



Parashat Toldot



English version

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THE FULLY CHARGED LIFE

Everyone who walks the ארץ, the land, has a רצון, a will. Ask anyone you meet what would be the greatest thing that he could achieve over the next 5 years. You will always get some sort of answer, of some sort of dream, hope, or aspiration. When someone has a clear, laser-beam Ratzon, then he is רץ, he runs! Because he is living the “Charged” Life, a life full of energy, motivation, alacrity, excitement, etc.

But there are two types of "C" lives that all the rest of the people in the world fall under. There is the Caged Life. The life where people are manipulated by fear, or are “stuck”. *I wish I could achieve x, but this person, or that circumstance, or some other manipulation or excuse, is stopping me from reaching my dreams.*

The third life is the Comfortable life, where people give up their dreams, their hopes, their destiny, because they prefer the comfortable lifestyle they are in. Their comfort zone is too precious. They talk the talk - they talk about what is important, they talk about what would be amazing in life. But they don't walk the walk - they don't want to pay the price for the lifestyle they wish for, they don't want to get out of their comfort zones, they don't want to take responsibility. The lifestyle they live is diametrically opposed to the life of their dreams. They are not willing to get uncomfortable for the sake of their ambitions.

Baruch Hashem, we live in a time where there are so many yeshivot, seminaries, Shuls, organizations, etc. Ken Yirbu. Unfortunately, though, so many people in our Frum system have some sort of

spiritual aspiration, but very little motivation. Low battery. This is because they are living either the Caged life, or the Comfortable life. They don't want to pay the price of being more spiritual. Of taking that responsibility of bringing G-d into their everyday lives, as much as possible.

Esav sold his rights as a firstborn to Yaakov for nothing more than a bowl of lentils. The word the Torah uses is יָבַן עָשָׂו אֶת הַבְּכֹרָה And Esav scorned the rights to the firstborn. R Wolbe asks, How can a person either buy or sell the rights of a firstborn? Isn't that something spiritual? R Wolbe explains how Esav sold his spirituality, his firstborn rights. Spirituality *can* be sold, according to how much you don't value it. And on the flip side, spirituality can be “bought” according to how much you are willing to give up for it. Spirituality is something that is not tangible, so its price, whatever you are willing to invest in it or risk for it, is its value. This explains how the deal of the firstborn sale went through...Don't we have a rule of הוֹנָאָה יוֹתֵר מִשְׁתּוֹת that something cannot be sold for a price that is much greater, or much lower, than its real value? How, then, could the sale of the firstborn rights go through for such a low price? The answer is that spirituality is worth whatever you are willing to barter for it. For a hungry Esav, the bowl of lentils had the same worth as the firstborn birthrights, which were of inestimable value to Ya'akov.

This can also explain why it is considered that Esav “scorned” his firstborn rights, by selling them. Didn't Rashi mention earlier that Esav was afraid to keep his firstborn rights, because of the responsibilities they entailed? Esav was afraid that



if he would retain those firstborn rights, he would have the status, legally, of a Kohen. That was the law in his times. Being a Kohen meant being the one to serve G-d, bring sacrifices, be G-d's representative to the people of the world, and representative of the people to G-d. Esav was ready to give up the privileges that come along with the responsibility, not because he belittled being the Firstborn, but because he was afraid of the punishments he would receive for not keeping the strict laws that only the Kohen needs to keep! If he wanted to be absolved of them because of fear of the responsibilities, because he did not want to take any chances, why does the Torah call that "scorning"?

The answer is that to acquire a level of greatness, you need to "pay" - to accept the responsibilities that go along with it. That is its "uncomfortable" price tag. If you do not want to pay the price, *it means that you do not want that level of greatness*. It means you are not ready to sacrifice, to make your effort to reach that level. It means that you do not really value, what you are not willing to take responsibility for.

This is such a simple, black and white, belief. If you don't want to practice shooting baskets in the dark, you don't want to play basketball like

Michael Jordan. If you don't want to learn something again, and again, and again, then you do not want the memory of R' Ovadia Yosef. If you don't want to take the chance of losing a game, you are not ready to win. If you are not willing to get "no"s, you are not ready to make a sale. If you are not ready to learn mussar and look your mistakes in the face, you are not ready to become the great person you can become. It means that these goals are not important enough to you. If your holiness is important, you are willing to give up more internet access, a cooler phone, a better deal, and a more exotic vacation. But, if to save a couple of dollars, you go to places where you see unholy sites, that means that all your holiness is worth to you is a couple of dollars.

What value in life that you live by, will cause you to live a fully charged life? Are you living a charged life, a caged life, or a comfortable life? What comfortable habits or lifestyles are causing you to stay away from that awesome life you truly deserve? How much are you willing to pay, what are you willing to give up in order for you to achieve the life of your dreams?

The more we ask ourselves these questions, the more passionate, real, and charged, our lives will be.

G-D, WHY THE DELAY?

People don't have as hard a time believing in G-d as they do accepting G-d. So many times, people pray and G-d makes the person wait, and then, sometimes, only after a while, G-d gets things moving. Many times, many people have a hard time understanding G-d, and accepting that He has His reasons for the delay.

Everything in the Shidduch of Rivka was clearly the Hand of G-d, and how it all happened so fast is amazing. It is so strange then, that G-d made them wait so long for a child. Yitzhak and Rivka prayed, and G-d put them on hold. Why should they have to wait so long to have a child?

Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld points to an amazing thing in our Parasha. ויעתר לו ה' And G-d allowed *Himself to be entreated by Yitzhak's plea*. Rashi adds, ונתפצר ונתפס ונתתה לו G-d was *persuaded* by Yitzhak, and G-d granted Yitzhak children. Here, Rashi is stressing, that G-d allowed Himself to be persuaded to grant Yitzhak children, something He was not really ready, otherwise, to do. What does this mean?

We know that Yitzhak's son, Esav, on the day of his Bar Mitzvah, transgressed the cardinal sins. He came home, and found Yaakov busy brewing lentils, the food that is traditionally eaten by mourners. This is because Avraham had just passed away, and Yitzhak was in mourning.



The Midrash teaches that Avraham died on that day because G-d did not want him to see how his grandson, Esav, had left religion. This would not be a *שיבה טובה*, a happy ending, for Avraham. So Avraham actually had to die five years earlier than he was supposed to. He died at 175, instead of dying at the age of 180, like his son Yitzhak.

Now, the reason why he died five years earlier was because of his grandson Esav's misbehavior when Esav reached bar mitzvah. This means that if Esav would have come into the world on the day that he was supposed to, Avraham would have lived a full life of 180 years. So, why was Esav born five years before his time? Because Yitzhak prayed and prayed, so much, that G-d was persuaded, and gave him a son five years earlier than planned.

Of course, we need to pray for things that are important. But when G-d does not answer us as fast as we want to, every minute of a delay has a reason.

There is a wild story that happened with the Arizal. The story is cited in the Sefer Kav Hayashar. A forty-year-old man approached the Arizal, saying that he had not yet merited finding a wife. As much as he dated, it never bore results. Either she did not want him, or he did not want her. The man asked the Arizal for a bit of advice. Shockingly, the Arizal told him, "Your shidduch lives in Alexandria, in Egypt. Go there. Her name is so-and-so, and her father's name is so-and-so".

The man who believed the Arizal traveled the dangerous roads from Tzfat down to Egypt, and when he finally arrived in Alexandria, he asked if anyone knew the father. It turned out that the man was a well known member of the community, in charge of the taxes in town. When he asked about the daughter, he was told that she was of marriageable age and that a suitable husband was being sought for her. She was said to be a wonderful person, attractive, and only twenty years old.

He went to the shadchan in town and asked if it was possible to arrange him a meeting. The shadchan approached the father of the girl and said. "I have a nice, 40-year-old man, and he would like to meet your daughter. The father agreed, and the two met. They enjoyed each other's company, and after a few meetings, they agreed to get married a month later. The engagement worked out nicely, and the wedding was well attended by Rabbis and respected community members. They had a beautiful wedding.

The father of the girl gave a whopping 150 thousand dinars for the dowry. The man was very happy with his new wife, but not for very long. Three months later, the wife got sick. Her situation got so bad that she died within a few days. For him, this was, obviously, a huge shock and a great tragedy.

Broken, he went back to the Arizal in Tzfat, and asked, why the Rabbi had sent him to marry that girl. It would have been better, he said, if I would never have known her!

The Arizal told him to take a seat. He had a few questions to ask him. "Do you remember what you worked in 20 years ago?" The man responded that he had owned a bakery. The Arizal asked, "Do you remember who your partner was?" The man said, Yimah Shmo, that cursed man! That partner robbed me of all my money! Because of him, I lost out on 150 thousand dinar!

The Arizal told him that that was the answer. The woman you married - her soul, in her previous life, was that partner. He died shortly after he ran away with your money, and in Heaven it was decided that he would need to come back, in reincarnation, to marry you, and bring you pleasure for three months, to rectify the pain that this Neshama caused you when you were partners in the bakery. So, after the three months, her Tikkun was done, and her Neshama returned to its Creator. And because the amount that you lost was 150 thousand dinar, you were paid back in the dowry. And this is the reason why your marriage



was delayed until you were 40, for you needed to wait until she was ready to get married. Now, it is time for you to go and get married to the wife that you will remain with, happily ever after.

R' Yitzhak Fanger recently told a story that a certain woman had told him. The woman was doing laundry, while her six year old daughter was looking for sweets that were high up in the kitchen cabinets. The girl fell backwards, on her head. The loud noise of the fall startled the mother, and she lost herself when she saw her daughter on the floor, in a bad state. The ambulance came as fast as it could and took mother and daughter to Terem, where it was decided to rush the girl to the Emergency room in the hospital. Things looked much too serious for Terem. When they got to the hospital, a nurse came, looked at the child, and decided (something she was not allowed to, as she was not a doctor) that the child's condition was not an emergency and could wait. They waited 6 hours, from 8 pm until 2 am. The child was very hungry, so the mother searched in her purse, finding only a bag of raisins, which she gave her daughter. She waited impatiently until a doctor arrived, who immediately decided that the child needed anesthesia, so that he would be able to begin complicated head surgery. The doctor asked why the mother had waited 6 hours to come after

the child had fallen. The mother frowned and said that she was there earlier, but the nurse decided that it was not an emergency.

The doctor asked to make sure, before administering the anesthesia, that the child had not eaten anything for the last few hours. The mother felt horrible, because she did give her daughter some raisins, just a half an hour before! Sternly, the doctor said that she would need to wait another 6 hours without food, so that he could begin anesthesia and surgery.

Now, the mother was beside herself. She started asking G-d - why?. Why did the nurse say that it was not an emergency? Why did she make the foolish mistake of giving the girl the raisins, without asking the doctor first? And why does she have to wait another six hours to start the surgery? Doesn't G-d have mercy on her daughter?

When the 6 hours had passed, the doctor came, ready to start his medical procedures. He checked the child, and told the mother that now, it does not seem as though the child will have to go through head surgery. Something happened over those six hours.

Now all delays made sense.

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