, we must lead each child according to their unique way, educating them toward the one great goal in alignment with their individual strengths.

7. Education is not about giving orders, instructions, or commands. It is not about habituating a child to perform specific actions, nor is it about imparting information or filling their mind with

knowledge. Education is not commands, routines, or knowledge. Education is the beginning—the start of fulfilling the child's personal mission in revealing Hashem's honor in the world. Every person has a unique path in serving Hashem, and it is our role to guide the child toward their unique mission in this world.

8. To "be a parent" is the desire of every Jew. However, it is essential to know that the frustration of parenthood is love—not just the feeling of love in the heart, but expressing that love through one's relationship with the child, providing warmth, encouragement, and kind words. When parents speak to their children carelessly, without boundaries or consideration, they can turn the most beautiful flower into a withering leaf, a fleeting shadow. If you want your child to eventually return to the right path, you must take responsibility, set aside dedicated time to genuinely engage with them, and show real interest in their life.

Shabbat Shalom!



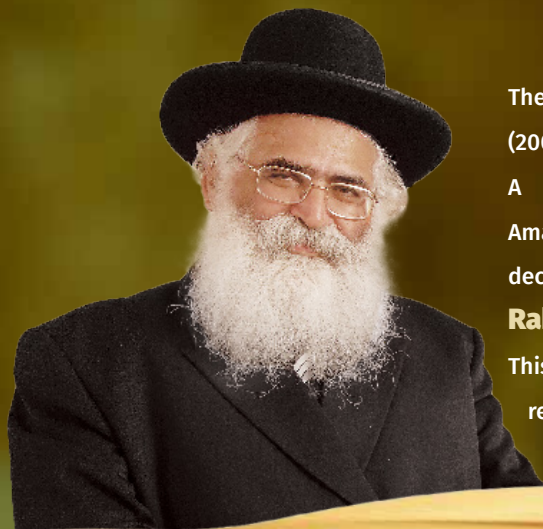
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29<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan, 5785



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:11 pm	5:14 pm	5:41 pm
Miami	5:11 pm	6:06 pm	6:41 pm
Los Angeles	4:26 pm	5:24 pm	5:56 pm
Montreal	3:55 pm	5:02 pm	5:25 pm
Toronto	4:24 pm	5:29 pm	5:54 pm
London	3:38 pm	4:52 pm	5:07 pm
Jerusalem	4:20 pm	5:10 pm	5:42 pm
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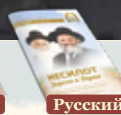
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