**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Vayeira 5784**

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**Accepting Apeasement**

**By Aharon Spetner**



***Illustration by Miri Weinreb***

Malky!” Basya said excitedly, as she ran over to her friend after the recess bell rang. “I have the best idea ever!”

“Ooooh let’s hear!” Channie said, joining them.

“You remember how Morah Esty said that her five-year-old niece is very sick in the hospital and she was very happy when Morah brought her an arts and crafts project to help her fill her day? I figured out a project we can do to help out all sick children!”

“Oh, I love it already,” Malky gushed. “Bikur cholim and a project all rolled up in one. Tell us more.”

“We’ll make coloring books for them!” Basya said, talking quickly out of excitement. “We’ll draw beautiful sketches for them to color in and make it into a real coloring book. And my Uncle Ben who prints the Toras Avigdor booklets on his big fancy printing machines, I bet he’ll print up the coloring books for free! And then we can give them out to all the children in the hospital.”

“C-c-could I help?” came a shy voice from behind them.

**The Quietest Girl in the Class**

The girls turned around to see Devorah, the quietest girl in their class standing there, blushing furiously.

“You want to help?” Basya asked, confused. Devorah had never talked to her before. She just usually spent her recess alone doing arts and crafts projects.

“Y-yeah, I like to draw. I also have a cool idea for the cover of the coloring book.”

“Um - yeah, of course, we’d love to have your help!” Basya said, quickly regaining her composure. “And maybe Morah Esty will let us work on it as a class project!”

A few minutes later, the bell rang and the girls made their way back to their classroom.

“Girls,” Morah Esty said as everyone took their seats. “Devorah stopped me on my way into the classroom and told me about this wonderful idea that she came up with for a class project.”

**“What was Devorah Thinking?”**

Basya looked up in shock. “That she came up with”?!! This was her idea, and Devorah told the teacher about it as if it were her own? As Morah Esty told everyone about the coloring book project, Basya glared over at Devorah who quickly looked away, her face bright red. What was Devorah thinking? How dare she steal her idea and call it her own?

Basya couldn’t pay attention to anything Morah Esty said for the rest of the day. All she could think about was how she came up with this amazing idea and now Devorah was taking all of the credit.

“H-h-i Basya,” Devorah said to her after the bell rang and the girls began gathering their things, but Basya was too angry at Devorah to speak with her and she stomped off and headed home

“Hi Basya, how was school?” Mommy asked as Basya walked into the kitchen

“Terrible!” Basya said angrily. “It was the worst day ever!”

“Oy, I’m so sorry to hear that! What happened?”

Basya told Mommy all about her great idea and how she was now not going to get any credit.

“Oy, I’m so sorry,” Mommy said kindly. “But I want to show you something.”

Mommy pulled out a little craft made from colorful yarn.

“A girl named Devorah from your class stopped by a few minutes ago,” Mommy said. “She told me that she was the one who told the teacher about the idea and that she was so nervous that she forgot to mention it was your idea.”

**Basya Folded Her Arms Stubbornly**

“Well, she should have corrected the teacher when she got all the credit,” replied Basya, folding her arms stubbornly.

“She said she’s terribly sorry about what happened and she wanted me to give you this.” Mommy handed Basya the yarn craft, which Basya took and looked at with a raised eyebrow.

“This?” Basya said in disgust. “She thinks some stupid arts and craft project will make things better? What am I going to do with this?”

“Well,” Mommy said slowly. “Do you think Hashem has what to do with the smell of burning animals?”

“What?” asked Basya, confused.

“Well, in last week’s Parsha it says that Hashem smelled the ‘pleasant smell’ of Noach’s korbanos and as a result said he would no longer curse the land because of aveiros. Do you think that Hashem really needs the smell of burning korbanos?”

Basya thought about this, still not sure what it had to do with anything.

“Basyaleh,” Mommy said. “It’s not about what Devorah gave you - it’s the fact that she tried to do something nice for you. Think about how Hashem saw Noach trying to do something for Him. Even though Hashem didn’t need his korban, yet Hashem still accepted his sacrifice. Don’t you think you can see that Devorah is trying to make sholom with you by giving you something that she made? Even if you don’t need it, it shows that she cares.”

Basya looked down at the braided yarn in her hand.

“Yeah I guess that makes sense. Thank you Mommy for explaining this. I should probably call Devorah and thank her - and also apologize for ignoring her earlier today.”

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

**Continued of Page 9**

**Takeaway:**

We learn from Hashem to accept any form of appeasement in order to forgive others.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5784 email of Toras Avigdor Junior, adapted on the teachings of Rabbi Avigdor Miller, zt”l.*

**The “Beauty” of Humility**

The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz, zt”l, once related that the Baal Shem Tov heard of a certain priest who “exemplified” the virtue of humility. The Baal Shem Tov had difficulty believing this, so he made the effort to meet with this priest to see for himself.

After spending some time in conversation with the priest, the Baal Shem Tov left the meeting. As he was walking away, he noticed the priest was running after him, and when he caught up, the priest asked, “What do you think of my humility?”

**The Biggest Manifestation of the**

**Priest’s Great Arrogance**

When the Baal Shem Tov heard this, he understood that while the man outwardly acted humble, it was actually the biggest manifestation of his great arrogance!

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein related a story about the humility of Rebbetzin Elyashiv, z”l, the wife of the Poseik HaDor, Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv, zt”l. She had a “child of her old age”, and she went to parent-teacher night with all the young mothers. The Rebbetzin waited patiently for her turn, even though many others waiting with her respectfully tried to let her go ahead of them, but she wouldn’t accept their offers.

When it was her turn, she went in to speak with the teacher, got a beautiful report about her daughter, and then left the room. At the end of the long evening, the teacher was finally heading home. Suddenly, she noticed Rebbetzin Elyashiv sitting patiently in the hallway, long after her meeting had been completed.

**A Surprised Morah**

“Rebbetzin,” the Morah asked, with worry on her face, “did I say anything wrong? I told you that your daughter was a wonderful and fine girl.”

With a calm smile, Rebbetzin Elyashiv responded, “How could I allow the Morah to leave such a deserted place like this at night all alone?”

The teacher was relieved and left the school with Rebbetzin Elyashiv, excitedly declaring how honored she was to be walking home with the esteemed Rebbetzin.

Rebbetzin Elyashiv, however, responded, “You can’t imagine how happy my daughter will be when I tell her that I had the honor of walking home with her Morah!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5784 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.*

**The Non-Jew’s Reward**

**for a Good Deed**



In 1942, a husband, a wife, and a small boy named Shachneh lived in Krakow. At that time, the Germans were drafting able-bodied people into work camps. Those who were strong were able to survive; children, generally, did not make it. Mr. and Mrs. Hiller had a dilemma — what to do with their little son.

They realized that their only option was to give their son to a non-Jewish family whom they knew and trusted in Krakow, named Yakovitch. On the night of November 15, 1942, Mrs. Hiller — at risk to her life — walked through the Jewish Quarter of Krakow to the non-Jewish Quarter and brought her child to her friend, Mrs. Yakovitch.

Mrs. Hiller said, “If we ever make it through the war, please return our child to us; but if we do not make it through the war, here are two letters — addressed to relatives in Montreal and Washington, DC. When this terrible war is over, please contact them and they will take Shachneh. We ask only one thing, that he be raised as a Jew.

As fate had it, the Hillers were killed in the Holocaust. Mrs. Yakovitch, a religious Catholic, raised the child as her own. After attending Mass together for a while, he learned the Hymns and became like a Christian. In 1946, Mrs. Yakovitch decided that it was time to baptize Shachneh. She took the child to the parish priest and asked him to baptize the boy. The priest wondered aloud how it was that a boy of 10-11 years old was not already baptized. He had a discussion with Mrs. Yakovitch, in which she related all the details of the story.

The priest told her she was acting improperly. The wishes of the boy’s dying family must be honored. After this discussion, Mrs. Yakovitch had second thoughts and contacted the families in North America. Finally, in June 1949, through the efforts of the Canadian Jewish Congress, this child — together with 13 other orphans from Poland — came to Canada. Ultimately, in February 1951, through a special bill signed by President Truman, the boy came to the United States, to his family in Washington, DC.

The lad grew up in the United States but kept in touch with Mrs. Yakovitch, to whom he felt sincerely indebted. He sent her letters, packages, and money. He grew up as a religious Jew. He became the vice president of a corporation, did very well for himself, and always felt a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Yakovitch.

Finally, in 1978, Mrs. Yakovitch, who was getting older, wrote a letter to him, telling him for the first time of her terrible dilemma and her initial decision to have him baptized. In that letter, she revealed the name of the parish priest who convinced her otherwise: Karol Wojtyla, more commonly known as Pope John Paul II.



The Bluzheve Rebbe (Rav Yisroel Spira; 1890-1989) said that although we are not privy to G-d’s ways, we can perhaps speculate that G-d chose to reward this young parish priest for his noble action by raising him to leadership as the Pope.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Lech Lecha 5784 email of Jack E. Rahmey as based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

**Rav Moshe Feinstein’s**

**Friday Night Davening**

**By Yoni Schwartz**



As Rav Moshe Feinstein, ZT”L, got older he was no longer able to walk back and forth to his Yeshiva, Mesivta Tiferes Jerusalem, to daven on Friday night, so he davened in Rabbi Halpern’s minyan. This was a small Friday night minyan that took place in the building attached to his.

To do this, he had to walk down a flight of stairs and up another one. Rav Moshe would attend this Minyan for a few years until he was no longer able to walk up and down the stairs. At this point, he started davening alone in his home every Friday night.

People approached Rav Moshe and asked why he wished to daven alone when they could easily have a minyan gathered at his house. Rav Moshe responded that if he were to do so and even one member of Rabbi Halpern’s small minyan left, it could harm the honor of Rabbi Halpern.

So, Rav Moshe continued to daven alone on Friday night for years to come out of concern for another Jew's honor. Rav Moshe rules in Igros Moshe that davening with a minyan is a great obligation; yet, when faced with the choice, he ruled that protecting the feelings of a fellow Jew is a greater obligation.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5784 email of Torah Sweets*

**The Benefit of “Losing” the Winning Lottery Ticket**

Rav Meilich Biderman, Shlit”a, related a story. Rav Berel Cohen, a resident of Kiryas Sanz in Netanya, once bought a lottery ticket. To his great surprise and happiness, his ticket won the lottery, and this meant that an enormous sum of money would be his. He had never been a rich person, and this new fortune would drastically change the life of his family.

Unfortunately, his good fortune lasted only for a few days. The lottery officials discovered that there had been an error in the drawing, and they had declared the wrong winner. The money was to go to someone else.

It is one thing not to win the lottery, but to actually have the winning ticket, and then be forced to give up the winnings, is very difficult, and the family took the news very hard.

**Remained Calm with His Usual Sense of Joy**

Rav Berel, however, remained calm, and he was filled with his usual sense of joy. One of his children found it difficult to understand how his father could stay so upbeat, despite the emotional waves of the experience. He asked his father, “How can you remain happy at a time like this?”

In his typical calm manner, Rav Berel answered, “Chazal teach us that if someone does something that he is Chayav Misah for, and he is sentenced to death, at times, Hashem will make this person lose all of his money and leave him poor, in exchange for this person’s life. As the Gemara says, ‘A poor person is like someone who is dead.’

“I always wondered that while this may be a good solution for someone who is rich, what about someone who is poor to begin with? What can he do? He really has nothing to lose, and there isn’t anything he can exchange in place of his life.

“Then I realized, what about me? I have nothing. I am not a rich man. If, Chas V’Shalom I am deserving of death, I have no way out! What would I do? Baruch Hashem, Hashem was very aware of my ‘problem’. Therefore, He provided me with an enormous sum of money, and He made me a very wealthy man, but only for a short time. After that, I lost it all, and I am poor again. Baruch Hashem, now I can live!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5784 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.*

**Despite the Birds**

**By Aharon Spetner**



**Illustrated by Miri Weinreb**

**Continued from page 3 of this week’s email**

“Okay,” Basya said as her friends arrived at her house carrying stacks of papers. “Let’s see what everyone made!”

Basya led her friends into the dining room where they laid out all of the pictures they had drawn for the coloring books that they were going to distribute to all of the sick children in the hospital.

“These are amazing!” gushed Basya. “Look at this one! The crocodile looks like it is jumping out of the paper! Who drew this?”

“I did,” Devorah said shyly.

“I’m so glad you joined the project, Devorah,” Basya said warmly, looking at another one of Devorah’s drawings. “Your art is really professional.”

Devorah blushed at the compliments.

“Basya, where are your drawings?” asked Malky.

“Right here,” Basya said, opening a folder containing more sheets of paper. “I hope the kids in the hospital enjoy coloring them in,” Basya said, gathering up all of the papers and placing them neatly inside her folder. “Come let’s go to my uncle’s print shop. He said he can print it today.”

As the girls walked, they couldn’t stop talking about how much the children in the hospital were going to enjoy their coloring books. It felt so good to be able to do such a big chessed.

**Walking into the Print Shop**

“Hi Uncle Ben!” Basya said as they walked into the print shop.

“Hi Basya,” Uncle Ben said, looking up from the big machine he was working with. “Are you guys ready to go to print?”

“We sure are! Thank you so much for agreeing to print this for free!”

“It’s my pleasure,” smiled Uncle Ben. “Let’s see what we have.”

Basya handed Uncle Ben the papers, which he then fed into his massive scanner. The girls watched as the scanner gobbled up each page and spit them out in a neat pile. “When should we come back to pick up the coloring books?” Basya asked.

“How about in five minutes?” smiled Uncle Ben.

“Five minutes?” Basya asked, astonished. “You can print it that quickly?”

“See for yourself,” Uncle Ben grinned, pointing at a massive printing machine that was spitting out the finished coloring books at an incredible pace.

“Unreal,” breathed Malky. “It’s like magic!”

“Thanks Uncle Ben!” said Basya a few minutes later as they carried the huge stacks of coloring books out of the shop

**Stopped by a Group of Police Officers.**

Later that day the girls arrived at the hospital full of excitement, but when they reached the entrance, they were stopped by a group of police officers.

“Excuse me, what are you carrying?” one of the officers asked.

“These are coloring books which we made for the sick children,” Basya said brightly.

“I’m sorry,” the officer replied. “We can’t allow you to bring unauthorized reading material into the hospital.”

“What?” asked Basya, confused. “Why not?”

“It’s a new regulation from the New York Department of Education. All reading material must be approved by the state before being distributed to children.”

“But it’s not reading material,” protested Channie. “These are coloring books.”

“I see words on the cover,” another officer said. “And if I’m not mistaken, words are meant to be read.” The other officers nodded in agreement.

“What? That’s ridiculous!” Malky said.

“I’m sorry, but the law is the law,” the first officer said firmly.

With tears in their eyes, Basya and her friends hurried to the parking lot, where Totty was parking the car.

**How Could Hashem Let this Happen?**

“Totty, it’s not fair!” Basya sobbed, as she told him what happened. “I don’t understand! We are trying to do such a big mitzvah and everything was going so well - how could Hashem let this happen?”

“Well Basya,” Totty said. “I can’t tell you why Hashem does what He does. But I can tell you one thing. In this week’s Parsha, Hashem made a ‘bris’ with Avraham Avinu, the Bris Bein Habesarim, where He told Avraham to cut animals and Avraham walked between the pieces, and the shechinah passed between them as well. “A treaty, an agreement, with Hashem! Can you imagine anything better than that? And then what happens next? The Torah tells us that birds came to eat the meat and Avraham Avinu had to spend the whole day chasing them away! Why did Hashem do that?

“And the answer is, that the Torah is teaching us that just because you are doing the right thing and things are going well, you still have to watch out for the Satan, who will try to cause problems. We are never able to sit back and relax and assume everything is going to be okay. Life is about constant avodah, constant work, to make sure that our mitzvos are done properly.”

“So, what are we supposed to do now?” Basya asked.

**Connections with Those in Government**

“I guess we need to do more hishtadlus,” Totty said, pulling out his phone. “I’ll call Anshel Holtzbacher. He has connections in the government. I’m sure he can help us.”

Five minutes later, Totty walked with the girls back to the hospital entrance.

“Oh, hi girls,” said the policeman who had stopped them earlier. “We were just told that your coloring books have been approved. Have fun distributing them to the children!”

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

**Takeaway:**

Doing mitzvos and getting close to Hashem does not come easy, problems will always crop up, but we learn from Avraham and push forward anyway.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5784 email of Toras Avigdor Junior, adapted on the teachings of Rabbi Avigdor Miller, zt”l.*

**The Son-in-Law’s**

**Marriage Advice**

**By Nissan Mindel**

In the year 1648 the Jewish people were overtaken by terrible and overwhelming tragedy. In that black year the Ukrainian Cossack Bogdan Chmielnicki and his vicious hordes rampaged through the countryside murdering and pillaging the unfortunate Jewish villages in their wake.

A young girl was living in a small Polish village together with her widowed mother and small brothers and sisters at the time of great upheaval. When word spread of the approach of the murderers, the Jews fled wherever they could; this girl was separated from her family. She wandered the countryside with a group of destitute Jews, begging for food.

**The Wife of the Shelter Manager**

After some weeks of wandering, the group of refugees came to Vilna where they found a community shelter. The wife of the shelter manager took a special liking to the girl and offered to help her establish herself in Vilna, reasoning that in a large city, she would more easily find her family.

The girl, for her part, was grateful for the woman’s friendship, and when she was offered a job in a Jewish house, she accepted happily. “My son-in-law,” explained the lady of the house, “is a great Torah scholar and studies every night until midnight, at which time he is served his dinner. Up until now my daughter and I have had the honor of serving him, but it is difficult for us to keep such late hours and also manage the house during the day. You will have the duty and privilege of serving my son-in-law.” The girl accepted the job happily.

**Tears Suddenly Began to Flow**

The first night as she sat outside the door of the scholar, listening to the haunting sing-song melodies of the Talmud, the girl was transported back many years. It was as if she was listening to her father’s voice rehearsing the ancient texts in just the same melodious voice. With these memories filling her mind, tears suddenly began to flow down her cheeks, as she sobbed quietly.

A moment later the door opened and in an annoyed tone of voice the young man said to her, “Please stop that noise. You are disturbing my concentration.” Frightened to lose her job, the girl was quieted at once.

The following night as she sat by the closed door listening to the ancient melodies, the girl was again moved to tears, and she couldn’t control her weeping. When the young scholar opened the door, he saw at once that something serious was grieving the girl. His patient questions yielded from the girl an account of her sad tale. She told him about her beloved father, Meir who had passed away many years ago and about her mother and siblings lost in the terrible upheaval. She also told him about her older brother who had been sent away to study after his bar-mitzvah and whom she had never seen again.

**Her Long-Lost Brother**

The young man, Rabbi Shabetai Cohen, (later known as the ShACh), quickly realized that he knew the girl’s family and the whereabouts of one of her relatives, for he, in fact, was her long-lost brother. He did not disclose this information to her, though, for he had his reasons for withholding that wonderful news. Meanwhile, things continued as before, except that Rabbi Shabetai requested that the girl be relieved of her duties, remaining in the house with the status of a family-member.

About half a year later, the lady of the house took ill and the girl took upon herself the care of the invalid as well as assuming most of the household responsibilities. The illness was a prolonged one, and finally the lady passed away, deeply mourned by the whole family.

Not too long passed before matchmakers approached the wealthy widower with suggestions of matches. Uncertain about what to do, the widower consulted his learned son-in-law. Rabbi Shabetai replied that he should postpone any action in the matter, and should wait another year.

**The Best and Most Suitable Match**

After a year passed the marriage brokers returned, and the widower consulted his son-in-law again. This time he offered this advice: “Disregard all the suggestions of the matchmakers, for the best and most suitable match is right here, the young woman you have ‘adopted’ into your family. Set the earliest possible date for the marriage. After the chupa I will tell you the true identity of the girl.”

The young woman was happy and honored to accept the proposal, and the marriage was celebrated joyously. Rabbi Shabetai now revealed to his father-in-law that his bride was none other than his own long-lost sister. He added: “As a wedding gift, I promise that you will be blessed with a son. You will name him Meir, after my saintly father, and he will enlighten the Jewish world with his Torah knowledge and wisdom.”

This indeed came to pass.

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