

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION
IN MEMORY OF CLARA CHOPP A"H

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

CHODESH KISLEIV

Joey & Pamela Sakkal

PARSHAS VAYEITZEI
YAAKOV THE REDEEMER

PARSHA SPONSOR

לעילוי נשמות

הרה"ח ר' יהונתן בנימין ב"ר משה אליהו ע"ה

עסטרייכער

נפטר ו' כסלו תשע"ה לפ"ק

IN MEMORY OF CLARA CHOPP A"ח

חיה ריזל בת ר' מרדכי ע"ה

v. Hi
m-m. my
n- name
i- is
s-s. Shlome

Stuttering? Cluttering?
Stammering?
Tried everything?
DON'T GIVE UP!

**At Dr. Fluency we help you
actually achieve fluency!**

WHAT SETS US APART?

- Tech-enabled, voice recognition-powered speech practice.
- 1000s of Success Stories
- Clinically Backed Worldwide
- Winner of Israel's Prime Minister Award

The Dr. Fluency program combines Hi-Tech and therapy using a method no one else can offer—built for real, lasting results. **See 100s of graduates speaking fluently at Graduations on our website!**



THE *Dr. Fluency* INSTITUTE

Stuttering?

The words are there. let them **Flow.**



Hi
my name is Shlome
thank you Dr. Fluency.

drfluencyusa.com
1-516-284-0199

Call for a **\$450 FREE** Evaluation
/ **Demonstration**
(With no commitment what-so-ever)

Dr. Fluency Where Fluent Speech is Within Reach!

*Get Life
Insurance Today.*

DO IT FOR YOUR CHILDREN.
No, we are not Life Insurance Brokers.

 **BseferChayim.org**

LESS THAN \$1 A DAY

PARSHAS VAYEITZEI

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

YAAKOV THE REDEEMER

CONTENTS:

Part I. The Founders - 3

Part II. The Builders - 7

Part III. The Thinking Builders - 12

Part I. The Founders

Who Redeemed Avraham?

In Mesichta Sanhedrin (19b) the Gemara quotes a *posshuk* from Yeshayah that sheds light on the entire life story of our father Yaakov Avinu. Yeshayah is saying a *nevuah* and he introduces it as follows: כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֵל בֵּית יַעֲקֹב – So said Hashem to the house of Yaakov, אֲשֶׁר פָּדָה אֶת אַבְרָהָם – Who redeemed Avraham (29:22). And for now, we'll study just these opening words.

The plain meaning is, 'Who is this Hashem that is speaking to the house of Yaakov? It's the Hashem Who redeemed Avraham.' That's the *poshut pshat*. But the Chachomim gave it a twist to mean something in addition to that, that it was Yaakov who redeemed Avraham. כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֵל בֵּית יַעֲקֹב – So spoke Hashem to the house of Yaakov. And who is Yaakov? The one אֲשֶׁר פָּדָה אֶת אַבְרָהָם, who redeemed Avraham.

Now, that would be an interesting story to hear. Yaakov saved Avraham? We never heard such a thing. The truth is, although we're sure there were many, we're not told in the Torah of any interaction between Yaakov and his *zeide* Avraham. Especially such a story, where Yaakov saved Avraham from someone, or something, we never heard anything about that. And so the Gemara asks, **וְכִי הֵיכֵן מְצִינוּ בְּיַעֲקֹב שְׁפָדָה אֶת אַבְרָהָם** – *Where do we find such a case that Yaakov redeemed Avraham?* There's no such story in the Torah that we know of.

Redeemed from Distress

So the Gemara tells us what it means. **אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה שְׁפָדָאוּ מְצַעַר גִּידוּל בָּנִים** – *Rav Yehuda says that Yaakov redeemed Avraham Avinu from the distress of raising children.*

Now, this *maamar* requires explanation, and we'll try now to understand it at least superficially. But even the little bit we'll speak about now, will provide a new clarity in understanding our *sedra* and the story of the Avos in general.

And so we'll begin from Avraham Avinu. **וְה' בֵּרַךְ אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכֹל** – *Avraham was blessed by Hashem in everything* (Bereishis 24:1). It is a remarkable aspect of this great man's history that he was always wealthy. When he came to Eretz Canaan at the command of Hashem, he already had a retinue; **וְאֵת הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן**. Besides for admirers who came along with him, he had servants and cattle; **וְאֵת כָּל רְכוּשָׁם** – He had already acquired a tremendous amount of wealth.

And when he went down to Mitzrayim shortly thereafter, he gained even more. After the episode of Pharaoh seeking to take Sarah, Avraham was sent away with even more wealth; **וַיְהִי לוֹ צֹאן וּבָקָר וְחֲמֹרִים וְעֶבְדִּים וְשִׁפְחוֹת**; **וְאֵתנָת וּגְמָלִים**. He became a very rich man and as his life progressed so did his wealth. He became **כְּבֹד מְאֹד**, very heavy with possessions.

Lives of Leisure

We see the same in the history of his son Yitzchak. Yitzchak was born into the wealth of his father's property, but it increased under his supervision. Whatever Avraham had when he passed away, **וַיִּתֵּן אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר**, **לוֹ לְיִצְחָק** – he gave everything to Yitzchak and Yitzchak increased the property. We know that when he went into agriculture, **וַיִּמְצָא בְּשָׂנְהָ הֵהוּא**, **מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים** – *he found a hundred times as much as others did in their crops*. He was extraordinarily successful. He became much wealthier than his father had been, and that's saying a lot. It's a remarkable story.

Now, you can be sure that they didn't do much menial work, these two great men. They had slaves, many servants. That we see again and again in the *pessukim* that they had people who were willing to do things for them.

And so we see it was the plan of Hakadosh Baruch Hu that the first two fathers of the Jewish nation should spend their lives in affluence, in leisure. It's not an accident. And it's not merely to make them appear better to us, because to the Jewish people, wealth is not the ultimate ideal. Yes, we have wealthy Jews and they're important for our nation but we know that there's a higher ideal of the *eved Hashem* who is willing to forgo all the luxuries of life and to serve Hashem anonymously and in poverty too. We had great men who succeeded in becoming great *avdei Hashem* in the midst of poverty. And therefore we must understand that there was a purpose that Hakadosh Baruch Hu had in making the first two fathers of our nation extremely wealthy all their lives.

A Life of Struggle

Now, the question is made even stronger when we see that in the case of the grandson and son Yaakov, it wasn't so. Because we see that at the beginning of his career of independence, when he left home to find a wife, he had nothing. The clothing on his back and a walking stick, that's all he had.

Yes, he had many years that he spent in the wealthy home of his father, but when he went out on his own, he found himself in totally opposite circumstances. He was flat broke and had to get busy doing menial work. And that's what we're told most about Yaakov Avinu, that he toiled in difficult physical labor for many years. For twenty years he slaved for Lavan day and night. Day and night! He describes it in his own words. *הַיְיַתִּי בַיּוֹם אֶכְלֵנִי הַחֵרֶב וְקָרַח בַּלַּיְלָה* - *The heat consumed me by day and the frost at night, וַתִּגְדַּר שְׁנַתִּי מֵעֵינַי* - *and I banished sleep from my eyes (ibid. 31:40).*

Now that's a remarkable thing. It's entirely unlike the biographies of his father and his grandfather and we have to understand: what was the reason that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made things turn out so? In our great history nothing is accidental. Especially in the lives of the founders of our nation, every detail is fraught with great significance. Every *prat* that the Torah relates about our forefathers, *ma'aseh avos*, is a *siman l'banim*, and therefore something as significant as this must be a symbol of great lessons.

Now who am I to give interpretations? But we have a right to attempt to understand what was taking place here. Why was there such a big

difference between the life stories of Avraham and Yitzchak and the life story of Yaakov Avinu?

Avraham's Career

Now, if we had to give an answer in one sentence we'd say that Avraham and Yitzchok were tasked with founding the *ideology* of the nation. This we know from the teaching of the Rambam. At the beginning of *Hilchos Avodah Zarah* in the *Yad Hachazakah* the Rambam describes the career of Avraham Avinu. It was a career of a philosopher, of a man who spent his life in thinking. Avraham studied the world, and from nature and from history, from the physical world, he discovered Hashem and the principles of living according to His will. Avraham spent his time in meditation. Our great forefather used his head all the days of his life to ponder, to reflect, to contemplate and to think. That was his career.

And he lectured too. He spoke to his guests and also 'וּיְקָרָא בְּשֵׁם ה' he called together people and held public lectures, speaking about all the great verities, the truths of the world. And that made his mind even greater. Like the Mishnah says וּמִתְלַמְּדֵי יוֹתֵר מִבָּלָם – *by teaching others, the teacher himself gains most*. Wherever he went, he was constantly explaining, convincing. He had to argue with people who were not convinced, and he had to bring examples to them, facts of nature and from history, and gradually he built up a great system of all of the basic ideals and principles, the foundational *hashkafa* of the Am Yisroel was developed in his great mind.

Avraham Avinu started many beautiful things that we live with because of him. He introduced many beautiful things into the bloodstream of our nation, only that today we don't recognize where it came from anymore. Actually, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave the Torah, to a big extent, He was corroborating what Avraham had already said, many principles that he put into practice already.

Like Father, Like Son

Now we know that Yitzchak followed in his father's footsteps. He continued his father's system and he became very great by means of the opportunity that wealth offered him. If you remember that *possuk* when Rivkah was coming from Padan Aram to be married to Yitzchak and she saw a man walking in the field – וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׂוּחַ בַּשָּׂדֶה. It's a mysterious *possuk*—'Yitzchak went out to speak in the fields.' You might think he went out to spend a little time with his friends, talking things over, chatting. No, no. Yitzchak didn't chat.

Now, the Gemara (Brachos 26b) learns from this that he was the one who instituted *tefillas Minchah*. But it doesn't mean only *Minchah*—he didn't go out merely to *chap arein ah Minchah*. Yitzchak was 'talking in the field', but it was a purposeful talking; he was talking to Hashem, or talking to himself, or talking to his *talmidim*.

Not that one day; that was his practice all the time. He went out in the fields and he meditated and spoke every day. And he was able to do it because he didn't have to work. Yitzchak was wealthier than his father Avraham, and so he spent his life in meditation, in talking. Of course, it wasn't easy. It was work too. You know, if we went out to the fields to meditate on Hashem, on Torah principles, so someone would find us sleeping in the grass, snoring away. But these two men had great minds, and they had the wealth that afforded them the opportunity to use their minds to the fullest.

Money is Time

And so, wealth, for these two great men, was an opportunity. Because the Gemara says *עֲנִי הַשׁוֹבֵב כְּמֵת* – *a poor man is like a meis* (Avodah Zarah 5a). A poor man is a slave. He has to sweat to earn his bread. He comes home dead tired at night and he falls into bed out of his weariness. He doesn't have a head to think about things. But men who are blessed with leisure—wealth gives leisure—they can accomplish great things in their minds.

Like the Chafetz Chaim used to say, he said, "You Americans say time is money, but we say: money is time." Money means time— a wealthy person has time, and if he's wise, he's able to make use of it.

And that's what Avraham and Yitzchak did—they spent their lives thinking, meditating and discussing. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu blessed them with the opportunity to continue that way all the days of their lives because that's what He wanted from them. That's why Avraham and Yitzchak, as their lives progressed, they became wealthier and wealthier. They had even more time than before, and with that time, they were able to ponder and think and study and thereby establish the ideals and principles that became the foundation of our nation.

Part II. The Builders

Yaakov the Laborer

Now, Yaakov however, he was a different story. He had a different role; he was a different kind of builder. Because what was Yaakov laboring for?

Why was he working so hard? What was the purpose? The answer is to *build a family!* Most of what we know about Yaakov Avinu, we know from the *sedras* that talk about the time he spent with Lavan. And he spent the time there for one purpose—in order to gain a family.

Look what Yaakov said. He said to Lavan, “זֶה לִי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּבֵיתְךָ – *I have been twenty years in your house*, עֲבַדְתִּיךָ אַרְבַּע עֲשָׂרָה בְּשָׂנֵי בְנֹתֶיךָ – *I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters.*”

Imagine a man wants to get married and the *shver* tells him, “Work for seven years and then I’ll let you take her out.”

“Forget about it,” you’d say. “Keep your merchandise.”

Building a Family

But Yaakov Avinu knew what it was about. He had a *tafkid* now, to build a family. And therefore for fourteen years he labored—hard labor—to earn those glorious wives that would be the mothers of the Jewish people!

Then he had to work six more years to support the little children. Lavan was an old time *shver*—he didn’t support Yaakov. No *kest*. He took his son-in-law into the business and put him to work. And so Yaakov Avinu spent the best years of his life laboring for his family. When he left Lavan, he was already an old man, and not much is left to tell about him in later *sedras*. It means his main accomplishment in life was spent in raising a family.

Now, I’m sure in these twenty years, he was also meditating on the teachings of his father’s house. Yaakov Avinu received the teachings from his great fathers and he certainly spent time learning in his parents’ home and also in Shem v’Ever. He had an extremely great mind and there’s no question that during the time he worked, he was *mechadesh chiddushim*—he added to the teachings of Avraham and Yitzchok. But nothing is said about that! The Torah concentrates only on the great task of toiling to get his wives and to support his large family.

Building our Foundation

And that’s because there are two kinds of achievement that the founders of our nation had to achieve. One was the greatness of ideology, of understanding the world, of establishing and developing the principles of *emunah*; to come close to Hashem, to make contact with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and to see His ways in the world, to see His kindness and wisdom.

That's a very great function, a very important part of the nation. It's the foundation of our people and we needed great thinking minds to do that. And so Hashem said, "To have such original minds, minds that will think along these lines and discover all the secrets of the universe, so how can I have these minds taken up with other things? I want it to be a free mind."

That's why for so many years Avraham Avinu didn't have any children. Of course, he wanted children very much. But because he was such a great and original mind, Hashem said, "I'll leave him alone for now." When he was a hundred years old, then Yitzchak was born. He had Yishmael before that, but it was one child; he wasn't occupied with *tzaar gidul banim*. He had the freedom to build an ideology.

On Avraham's Shoulders

And Yitzchok, same thing. Yitzchok took all the studies of his great father, and he built on them. The Medrash states that Yitzchok was a bigger *chochom* than Avraham. You hear that? The Medrash says that. But he was only a bigger *chochom* because he was sitting on Avraham's shoulders, **הַנָּנִים עַל גְּבֵי עֶקֶק**, like a dwarf on the shoulder of a giant. If a little man sits on your shoulders, so he's bigger than you only because you're underneath. Avraham made Yitzchok great, but Yitzchok took all of his father's teachings and enlarged them.

And so, Yitzchok too, was needed for building the foundation of the Am Yisroel and therefore Hashem didn't bother him much with children. He had a small family. He had wealth. He didn't have to labor. Instead he was busy all the time walking in the fields, thinking and talking. **הָרַר כְּבוֹד ה' הוֹדֵד וְרִבְרִי נִפְלְאוֹתַי אֲשִׁיחָה** – *The glorious majesty of Your splendor and Your wondrous deeds I will speak about* (Tehillim 145:5). **אֲשִׁיחָה** – *I'll speak about it*. That's what Yitzchok did: **לְשׁוֹחַ בְּשֵׁרָה** – *He was thinking and talking to himself, developing and growing*.

And it was done for us. Someone had to do the hard work of developing the ideals of our people. And so, we are forever indebted to Avraham and Yitzchak because they gave their lives to establish the ideology of the Jewish people with which we live today.

Building People

But there's another aspect that a nation needs—a very important matter still remains, and that's the matter of having a nation. It's not enough for you to be a philosopher or even a great Torah thinker, and you're sitting in your *beis hamedrash* all by yourself, and you're writing

seforim and you're thinking noble thoughts. That's good, but it's not everything. A nation needs families. A nation needs families to live out those principles, to live that ideology in the world.

And that's what Yaakov did. Hashem said, "Since your fathers already worked out all the great truths of life, the two *avos* discovered all the great secrets of life, now you get busy raising children." And that's what Yaakov was occupied with; raising a family. Not that Yaakov was devoid of greatness of the mind, but while his forefathers never had to interrupt their studies, Yaakov was forced for twenty years to work very hard. He was busy on the second aspect; he was making the Jewish nation, and that took up his life.

In those days, you didn't work nine to five. Even in my days, I remember as a boy, you didn't work nine to five. All the stores were open six o'clock in the morning. All the stores. The grocery store was open at six o'clock in the morning and it closed twelve o'clock at night. No exaggeration. Six in the morning to twelve at night.

And workmen worked every day in the week except Sunday in America. Saturday all day long. You had to work all day Saturday; otherwise no job, no *parmassah*. That's why it was so hard to be a *shomer Shabbos* in the olden days when immigrants came here. Unless you became an organ grinder. I know an old Jew who became an organ grinder; he bought a monkey and a little hand organ and he was a *shomer Shabbos* all his life. It wasn't easy, however, to be a *shomer Shabbos* in the olden days because you had to work all day, every day.

Busy Parents

And so Yaakov labored day and night. Not only in the fields. He and his wives were very busy in the house raising the children. You know what it means to bring up a boy? Yaakov had a houseful of boys. Don't think it was easy raising those boys. They weren't born old men with beards. They were born boys. They were climbing on the tables. No question—they were boys after all.

A boy is a *mazik*, a *sheid*. He breaks windows. Girls are a handful too, but a boy makes *real* trouble. No matter what the feminists tell you. They'll try to persuade you that girls are the same as boys but it's only false persuasion. It's not so. Anybody who raises children knows that boys are *mazikim*. And a woman who raises a houseful of boys knows that boys are troublemakers. No question about it.

And when the *shevatim* became bigger, so bigger boys make bigger *tzaar gidul banim*. You think it was a small *tzaar* what he had with Reuven, the episode of Reuven and Yaakov's maidservant Bilhah? That was some trouble—Yaakov Avinu went through a lot with his children.

Even when he came home to Eretz Canaan. That's when the real trouble began, when he came back home. The story of Dinah. The story of Yosef Hatzaddik going lost—he mourned many years for him. And then the story of Binyamin, of maybe losing Binyamin. And much more is not told in the Torah. Only a minimum part is related in the Torah.

Redeeming the Avos

So we come back now to our *possuk* and the Gemara in Sanhedrin. “Who is Yaakov?” the *navi* said. “He’s the one who redeemed Avraham.” שֶׁפָּדָאוּ מִצָּעָר גִּידוּל בְּנִים – *He redeemed him from the distress of raising up children*. He was the one given the role of building the family that became the Am Yisroel and he freed Avraham to have the leisure to build the foundation for the family.

Of course, when we say Yaakov here, it means Yaakov and his wives. Absolutely. They were one unit that together בָּנוּ אֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. Together they took over the function of raising a family, of raising the Jewish nation. Besides for being a greatness in its own right, it also redeemed Avraham and Yitzchak and allowed them be free to meditate and to discover all the great truths of the world, the secrets of the universe, the *darkei Hashem ba’olam*.

No Shame

וְהִינוּ דְּבִתִּיב – *And that's what it's written, יְבוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב, – ‘And now Yaakov will not be put to shame, וְלֹא עֲתָה פָּנָיו יִחְוָר, – and now his face won't turn pale’ (Yeshaya 29:22).*

And the Gemara explains. What does it mean he won't be put to shame? מֵאָבִיו – Yaakov won't be ashamed because of his father. Why would he be ashamed of his father? It means that when Yaakov will be confronted by the achievements of his father, the philosophy of his father, the meditations of his father, the *chiddushim* of his father, so you might think Yaakov will be put to shame. He didn't find so many original ideas as his father did. How could he accomplish in thinking as much as Avraham and Yitzchok? He couldn't. Impossible. He didn't have the time to do it. So maybe Yaakov in the Next World, when he comes to face his father, he'll be embarrassed? No! “And now Yaakov will not be put to shame before Yitzchok.”

“And his face won't turn pale when he has to confront his father's father.” Maybe when Yaakov has to confront Avraham, he'll be embarrassed. Avraham was a man who discovered everything. Like the Rambam says, **נַעֲשׂוּ שְׁתֵּי בְּלִיּוֹתַי כְּשְׁתֵּי רַבָּנִים** – his two kidneys became like two teachers and he was inspired with instruction and *chiddushim* and discoveries and knowledge. Avraham was a man who was like we say in Yiddish, ‘iz *gelegen in lernen*’—he was busy thinking day and night and studying the *Toras Hashem* that you could see in the universe. And now Yaakov has to face his grandfather without a lot of that greatness.

A Job Well Done

He's ashamed? No. **וְלֹא עָתָה פָּנָיו יִחְזָרוּ** – *And now, in the Next World, Yaakov's won't turn pale.* He won't be ashamed **כִּי בְּרֵאתוֹ יִלְדֵינוּ מַעֲשֵׂה יְרֵי בְּקֶרְבוֹ** – *when we'll see his children that I created in his midst.* Oh! The children! When we'll see the children of Yaakov and his wives then they won't have anything to be ashamed about, because they were doing their end of the job. They didn't have that much time to become great in other ways, but they were busy on the second aspect, making the Jewish nation.

They were the ones who finally created the Jewish nation. They trained their boys. Yaakov got angry at them – **אָרַר אֲפָם כִּי עָזוּ**. He rebuked them. Yaakov and his wives trained their children; they chastised them and taught them *derech erez* and the ideology that Avraham and Yitzchok had developed. It took hard work to bring them up.

You know, Eisav also had children but he didn't *bring up* a family. They grew up—like bushes grow up wild, that's how they grew up. Maybe he taught them some things. He taught them to *mal* themselves, ok. But he didn't toil in raising them to be the nation of Hashem. Yaakov and the Imahos toiled! They worked in the home and outside the home and they made their children into the fathers of great tribes, the ones who actually made our nation. **כִּרְחֵל וְלֹאָה אֲשֶׁר בְּנוּ שְׁתֵּיהֶם אֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל** – Yaakov and his wives, they were the ones who created the *Am Hashem* that took over all the great teachings of the Avos and were ready at Har Sinai to continue with *kabalas haTorah*.

Part III. The Thinking Builders

Toiling in Vain

Now, when we speak about the toil of a mother and father—working in the house with the children, taking care of the home, working outside

the home in the office or the factory, whatever it is—we have to take some time in order to appreciate that subject properly. Because even something as great as the accomplishment of raising a family, of toiling in order to build the nation of Hashem, if it's missing a certain ingredient then to a great extent all of that work is for naught.

We have to read the words of the Chovos Halevavos to understand what we're going to talk about now. It's at the end of *Shaar Yichud Hamaaseh* and he says there, וְיִשְׁתַּדֵּל בְּכָל כּוֹחֶיךָ – *You should attempt with all your strength*, לְזַכֵּךְ מִמַּעֲשֶׂיךָ – *to make your deeds pure*. It means *l'shem Shamayim*. Whatever you do, you should do it for the purpose of serving Hashem and doing His will. שְׁלֵא יִהְיוּ עֲנִינֶיךָ לְרִיק – *Otherwise you'll toil in all your labors for nothing. Larik!* Because if a person doesn't have intention in whatever he does for the purpose of serving Hashem then his work, his deeds, are thrown out and wasted. And that's one of the great tragedies of life—to come to the Next World and to find out that so much of your hard work was for nothing.

Prisoner With a Purpose

Now, I once told the story here of a man who was a prisoner and he was very bored—all day sitting in his cell doing nothing. And so finally he told the jailer, “I'm going out of my mind. I'm going to die of boredom. Please give me something useful to do.”

And so they installed a wheel in his cell with wires that ran under the cell door and they told him that he should get busy turning this wheel. “You turn the wheel like this,” they showed him, “and it produces power for a plant down on the other side of the prison that makes stockings—it causes power to make a stocking machine work.”

Oh! He had a purpose in life now; he wasn't wasting his days. He didn't wear the stockings himself, but at least he was doing something useful—because of him, stockings were being brought into the world. Feet were being warmed! And so he got busy turning the wheel. Sometimes he even got up early in the morning to work extra, or he remained at the wheel later at night. He took away from his sleep because it made him happy.

That's what the Gemara says in one place. גְּדוּלָה מְלֵאכָה – *Work is a great thing*. Now, when the Gemara says גְּדוּלָה it doesn't mean it's a ‘good’ thing. It means it's a very good thing. *Gedolah melachah!* That's how to say it. How great is work! And why? שְׁמַכְבֵּדָתָא אֶת בְּעַלְיָה – *Because it honors you*. You're transformed when you work. Here's a man at work. He doesn't have a grin on his face. He's not acting silly. He's not talking foolish things. Work brings out the best of his character. He's serious. He's intent. He's

intelligent. He's businesslike. He's responsible. He doesn't want to fool around. Work makes something out of a person because you know that you're doing, building, accomplishing.

Spinning Your Wheel

And so we'll come back now to the end of the story, of the prisoner who was finally accomplishing something with his life. He's been turning the wheel now for thirty years. And despite the prison pallor, he has a little bit of redness in his cheeks. He has some optimism. He's more healthy in his body and his mind because he feels he's living for a purpose. Every day, he dutifully turns that wheel and he's happy.

Finally, one day he became curious to see what's doing in that factory, what the results are. So he asked the guard if he could take him to the other side of the prison to see the stockings factory. But the guard is too lazy; he won't take him. So he saves up from his food every day until he has a sizable stockpile; he denies himself food for a long time and then he bribes the guard to take him.

So the guard takes him out of his cell and they follow the wire down the hallway to the door that leads out into the yard. And when the guard opened the door the prisoner sees that the wheel was connected to nothing at all. It's just a wheel that connects to nothing. And the man collapsed. His life was wasted.

Don't Spin Your Wheels

Now, we have to know that this doesn't apply only to him. It applies to others too. It applies to most of mankind. Their lives are wasted. Certainly, *gedolah melachah*; certainly, the work that a person does rescues him from boredom. It preserves his sanity. There's no question that a busy mother and a busy father have no time to be depressed, to fall prey to all kinds of illnesses, including depression. They have less time for these things.

And so, absolutely, the mother working at home and the father working in the factory benefit even if they don't activate their minds. However, despite all the blessings bestowed by being busy with raising a family, if it's not done *l'shem Shamayim* then it's לַמַּעַן לֹא נִיגַע לְרִיק וְלֹא נִדָּר לְבַהֲלָה. It's thrown out.

A great tragedy! A life spent in vain! They're working hard making a living, and also raising children. But it's a great pity on them because it could be that all of their work, as much as it was a benefit to them in this world, they might *chas v'shalom* find out one day that the wheel they

were turning wasn't attached to anything—it wasn't connected to the Next World.

Building With Purpose

Because what did our great ancestors do? **בְּרַחֵל וּבְלֵאָה אָשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׂתֵימָהּ** – **אֵת בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל** – They built with the intention of building up the house of Yisroel. Together with Yaakov, they were building a nation. And they kept that in mind always. When Yaakov Avinu was tending the sheep of Lavan, he was thinking about that. When Rochel and Leah were changing the diapers on the children, they were thinking. They had no other thought in mind but **לְהַעֲמִיר אֹמָה עֹבְרַת אֶת ה'** – to raise up a nation that would live according to all the ideals that Avraham and Yitzchok had spent their lives working on.

Of course Hashem will reward everybody. **אֵין הַקְּרוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְקַפֵּחַ שָׂכָר** – **כֹּל בְּרִיָּה** – He won't deny the rewards of anybody. Any *frum* man and woman raising a *frum* family are already successful. But you have lost most of the benefit if you didn't have the intention *l'shem Shamayim*—if the wheel wasn't connected to anything.

Background Noise

Now, we're only human beings and we can't be perfect in this, but it's important that it should always be a thought fluttering in our minds that I'm doing all this **לְהַעֲמִיר אֹמָה עֹבְרַת אֶת ה'**. Always it should be in the background. And whenever possible, bring it to the forefront of our thoughts—that's how you prop up the background noise.

So here's a man on the subway, he's going into Manhattan to work. It's Monday; another long week in the office ahead of him. So while he's holding onto the strap, he should think for one minute. "I'm like Yaakov Avinu. I'm laboring for the greatest purpose in the world, to build the Beis Yisroel."

While you're in your factory or your shop and you're turning the wheel or pressing buttons on the computer, whatever it is, you're thinking about your children. You want to support them. They should be *bnei Torah* and your daughters should marry *ovdei Hashem* who want generations to come out of them. As you're dealing with a customer, you're thinking, "I'm doing this to raise up a family of servants of Hashem."

And when a mother is serving supper, if she can keep in mind, "I am feeding the future servants of Hashem," that's called living! She's toiling over the gas range and over the washing machine and she's toiling, not like an Irish woman or Italian woman. She's toiling in eternity.

Late Night Greatness

Now that's an important principle because it is heavy labor. *Tzaar gidul banim* means that you'll suffer from raising children. When the children are up in the middle of the night and she can't sleep, it's laborious. It doesn't mean the husband shouldn't help out but sometimes he can't. He's so drugged by overworking that he can't get up out of his bed. He has his own labor in the factory and he's dead tired. So she drags herself out of bed to take care of the child or the children. And when she finally falls asleep, he drags himself out of bed—it's still dark outside—to go to the *beis medrash* to a *shiur* before *davenen*.

It's not easy. Great things never come easy. Ask a man who built a skyscraper if it came easy. And that's what a mother and father are doing. They're building better than skyscrapers—they're building the Beis Yisroel!

That was the forte of Yaakov Avinu. That was his great achievement—the Am Yisroel. Of course, he was great in everything else. He inherited all the philosophy, all the Torah, all the wisdom that Avraham and Yitzchok developed. He was great in *avodas Hashem* and great in *emunah* and great in *bitachon* and great in *middos tovos* and great in *gemilus chassadim*. But his chief achievement in the world was the *tzaar gidul banim*. The children, that's the justification for everything. That's the great contribution that he made in the service of Hashem.

A Source of Pride

It's worth living for that purpose alone. Just to raise Jewish children. A tremendous *zechus*! A mother and father who are busy raising children should know that they're living in a form of *avodas Hashem* even better than a *rosh yeshivah*. They're *making* the *bnei Torah*. They're producing them and feeding them and raising them up.

And that's why the woman with a family can face the *roshei yeshivah* without any embarrassment. "You learned *Shas*, and I raised a family. You said *chiddushim*, and I washed diapers. I served Hashem and you served Hashem." And the man laboring in the office all day, same thing. "You raised up *talmidim* and I raised up a nation. When I was working in the factory, I was building the Beis Yisroel."

And that's why we're not called Yitzchokim and we're not called Avrahams—we're called Yisroel! That's Yaakov Avinu's name because he's the one who worked for us. He made us!

And we walk in his footsteps and acquire greatness just like he did. And it's a greatness that becomes especially incalculable, because we're

partnering with Hashem. Hashem wants to perpetuate the Am Yisroel, and those who are assisting Him are chosen as His especial servants. They can look in the faces of the *roshei yeshivah*, Avraham and Yitzchak, without any shame. They can face the Next World with the full confidence of knowing that they lived successful lives walking in the ways of our Avos and Imahos.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Feeling inspired & uplifted? Help spread that feeling to Jews everywhere!

Toras Avigdor strives to spread Rav Miller's Torah & hashkafah freely around the world, supported only by idealists like YOU who are looking to bring yidden closer to Hashem.

Join this movement NOW!

torasavigdor.org/give

732-844-3670

Let's Get Practical

Connect My Efforts to Hashem

This week we learned that while Avraham and Yitzchak built our nation's ideals through a life of deep thought and meditation, Yaakov and the Imahos built the nation through years of devoted effort. Their greatness was that whatever they did – whether thinking, working, or caring for others – was done with the intention of serving Hashem and building Klal Yisroel.

This week I will *bli neder* pause three times a day – even for ten seconds – to remind myself that whatever I'm doing, whether at work, at home, or for others, can be part of serving Hashem. I'll think: "I want my efforts to help strengthen Klal Yisroel." By attaching my daily activities to this purpose, I elevate even ordinary moments into meaningful avodah and ensure that the "wheel" I'm turning is truly connected to the Next World.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:
471 – Gift of Speech 2 | **541** – Bringing Up Children VII
764 – Building the Bais Yisroel

TORAS AVIGDOR PILLARS

Joey & Pamela Sakkal

Victor
Braha

לעילוי נשמות
מרת פאגלא בת
מוריני ר' ישראל ע"ה

ומרת בראנדל
בת ר' משה דוד ע"ה

לע"נ הרה"ג
ר' אברהם שלמה יאזוא זצ"ל
תלמיד הרב זצ"ל



לזכות נתן יוסף
בן שהלה תמר חיה
ודבורה בת מלכה



להצלחת:
מאור בן זינאט
לרפואה שלימה ורפואת הנפש:
מנוחה בת יפה
יצחק אהרן בן מנוחה
שמואל בן מנוחה
משה בן מנוחה
רחל בת מנוחה
אסתר בת מנוחה



Shabbos Inspired

לע"נ שרה נטשה בת דבורה שהין · דינה ברכה בת שרה נטשה · דבורה מזל בת שרה נטשה

“ויקרא את שם המקום ההוא בית אל”

The term "Beis HaMikdash" means a "house" of *kedushah*. What is the purpose of a house? Chazal convey to us how highly Hashem values a house:

Not like Avraham, for whom it is written, "mountain," as it says (*Bereishis* 22:14), "As it is said this day, on the mountain Hashem will be seen." And not like Yitzchak, for whom it is written "field," as it says (*ibid.*, 24:63), "And Yitzchak went out to pray in the field." Rather, like Yaakov, who called it "house," as it says (*ibid.*, 28:19), "And he called the name of that place 'the house of God.'" (*Pesachim* 88a)

This teaching of Chazal expresses the different approaches taken by the Avos. What is the right way to achieve a personal connection and relationship with Hashem? Avraham chose the way of the "mountain," Yitzchak, the way of the "field," and Yaakov, the way of the "house." And Hashem cherished the way of the "house" above all.

Obviously, it is impossible to build a relationship with Hashem in the street or the park, as this relationship requires privacy. If a person spends his time in the street, this surely will not help him grow to be an outstanding *talmid chacham* and *yerei Shamayim*. But Avraham Avinu maintained that climbing to the top of a high mountain and separating himself from the impurity of his surroundings granted him sufficient privacy with Hashem.

Yitzchak Avinu disagreed: A mountain is not enough. True, there are not very many people on top of a mountain; nevertheless, it is an area open to all who wish to enter. What we need is a field, because a field is private property. That is why "Yitzchak went out to pray in the field."

Yaakov Avinu countered that even the privacy afforded by a field is insufficient to build a proper relationship with Hashem. What we need is total privacy—that of a house. No one comes into a house without knocking, even when the door is unlocked. This is because everyone knows that a house is a private place and no one may enter unless granted permission.

Hashem agreed with Yaakov Avinu: "Rather, like Yaakov, who called it 'house.'" Here, Yaakov Avinu taught us something very important. To build a relationship with Hashem, *deveikus* itself is not enough. The *deveikus* needs complete privacy. Not like Avraham's mountain, and not like Yitzchak's field, but like Yaakov's house.

In order to build a true relationship with Hashem, we need a house of *kedushah*. In other words, we need a Beis HaMikdash. In the Beis HaMikdash, we lived with Hashem in *kedushah* and *taharah*. And on Shabbos, we live alone with Hashem, undisturbed by the world and its mundane concerns.

If we dedicate ourselves to living in the presence of Hashem, to being Jews dedicated to Shabbos, and building a Beis HaMikdash for Hashem within our hearts, we will secure bountiful blessings for ourselves and the entire Jewish people. Guarding the *kedushah* of Shabbos has never been more important than in our generation. This is because there have never been so many distractions. Due to modern communication and media, our lives are filled with all that happens around the world. Privacy with Hashem has never been so hard to come by.

Fortunate is he who connects himself to Shabbos, which is "blessed above all the days and sanctified above all the times." It is the fountain of everything we want and need!

Sponsored by **The Oved Family**
For Refuah Sheleimah **Haim Ben Mazal**

Adapted by R' Y. Levy from *Nefesh Shimshon, Shabbos Kodesh, Rav Shimshon Pincus, Feldheim*

For a FREE Sefer *Nefesh Shimshon* on Shabbos please email our friends at cbhass@agudah.org

Q&A

WITH
RAV AVIGDOR
MILLER ZT"l



HOSTED BY
BULK
SOLUTIONS
FOR ALL YOUR TELECOM NEEDS
www.bulkvs.com
1.855.906.0901

ש א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר ו ש א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל

QUESTION

Should people cut down on the size of *simchos*?

ANSWER

I'll say it like this. Should people cut down on the cost of *simchos*? Yes. But the size of *simchos*, not.

So you should rejoice as much as possible. But you don't have to hire any waiters in your house. You don't have to hire halls. You can have many happy occasions without spending too much money. And that's a very important matter. Because people are wasting money.

I'll give an example. There's a couple that wants to make a *bar mitzvah* in Eretz Yisroel. Now it costs a lot of money to travel to Eretz Yisroel. They say it will cost more if you make it here. So make it small here and think how much a trip would cost you and send the money there to the *yeshivos*. It will be a very big merit for you.

There was a girl who lost her father. So she wanted to go to Eretz Yisroel to visit her father's grave. I didn't agree. Stay here and send all the money to charity, to poor *talmidei chachamim* in Eretz Yisroel for your father's merit. And your father will appreciate it much more than when you come and stand near his stone.

There are many ways that people can accomplish great things by taking the money they would have wasted and giving it for a righteous purpose; some bigger achievement than squandering it on waiters and on halls and traveling and on things that are not a *zechus*. February 1991

Life Questions? 

Cybersecurity Questions? 

keystone
CYBER PROTECTION