



# A Taste of Torah

## Timeless Strategy

By Rabbi Yossie Kaplan

Yaakov was scared. Scared with good cause. He was en route with his family, but his enemy was en route, too. And while Yaakov was on his way home, his enemy was on the way to kill him. That enemy was Esav, his brother - much as his descendants have tried to wipe out the Jewish People ever since.

When the infamous German dictator rose to power in 1933, German Jewry was frightened, too; this epitome of evil had declared his intention of decimating the Jews. It was then that the Chofetz Chaim was asked what would remain of the Jewish nation. His answer lies in this week's parsha, words spoken by Ya'akov when he split his family in two, calculating that if Eisav were to attack and destroy one group, "and the remaining camp shall survive." (Genesis 32:4) Yaakov was promising us that the Jewish nation will survive.

But where will that surviving camp be? The Chofetz Chaim's answer to this was clear as well, "at the mountain of Zion there will be a survival." (Ovadia 1:17) Indeed, ten years later, the Germans suffered a major defeat in Egypt as they stood at the gates of Zion, Eretz Yisroel.

For generations, we've looked to our forefathers in times of trouble to see

how they acted in such times of distress. So what did Yaakov do when faced with Esav?

Rashi tells us that Yaakov harnessed a three-pronged attack: One, prayer; two, a bribe; and three, battle. Battle, says Rashi, alludes to the division of the nation into camps, so that if one camp was to be attacked, the other would survive. Thus, Yaakov wasn't merely offering a promise of survival; he was employing a strategy.

Fighting has never been our strong point, despite the trumpeting by some of wartime victories in recent decades. But self-defense, prayer and overtures of peace have been, and continue to be, our mainstay in times of trouble.

There's a spiritual element here as well. At the height of a spiritual battle, we need to remember Yaakov's three-pronged attack. When the *Yetzer Hora* (Evil Inclination) entices us with sin, we can bribe him. We can tell him we're unavailable, please try again tomorrow. At times it may mean giving in to a small (permissible) desire, if that's what the body needs.

The second step is battle strategy. For example, everyone knows of which situations allow temptations to arise. So when you see disaster heading your way,

# Ask the Rabbi

## Extinguish and Distinguish

Brian Connack from Jerusalem wrote:

I would like to ask the rabbi a question. I have noticed that when people put out their havdalah candles after Shabbat, rather than blowing the candle

out, they put it out in the spilled wine. I was also at a birthday party recently and the hostess insisted that the birthday boy not blow out the candles, rather she put them out by hand. I would like to know if there is any basis to this custom

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## Stories For The Soul

### A Timely Lesson

At a recent Sheva Berachos for a newly married couple, the groom, a pious young Talmud scholar, told a story about a turning point in his life.

It happened when he was in fifth grade. A classmate, Naftali, came in one day with an expensive new watch. At recess, Naftali left it on his desk, so as not to break it during recess.

When he returned to class, the watch was gone! There was no consoling the boy, who begged his rebbi to find the watch. The rebbi was quite sure that no one had entered the classroom. His instincts told him that another boy in the class had probably taken it.

"I know that it may have been tempting for someone to take Naftali's watch," the rebbi told the class. "We all saw that it was very beautiful and quite expensive. Did anyone here take it by mistake? And if yes, would you like to return it?"

No one stirred. The rebbi waited a few moments and said, "I guess I have no choice. I am going to ask all of you to stand up front, facing the wall and I am going to go through your pockets to see if it's there. But I am giving you one more chance to admit that you may have taken it by mistake."

Again no one said a thing. The rebbi told the boys to stand against the wall and not to turn around until he gave them permission.

The groom's face turned red as he explained what happened next.

"I was the third boy in line. The rebbi found the watch in my pocket. I was literally shaking. But instead of stopping, he continued checking

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## Kollel Happenings

### DERECH HASHEM

Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher for a philosophical series on "Derech Hashem", a sefer by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato. Discover and delve into the vital understanding of Hashem's world. The women's class is on Mondays at EDOS.



### A DEEPER LOOK

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issues, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Sunday nights 7:40-8:30 pm at Kollel, 1516 Xavier, and Tuesday nights at Aish Denver 8-9 pm.



### TRUST THY FATHER

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers for "Trust thy Father," a series based on Chovos Ha'Levavos/Duties of the Heart. Discover and delve into vital Jewish concepts of Bitachon. The classes takes place on Tuesdays, from 7:55-8:25 a.m., at Aish. For more info, email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org) or call 303-820-2855.

## Interpersonal Issues Safeguarding a Lost Object

A serious, mature Yeshiva student or the like may be trusted if he provides an identifying sign, even if the item is quite valuable, since such an individual is generally trustworthy.

*Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)*

## Ask the Rabbi

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and if there is, what is the difference between blowing out a candle and extinguishing it by hand.

Dear Brian,

There are actually three customs here:

Extinguishing the havdalah candle after havdalah

Extinguishing it in wine

Not blowing out candles in general

Before light bulbs were invented, they used candles! Extinguishing the havdalah candle immediately after havdalah demonstrated that it was lit solely for a mitzvah, and not as a regular source of light.

"Wine spilling like water," says the Talmud, "is a sign of blessing." In order to start the week off right, we fill the cup of havdalah so that a little spills out. And not only do we spill wine, but we spill it 'like water.' That is, we use it lavishly ~ to put out a flame; something you would never think of doing with wine.

As for not blowing out candles in general, the following reason has been said in the name of Rabbi Yaakov Yis-

rael Kanievsky (the 'Steipler'), zatzal:

There's an angel whose name is the same as the sound produced when you blow out with force. According to Kabbalistic tradition, it's improper to make use of the names of holy angels. Many people, therefore, extinguish candles by hand in order not to pronounce the name of this angel.

Another explanation: The Torah depicts man's soul as being a 'breath' from Hashem. The soul is also compared to a flame. Using your breath to blow out a candle is an ironic gesture, using one 'soul' to extinguish another.

I know a rabbi who puts out candles by saying the word 'Purim,' forcefully emphasizing the letter 'P'. And a friend of mine saw his Kung Fu instructor put out a candle by punching it!

Sources:

Rama, Orach Chaim 296:1

Shulchan Aruch HaRav 296:5

Kaf Hachaim, Yoreh De'ah chapter 116 halacha 115

Responsa Rivevot Ephraim IV 45:35

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## Stories for the Soul

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every single boy! When he finished searching he said, 'You all can go back to your seats. I have the watch.'

"As I walked back to my seat I had to hold myself back from crying. I understood that the rebbi had saved me from being embarrassed. He resumed teaching. I decided then and there that someday I would like to be like him."

"And Dina - the daughter of Leah went out." (Bereishis 34:1). Rashi comments that Dina's action was learned from her mother, Leah. Children are influenced greatly by their elders.

*As told by Rabbi Paysach Krohn.*

*Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Baruch Lederman.*