

# AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH

## YAAKOV'S PATH

Rav Nosson Tzvi Speaks by Rebbetzin Sara Finkel and Rabbi Yehuda Heimowitz

If someone were to ask me whether I would choose life in this world or life in the next, I would answer that I choose life in Olam Haba — but when we say this, our mouths and our hearts frequently do not correspond. It is virtually impossible to choose the path leading to Olam Haba to the exclusion of all else, without desiring at least a small taste of Olam Hazei. Therefore, while we face two diverging roads, each one leading in a different direction, it is hard for us to make a definitive choice. Instead, many of us seem to opt for life in this world as well as life in Olam Haba.

If we were given the opportunity to choose *only* Olam Hazei or Olam Haba, would we actually choose the latter?

The world today abounds with material pleasures and indulgences, offering an endless array of food, clothing, and devices. When I first came to yeshivah in Eretz Yisrael, there was nothing to be had! Many homes didn't have gas or even a refrigerator. All everyone had equally was poverty! Even in *chutz la'aretz*, where the economic situation was far better, people struggled to earn a living. Under such circumstances, the choice of a glittering Olam Haba over a wearying, poverty-stricken Olam Hazei is self-understood.

Today, we live in a world of plenty, showered as we are with both spiritual and material bounty. Everyone has a home and every device necessary for a home. In the past, someone who owned even one of these gadgets was considered wealthy. Today, anyone who doesn't own a cell phone is regarded as practically barefoot. How, then, are we expected to choose between Olam Hazei and Olam Haba?

**EVERY YID  
HAS THE  
CHOICE TO  
DWELL IN  
THE TENT OF  
SHEM OR TO  
HUNT GAME**

Every Yid in every generation has the choice to dwell in the tent of Shem, like Yaakov, or set out into the big world to hunt game, like Eisav. Is it possible that in this generation, we no longer have to choose between



Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel

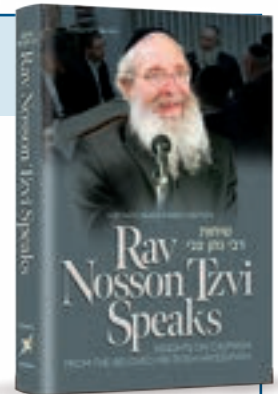
the two worlds, and we can choose a third course that encompasses both?

I once heard that a person who knows how to differentiate between the *ikar* and *tafel*, the core versus its external trappings, and to seize that core has great potential to succeed in life. Even if he also acquires the *tafel* along the way, he will succeed, as long as his primary focus is on the *ikar*.

In our world today, it is virtually impossible to live without any grasp on Olam Hazei, for even luxuries have become necessities.

"The principle of the matter," writes the *Mesillas Yesharim* (Ch. 1), "is that man wasn't created for his circumstances in Olam Hazei, but for... Olam Haba, although his circumstances in Olam Hazei are the means for his Olam Haba, which is his ultimate purpose." Here, the *Mesillas Yesharim* expresses that the function of the bounty that we enjoy in Olam Hazei is to enhance our *avodas Hashem*. Olam Hazei, then, is the tool that enables us to attain our ultimate goal in life.

Our task is to distinguish between *ikar* and *tafel*, to appreciate our essence and role in this world — and this is the manifestation of *bechirah* in our gener-



*continued on page 3*

One day a gentleman in his fifties walked into a *baal teshuvah* yeshivah in Eretz Yisrael, approached one of the rabbis, and said, "I am finally here, and I am ready. Please teach me Torah." The rabbi welcomed him and said that he was thrilled to have the man join the yeshivah, but what did he mean when he said that he was "finally here"? In addition, it wasn't every day that a gentleman in his fifties would suddenly decide to join a yeshivah. "Please, tell me your story," the rabbi requested.

The gentleman asked the rabbi if they could sit down, and he shared his remarkable story.

My mother was a Holocaust survivor who lost everything and everyone in her family. Forlorn and alone, she eventually made her way to Eretz Yisrael, where she met my father and finally experienced her first feelings of happiness and belonging. After they married, they moved to Tel Aviv. Shortly thereafter, they had me, and it seemed like my mother's life was finally beginning to get back on track. But one day, out of the blue, my father passed away. Once again, my broken mother was left alone in the world, but this time with a young child to care for. Sadly, she did not have the emotional ability to care for me properly, and she also lacked the financial resources to provide for me, so she made the difficult decision to send me to an orphanage. The nearest one was in Bnei Brak, and although she did not know it at the time, she had sent me to the Ponevezh Batei Avos under the auspices of the tireless Ponevezher Rav.

I was immediately put under the charge of a loving and caring staff, and I thrived both emotionally and spiritually. For the first few months, my mother did not come to visit me; she must have been dealing with her own grief. But several months into my stay, she traveled to Bnei Brak to visit me and was horrified when she realized that she had sent me to a religious institution.

On the spot, she informed the staff that she was taking me out, as she would never want to have her child exposed to any form of Yiddishkeit.



The Ponevezher Rav

The orphanage staff begged and pleaded and shared how wonderfully I had been doing, but she was adamant, and that very day she brought me back to her apartment in Tel Aviv.

When the Ponevezher Rav heard what had transpired, he was devastated. He had been following my progress and knew how well I had been advancing, and he also realized how counterproductive a move back home would be for me.

The very next day, the esteemed Ponevezher Rav traveled to Tel Aviv and knocked at our door. My mother was quite taken aback to see this saintly-looking rav on her threshold, and to her credit, she welcomed him into our small apartment and offered him a seat in our tiny kitchen. The Rav tried his hardest to convince my mother that my return to the orphanage was the best path for me and that while it was indeed a religious institution, the religion was what drove the warmth and care and high quality of the facility. My mother was unmoved and adamantly insisted that there was no way in the world that I was going back.

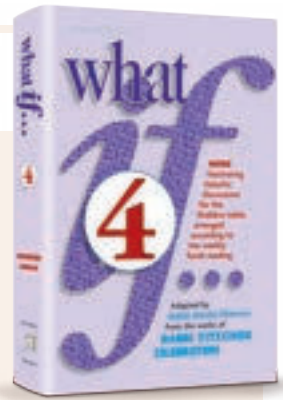
The Ponevezher Rav was crestfallen. And then he did something that I will never ever forget for as long as I live. He put his head down on the kitchen table and began to sob uncontrollably. For ten long minutes the Rav wept unabashedly, his entire being shaking from his deep sadness. After ten minutes, he wiped his eyes, straightened his hat and frock, and calmly and politely walked out the front door.

"For close to fifty years, those tears and those sobs have never left me, and they have accompanied me at every step of my life. I always knew in my heart of hearts that those tears would one day lead me back to everything that the Ponevezher Rav and the Batei Avos stood for." The man concluded, "My journey has been long and complicated, but I am finally ready to come back home!" 📖



*Flashes of Greatness by Rabbi Shlomo Landau*

YOMI SCHEDULES FOR THIS WEEK:	SHABBOS NOV 30 בט חשוון	SUNDAY DEC 1 ל חשוון	MONDAY DEC 2 א כסלו	TUESDAY DEC 3 ב כסלו	WEDNESDAY DEC 4 ג כסלו	THURSDAY DEC 5 ד כסלו	FRIDAY DEC 6 ה כסלו
	BAVLI	Bava Basra 158	Bava Basra 159	Bava Basra 160	Bava Basra 161	Bava Basra 162	Bava Basra 163
	YERUSHALMI	Shabbos 4	Shabbos 5	Shabbos 6	Shabbos 7	Shabbos 8	Shabbos 9
	MISHNAH	Bava Basra 6:1-2	Bava Basra 6:3-4	Bava Basra 6:5-6	Bava Basra 6:7-8	Bava Basra 7:1-2	Bava Basra 7:3-4
	KITZUR	19:8-10	19:11-13	19:14-20:7	20:8-21:2	21:3-8	21:9-22:End
							23:1-9



וַיֹּאמֶר בָּא אֲחִיךָ בְּמַרְמָה — — *But he said, “Your brother came with cleverness” (Bereishis 27:35)*

**Q:** Nachum is a very successful businessman who received a tip as to where he could purchase very special matzos for Pesach. Not only were the matzos baked by an expert team of bakers to ensure their *kashrus* for Pesach, but they were also unusually crisp and delicious. When Nachum asked the owner of the bakery how much the matzos cost per pound, the man quoted him an exceptionally high price. Nachum understood that the price had been set according to what the man assumed Nachum could afford, and Nachum refused to be the victim of extortion.

Nachum decided that he would send someone else in his place to purchase the matzos he needed. When Shmerel, one of Nachum’s workers, trudged into the bakery in his worn-out, faded suit, the owner sold him the matzos for half the price he had quoted Nachum.

The next day, Nachum wondered if he had acted properly, since had the bakery owner known that the matzos were really for Nachum, he never would have agreed to sell them at the lower price.

**A:** Rabbi Aharon Dovid Dunner was asked a similar question, and he responded that the wealthy man was entitled to act as he did, as is evidenced from the following halachah:

The *Shulchan Aruch* discusses the case of someone who wanted to buy a certain property, so he consulted one of the neighbors who owned an adjacent property. The neighbor advised him to make the purchase. After the purchase, the neighbor may claim that since he owns the adjacent property he has first rights to buy it, and the purchaser would have to sell it to him. This is despite the fact that the neighbor himself advised the purchaser to buy the property.

The *Sma* explains that the neighbor did not lose his right to buy the field, because he can clarify that the rea-

son he counseled the purchaser to buy the field is because he wanted the field to be sold for a fair price. Had he attempted to buy it himself, the seller would have hiked up the price, because the field is really worth more to the neighbor than to anyone else.

Just as the neighbor is permitted to orchestrate matters so that someone else will purchase the property for a fair price and thus avoid having the seller take advantage of him, Nachum could send Shmerel to purchase the matzos at a fair price and avoid having the seller charge him excessively.

Rav Zilberstein humbly argued with the comparison. In the case of a *bar metzra* (the owner of an adjacent property), there is a halachic obligation to offer the property for sale to one’s neighbors before offering it for sale to others, for the same price that he would sell it to anyone else. Thus a neighbor may “send” someone else to buy it for him if he fears that the seller may try to take advantage of the situation. That halachah would not apply to the owner of the bakery, who is not obligated to sell his matzos to Nachum. Perhaps in such a case Nachum cannot send an indigent to buy the matzos in his stead.

It would seem that the answer to the question would be dependent on whether the baker is trying to take advantage of wealthy customers, in which case he is guilty of an *aveirah*. The Gemara in *Succah* relates that Shmuel would threaten the merchants who sold *hadassim* for Succos to lower their prices so that the mitzvah would be available to all. In such a situation, Nachum could send Shmerel to purchase the matzos on his behalf. If, however, the baker sells to wealthy people for a fair price, but he sells to poor people for a discounted price, it would be forbidden for Nachum to ask Shmerel to buy matzos for him. 📖

## YAAKOV’S PATH continued from page 1

ation. Do we regard *limud Torah* as fundamental and everything else in life as the tools and external trappings that enable us to acquire it? Or does the endless *gashmiyus* surrounding us constitute the focus of our lives?

This is the essence of *bechirah* — the choice to follow Yaakov’s path to Olam Haba or to traverse Eisav’s path as an *ish yode’a tzayid*. Two people may dress

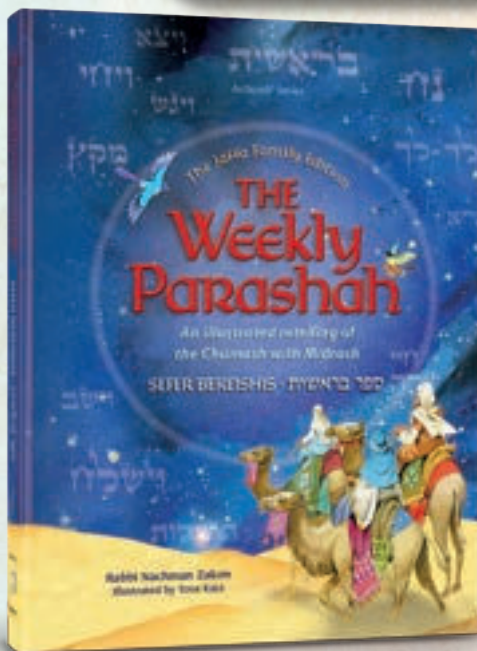
identically and learn shoulder-to-shoulder in the same *beis midrash*; they may live in the same type of home, and their lives may follow similar courses. Yet one may be following the path of Yaakov, and the other, the path of Eisav — since the former considers Torah the *ikar* and views everything else merely as a means of acquiring Torah, while his friend’s aspirations revolve around Olam Hazeh, and he regards *limud Torah* merely as another task in life. 📖





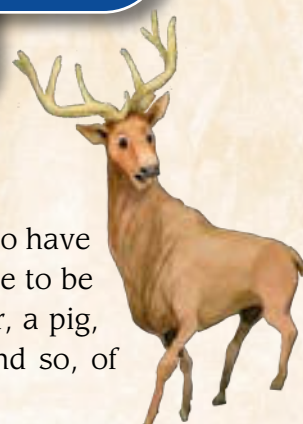
# Parashah for Children

## פרשת תולדות



### Split Hooves

**1**n order for an animal to be kosher it has to have two signs: its hooves (that is, its feet) have to be split, and it has to chew its cud. A chazir, a pig, has split hooves but it doesn't chew its cud, and so, of course, it's not a kosher animal.



There are animals that tuck their feet under their bodies when they lie down. Not the pig. It lies down with its feet sticking out in front of its body. It's as if it is showing everyone, "Hey, look, see my kosher sign! I'm really kosher." Though it is not!

Eisav was like the pig — he did things just for show, to give the impression that really he is a holy man. We already saw how he used to ask his father, Yitzchak, questions about taking maaser from salt, at

the same time he was doing terrible sins.

Many years passed. As Yitzchak grew older his eyesight got weaker and weaker until he became blind.

### Yitzchak's Blindness

**There are many reasons given why Yitzchak turned blind.**

- ▶ When Eisav's evil wives burned incense for their idols, the smoke drifted into Yitzchak's eyes and made him blind. Rivkah, who grew up with idol worship as a young girl, wasn't affected by the smoke, because she was used to it.
- ▶ During the Akeidah, Yitzchak was tied up on the Mizbei'ach, facing death. Seeing

this, the angels in heaven began to cry that Yitzchak was going to die. Their tears fell into Yitzchak's eyes. Over time the angels' tears caused his blindness.

- ▶ Hashem wanted Yaakov to get Yitzchak's blessings. Hashem made Yitzchak blind so that Yaakov was able to pretend he was Eisav, and Yitzchak would not see who he really was.

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## THE WEEKLY QUESTION

*Question for Toldos:*

***What images were woven into Eisav's special garments?***

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to [shabbosquestion@artscroll.com](mailto:shabbosquestion@artscroll.com) by this Wednesday to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name, city, and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition. HINT: The answer can be found in *The Jaffa Family Edition Weekly Parashah*.

**The winner of the question for Parashas Lech Lecha is: BINYOMIN KLUGHAUPT, Jackson, NJ**

The question was: Which two mitzvos did Avram's descendants get rewarded with when Avram told the king of S'dom that he wouldn't even take a string or shoe straps?  
The answer is: Tzitzis and Tefillin



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