

# Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Chayei Sara 5781 Year 11, #461

שבת מברכין כסדר

פרשת חיי שרה תשפ"ב

## *Being generous to another will always bring you a blessing*

וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָהָם אֶל עֶפְרוֹן וַיִּשְׁקַל אַבְרָהָם לְעֶפְרוֹן אֶת הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּאָזְנוֹ בְּנֵי חֵת אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף עֹבֵר לַפְּחָדִי: (כג טז)

And Avraham listened to Efron, and Avraham weighed out to Efron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the sons of Ches, four hundred shekels of silver, accepted by the merchant. (23:16) The Midrash on this Posuk connects Efron to a Posuk in Mishlei 28:22, which Shlomo Hamelech states: *He who hastens to acquire wealth is a man with an evil eye, and he does not know that deprivation will come upon him.* The question is asked on this Midrash, as we see clearly that Efron was a winner, as he was able to extract 400 shekel from Avraham, for something that had no real value to him. The Torah states: Avraham said to the people of Ches, וַיִּתֵּן לִי, That he -Efron- may give me the Machpelah (double) Cave, which belongs to him, אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶצֶה שָׂדֵהוּ "which is at the end of his field"; for a full price let him give it to me in your midst for burial property." Which had no real value to anyone! The answer may be as follows: If we analyze the dialogue between Avraham and Efron, we can clearly understand the Midrash. Avraham was looking for a burial place for Sarah, and he became aware that in the Machpelah, were buried Adam and Chava, and Avraham was informed by Hashem that he too will be buried there with Sarah as well as Yitzchok and Yaakov. For Avraham,

the Machpela was worth a vast fortune, and he was willing to pay any price that was asked from him. Now when Efron was approached to sell to Avraham the Machpela, he saw an opportunity to become wealthy, and asked an exorbitant price of 400 shekel. But in his haste, he added לֹא אֲדַנִּי שְׂמַעְנִי "No, my lord, listen to me. *I have given you the field, and the cave that is in it, I have given it to you.* Avraham was ready to pay 400 shekel for the מַעְרַת הַמַּכְפֵּלָה alone. Yet Efron conceded and threw in the field for the same 400 shekel, thinking that he outsmarted Avraham! The Torah concludes עֶפְרוֹן אֲשֶׁר בְּמַכְפֵּלָה אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי מַמְרֵא הַשָּׂדֶה וְהַמְעָרָה אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ וְכוּ' לְאַבְרָהָם And so the field of Efron which was in Machpelah, facing Mamre, was established as Abraham's possession. "This included the field" and the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within its entire border around. It was to Abraham as a possession. This is what Shlomo Hamelech meant *He -Efron- who hastens to acquire wealth is a man with an evil eye, and he does not know that deprivation will come upon him.* In his haste and evil eye, he relinquished and lost the field at no gain. This is a tremendous lesson, when someone sells to another with an evil eye, deprivation will ensue. טוֹב עֵינַי הוּא יִבְרָךְ *He who has a generous eye will be blessed, Mishlei 22:9 Be generous to another and be blessed. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)*

## **STORY OF THE WEEK** (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick ) (Revised and edited by Duvid Pinchas Rose)

\*\*\*\*\* **Only two scraps of wood preserved her tenuous bond to Yiddishkeit** \*\*\*\*\*

The famed and holy Rav Tzvi Elimelech, author of Bnei Yissaschar, personally related this story and plumbed its depths. Three successful Jewish business partners set out by horse and wagon from their home in Reisha (Rzeszow), Galicia, Russia all the way to Moscow -- a very long and grueling journey. What made it worth their while was the hope of reaping substantial profits from deals struck in the famous regional trade fair soon to convene in the Russian city, which always drew assorted dealers from far and wide. There was a lively trade in all kinds of merchandise and these three Yidden were confident of large ROI's (return on their investments in inventory.) The roads were muddy and the journey was slow. The sun hung low in the sky on Friday. Shabbos was nearing, yet they were still far from the city. They were in a village outside Moscow which had a public flour mill, with the owners' lodgings attached. They asked the wizened old lady sitting inside, not sure if she was Jewish, if they could spend a Shabbos there. They were carrying plenty of kosher food and really needed no more than a table, beds and a place to secure their horses over the

Holy Day. She agreed, but said her son was really the "ba'al-habayis" (master of the house) and would have to give his consent. She sent for him and in he strode, hulking and unkempt, with hardly any shreds of a Yiddish appearance. To their surprise, he made them feel more than welcome and set up the room to offer them any comfort and convenience for Shabbos the modest household could extend. In the friendly reception, one of the businessmen thought he saw a clear sign that it was BeYad HaShem that led them to this country gristmill and he expected that he would see some remarkable things. How right he was. Just before Shabbos, at around the usual "zman hadloko" (Shabbos candle lighting time), the old lady took two fragments of wooden logs, lit them afire, and set them aside and waited for them to burn out by themselves. She then calmly returned to her seat and asked the visitors where they were traveling from. When she heard "Reisha." she became quite agitated, and started inquiring about the welfare of one Reisha citizen after another. The guests knew every person and reported about each one of them. She then asked

pointedly about one individual. "Is that man still alive?" One traveler said, "No, I'm sorry to tell you he passed away not long ago. But it may interest you to know that I am his grandson!" The woman let out peals of weeping. "Well actually, I was married to him. It means that I could have been your grandmother!" This word utterly flabbergasted the guest, who all but fainted away from shock at the disclosure. His companions revived him to hear the earth-shaking revelation that followed.

"You must know that the grandfather you just recalled was my lawful husband. Yes, I am a true Jew. Soon after our wedding, the horrible Russo-Austro-Turkish war broke out and wartime conditions of panic, upheaval, and disruption set in across the entire population. Still a waif of a girl, I personally became separated from him and found myself taken to this place near Moscow without a shred of information available about my husband. I had no idea if I was a widow or an aguna (abandoned but still married woman) and war conditions made it impossible to find out. May Hashem have mercy on my soul."

"Evil and debased people forced me into a so called "marriage" with a crude non-Jew, which I was powerless to resist. The bloke died soon after my only son, whom you just met, was born. The boy never married, and I drifted further and further away from Jewish belief and traditions. Only one mitzvah did I tenaciously refuse to yield: that of lighting Shabbos candles. In my current situation there are no candles to be had, so I use whatever scraps of wood I can find to provide the Shabbos lights. Woe is me that I have sunken so low. Standing before you three respectable observant Jews, I proclaim my complete repentance for the profligate life I have been forced to live – and did live without proper protest and repentance."

Her weeping was heart-wrenching. She recited the "viduy" confession said before death (if one is fortunate enough to be able to say it) and returned her sullied soul to its Maker.

The traders made a hasty exit, fearing a false suspicion of having a hand in the woman's death. They located the son and told him that his mother had fainted. When he discovered the truth, he burst into tears -- but for a twisted reason. "Sirs, it's not that I miss my mother so much. It's just that the local Russian Orthodox priest extorts a large sum, which I surely do not have, to make a burial in his cemetery." The travelers, now knowing that the woman was a Jew, who had merited to do teshuva in her heart before her demise, were determined not to let her come to rest in a non-Jewish burial ground. "You needn't worry, young

fellow. Your mother, may she rest in peace, treated us kindly when we needed it by allowing us to spend a peaceful Shabbos here. We will repay her by making all the burial arrangements after Shabbos. Leave everything to us." The men were quite gratified that they could provide a kosher Jewish burial (kevuras Yisroel) for a wayward soul and also that the coarse-brained, boorish son would not stand in their way. They treated the remains with the dignity due a deceased Jewish person and after Shabbos took the woman to kevuras Yisroel in the nearest Jewish cemetery. The lummock of a son rode along, of course, but was only happy that it wasn't costing him anything. But his fate, (surely decided during the previous Rosh Hashona's Unesaneh Tokef prayer [DPR]) overtook him. He climbed into his wagon for the ride home. Without warning, the horses went rogue and bolted every which way, throwing him to ground, trampling him with their hooves. He perished on the spot, but the merchants remembered the basic fact that since his mother was a Jew, so in turn was he, and warranted kevuras Yisroel in his own right, even though his father was a gentile. The unlettered man, in the eyes of the Torah, was a member of the Jewish people and belonged in Jewish consecrated ground. These noble men were eager to attend to two "meisei mitzvah" in one day -- a mother and son to boot -- for there was surely no one else to ensure that the two isolated Yidden, estranged from their people, could have ever come to a kosher Jewish burial. (A "mais mitzvah" is a deceased Jew whom no one would bother to bury. It becomes top priority for any Jew, of the lowliest or the most exalted status, to attend to his final needs with dignity. [DPR])

In retelling the story, the Bnei Yissoschor distilled its potent message. "We see the insurmountable power of Shabbos lecht bentschen. Although "only" miderabban, it has, throughout the ages, exerted a power over the souls of Jewish women unlike any other. The tenuous link this poor persecuted, abandoned, and estranged woman maintained to Shabbos lecht, even in its most diluted form, set off a chain of events, that guaranteed her station in the World Above. Hashgacha protis, divine surveillance, sent the three travelers – during an uncommonly roundabout trip -- to her door, one of whom, under different circumstances, could have been a grandson. The hospitality she extended led directly to soul-searching repentance at the level of her basic identity. Two wayward sheep, ewe and lamb, strayed far from the flock but the Shepherd, berov chasdo, accepted them back into the fold at their End of Days. Teshuvah enabled both her and her errant son to come to a kosher Jewish burial at the hands of the three worthy travelers, who merited to be involved in two "meisei mitzvah" in the same day. Such is the power of Hadlokas Ner Shabbos.

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