



## A Taste of Torah When Losing Is Winning

By Rabbi Mordechai E. Fleisher

It was all over. Ya'akov had just defeated the archangel of Eisav in an epic, night-long battle. And now, as dawn was breaking, the angel begs Ya'akov to let it go, "for dawn is breaking" (32:27). A likely excuse. It would seem that the angel can't bear having lost to Ya'akov, and is looking for a way out of its bind. But Rashi explains why the crack of dawn was a good time for the angel to beat a hasty retreat; it was the angel's turn for "shira", to sing before G-d.

Rashi's explanation, though, raises a difficulty of its own. Why, of all times, did the angel's turn to sing before G-d arrive just when it was defeated by Ya'akov?

I'd like to share an explanation I once heard. Our Sages tell us that Eisav's angel is, in fact, none other than Satan, who is also the Evil Inclination, who is also the Angel of Death. That would seem like a lot of hats for one angel to wear, but all those names actually represent one purpose: the existence of evil in the world. Esav is the embodiment of evil in the world; his archangel is none other than Satan himself.

Ever wonder why G-d gave us an Evil Inclination? It's to challenge us. To give us the opportunity to overcome the

temptations that the world we live in has to offer. And when we successfully resist the designs of the Evil Inclination, we come closer to Hashem, having grown and become better people through having succeeded in defeating our lower selves.

Ya'akov's battle with the angel wasn't a mere physical wrestling match; it was a cosmic struggle with the forces of evil that exist in the world. And Ya'akov emerged victorious. Which means, if you're following the train of thought, that the purpose of the Evil Inclination - a.k.a. Eisav's archangel - had been fulfilled. It had been defeated. It had served as a means for a human to grow to tremendous heights.

When does an angel get to sing before G-d? When it fulfills the role G-d intended for it in Creation. And upon being defeated by Ya'akov, Eisav's archangel fulfilled, at some level, its purpose. Sure, there were many more battles with Evil to be fought, many more people who would yet appear on the world stage, many victories still needed before total perfection would be achieved. But at some level, Ya'akov had achieved perfection by overcoming this angel. And through going down to defeat, it fit into G-d's ultimate plan for Creation. It could now sing before G-d.

## Ask the Rabbi Peace in Triplicate

Moshe Pripas from Jerusalem wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Three years ago my mother-in-law

asked why we say "Shalom Aleichem" (Peace unto You) on Friday night three times. I gave the reason for being a "chazaka" (emphasis) but that itself

## Stories For The Soul

### Divine Protection

The year was 1917, and the Communists had taken over Russia. In Minsk, a rabbi by the name of Reb Shiah voed to continue fulfilling and teaching the Torah. Four years later, the rabbi was "invited" to an interview with the Chehka, the secret police. Knowing what the invitation meant, he put his affairs in order, and said goodbye to family.

To his surprise, when he arrived, the interrogator greeted him cordially in Yiddish, "Reb Shiah, would you like to have a seat?"

Seeing the rabbi frozen in indecision, the interrogator told him to "please sit down." He then asked, "Reb Shiah, perhaps you and your family would like to go to Palestine?"

Reb Shiah was at a loss. If he said yes, he'd be accused of being disloyal to his country.

The interrogator pulled out a five-inch thick file. "Reb Shiah, this is your file. It details everything - every mitzva, every child you taught, every bris that you performed." Reb Shiah looked at the file and trembled.

"For the last four years," the interrogator continued, "I have been assigned to your case. It is I who has protected you. Now I am being promoted and you will be discovered. The best I can do is to help you and your family get to Palestine.

Noticing Reb Shiah's shock, the interrogator continued. "I see you don't recognize me." The interrogator revealed that he was the son of a famous rabbi who had died young.

"I want you to know why I have been protecting you," he continued.

## Kollel Happenings

### FAMILY FUN AT CHILDREN'S EXTRAVAGANZA ON DEC. 25

Join the Kollel for family fun at the annual Jewish Children's Extravaganza on Sun., Dec. 25, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For the first time ever, the event will be held at South Suburban Family Sports Center, 6901 S. Peoria. Cost: \$13. Admission includes unlimited rides. Visit [www.mazeltot.org](http://www.mazeltot.org) to find out how to join for free. For general information, call 303-820-2855 or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org)



### BAIS MEDRASH NIGHT OUT AT DAT

Join the Kollel for a night of Torah study for the whole family. Classes are being offered for men, women and boys on a variety of topics for a wide range of levels. 8-9 p.m., Tuesdays at DAT. For information, call 303-820-2855 or email [rya@denverkollel.org](mailto:rya@denverkollel.org)



### WEST SIDE NIGHT SEDER AT THE KOLLEL

Join the west side community for vibrant Torah learning at the Kollel. Sunday- Thursday, except Wednesday, learning from 8-9 p.m. followed by Ma'ariv. For chavrusas or other information, contact Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher at [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org) or 303-820-2855

## Interpersonal Issues Bal Tolin

There is no issue of bal tolin if one purchased merchandise. This is true even if one purchased an item from a craftsman who labored to make it. For example, one who purchased a custom-made suit from a tailor is not subject to bal tolin. The reason for this is because

the craftsman isn't being paid for his labor, but, rather, for the finished product

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

*Continued from front*  
wasn't satisfying. Since then I have asked lots of people and nobody ever gave me a different answer.

Dear Moshe Pripas,

The Likutei Maharich asks your question. He explains as you did, that repeating something three times adds emphasis. We do the same in other parts of our liturgy, such as in kiddush levana and the bedtime shema.

But I've heard another answer: The Talmud states that two angels accompany a person as he walks home from synagogue Friday night. These angels are in addition to the usual angel who accompanies him at all times. Hence, we have three angels in all. Thus we recite "Shalom Aleichem" one time for each angel.

The problem with this answer is that people are usually accompanied by two angels at all times, making four in all. This can be answered according to the Zohar, which states that not two angels but rather two groups of angels accompany a man on Friday night. These, in addition to the usual group of two angels which accompany the person at all times, give us three groups in all. We recite one "Shalom Aleichem" for each group. This also explains the use of the plural "aleichem" - "unto You (plural)" - as well.

Sources:

Tractate Menachot 65a and Rashi ibid.

Tractate Shabbat 119b

Tractate Berachot 60b, Rashi ibid.

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## Stories for the Soul

*Continued from front*  
"After my father died, it was very difficult for our family. One Friday my mother came running to you with me in her arms. 'What will we do? We have nothing in the house!' she cried. You were wearing your beautiful Shabbos watch. Without a moment's hesitation, you hand it to my mother. For months we lived from the money we got for the watch, and I have never forgotten it!"

In this week's Parsha, Yaakov was

confronted by Esav and his 400 men. With courage and faith, Yaakov faced the dangerous confrontation. With the help of Hashem, Yaakov emerges unscathed. There are many times in our history when we are forced to confront an enemy. It is up to us to follow Hashem's Torah and trust in Him.

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