



## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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It is very common for those who grew up reading the stories of the *Avot* to forget what it is like to hear these stories in the Torah for the first time. When *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* tells Avraham Avinu to bring up his beloved son Yitzchak as a sacrifice, if we didn't already know how the story ends, we would be absolutely shocked, our hearts pounding, wondering what will happen and how Avraham and Yitzchak can make it out alive while listening to Hashem. When the brothers conspire to sell Yosef, we would be on the edge of our seats - if we didn't already know what happens in the story.

So too in *Parshat Vayishlach*. Yaakov Avinu is about to encounter his brother Esav, who, last we heard, planned to kill him all those years ago. Not only that, but we find out that Esav is accompanied by 400 men, a veritable army. What will be Yaakov's fate? Has Esav forgiven Yaakov, or will this be a showdown like no other?

The Torah sets this up as a kind of battle, and in some senses, the fight already

happened the night before with Yaakov wrestling with the angel, the *Sar shel Esav*, according to Chazal. However, just reading the Torah, we find that when Yaakov actually meets Esav, the conversation is seemingly cordial. At the end of the encounter, Esav makes the following statement: (Bereshit 33:9) "*Yesh li rav, achi*" - Brother, I have a lot. Yet, in response, Yaakov says something else: (Bereshit 33:11) "*Yesh li kol*" - I have everything. Then they go their separate ways. What is the difference between having "a lot" and having "everything"?

The answer is that Esav was constantly thinking that yes, he has a lot - but he could always have more. He was unfulfilled, unsatisfied with his family, his power, and his fortune. On the other hand, Yaakov said he had everything. He was happy with what he had, and was content with his lot, and could offer what he had to his brother.

My wife and I and our family have had the tremendous *zechut* of having over the children of Rabbi Mordechai and Shayndel Feuerstein, *a"h*, for many Shabbatot. Rabbi Mordechai and Shayndel Feuerstein were the Rabbi and Rebbetzin in Vancouver, British Columbia, before my family and I spent several years in Vancouver, and then they became the Rabbi and Rebbetzin in Livingston, New Jersey. While their children were growing up, I took such pride in seeing them become advisors in NCSY Vancouver, which I headed. Through that time and beyond, we developed a beautiful relationship with many

**Condolences to  
Mrs. Miriam Stein,  
Susie & Simcha Fund  
and to the entire family  
on the passing of their  
husband/father/  
grandfather/great-grandfather**

**Dr David Stein ז"ל**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

of them. I admired Rabbi and Reb-betzin Feuerstein because they were real trailblazers in what they did in their community, both in Vancouver as well as in Livingston, and their children continue in that path.

I remember one time, I had their son Yosef over for Shabbat, and after I cut the challah, he told me how his father, Rabbi Feuerstein, would make sure to collect the crumbs left behind after cutting the challah and eat them. Now, I had heard of the saying of the gemara that those who are careful with the crumbs of the challah will not become poor, and I had heard of various *segulot* involving bread crumbs.

"No, those aren't the reasons," he declared. It was something else entirely. He told me that his father would say that if a person stopped to think about the amount of grains of wheat that grow all over the world every single year, from Canada to America to Russia to Israel, they know that that amount must be massive. Ask yourself, he would say, what a particular grain of wheat has thought of on its way to becoming part of a challah. "Am I going to merit to be made into kosher food? Will people say a *beracha* on me? Will I help someone get closer to Hashem?" That grain must have prayed and begged *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* to be part of a challah and be part of our *oneg Shabbat*, with a special board and special cutlery and a beautiful table in front of him.

All those hopes and dreams for this piece of wheat - and it starts to come true. Lo and behold, the *Ribono shel Olam* grants his wish. This little grain travels a great journey, from the field to the factory to the store shelf to the grocery bag, and eventually is made into the *Lechem Mishneh* at a holy Jew's home



on Shabbat night. Wow! This piece of grain must be over the moon! The family washes their hands and makes *hamotzi*, all sitting in anticipation for their first bite of challah. The wheat grain is so excited. Finally, the *baal habayit* sits down and makes the *beracha*, and cuts the challah. And what should happen then? This little piece of wheat becomes a crumb. Instead of landing on a plate, he lands on the table, a small speck, forgotten and forlorn. "This is it for me," the grain thinks. "I'm going to end up in the garbage and all is lost. I went through so much to end up here, and this is it."

So, Rabbi Feuerstein would conclude his story, and say, how could I do that to this piece of wheat? And so he scoops up all the crumbs and brings them into his *seudah* as well.

Do we think this way? Are we sensitive to

In memory of  
**Rabbi Shimon Herman ז"ל**  
beloved husband, father,  
grandfather, great grandfather  
on his 7th yearzeit, 15 Kislev  
*Charlotte, N'tina, Yehuda, Moshe,  
Shmuel, Reuven and families*  
יה זכרו ברוך

the journey of all the things in our lives and how they got to be that way? All the obstacles they had to go through to be where they are supposed to be? Every piece of wood in the table in our kitchen, or every tile on the floor of the shul, has a story. More than that, every person has a story. Of obstacles, yes, but also of tremendous successes in getting through those obstacles.

Esav said, “*Yesh li rav.*” He saw himself as always needing more, not paying attention to the successes already accomplished and what he could be doing with what he has achieved. Yaakov knew that what he has comes from *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and that his wealth is in the service of a higher ideal. If he had crumbs, he knew they were for a holy purpose. We all should think this way. If I have a car, am I offering rides to others in need? Am I listening to Torah *shiurim* or wasting time? Am I taking my salary and making sure to donate as much as I possibly can, whether it is to OU Israel for the incredible programs that we’re running here in Israel, or to any other worthwhile organization that is doing great things for the Jewish people?

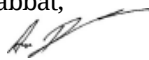
This consideration is particularly poignant in the month of December, when many of us think about how to close out our tax year with donations. So I hope that we’re all able to look up to *shamayim* and say, “*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, thank You so much for giving us all of the

incredible gifts that we have. We will try our best to take these gifts and sanctify them for the world as much as possible. We’re going to do as much *chesed* as we possibly can, and we’re going to make sure that we will never say just *yesh li rav*, but *yesh li kol.*”

Recently, Rabbi Feuerstein’s son Yosef reminded me how Rabbi Feuerstein would compare his story of the crumbs to how we should view all of *Bnei Yisrael*. We cannot forget any Jew. We need to bring them together and raise them up, spiritually and materially. We have to do everything we can to help them, save them, and be sensitive to their needs. And really, this is why I am so proud of the work we are doing at OU Israel.

Let me add to what Rabbi Feuerstein said and say that when Yaakov Avinu tells Esav “*Yesh li kol,*” he is standing with his eleven sons and his daughter, Dina. Truly, he saw the importance of every single Jew and knew that he had everything he needed when they were united as one.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

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