

Good Merchandise

"Last call to board flight 001 to New York."

The announcement brought a flurry of activity in the boarding area. The last remaining passengers gathered up their possessions. Betzalel waited patiently in line. Behind him was a friendly looking man. He smiled.

"It looks like we'll be traveling together for the next ten hours."

"May we all arrive safely."

"Amen. What is your name, young man?"

"Betzalel. And yours sir?"

"Kalman. Pleased to meet you, Betzalel."

And so, the two strike up a conversation.

"What do you do with your time during the day, Betzalel?"

"I learn in yeshiva."

"Wonderful! Do you have an opportunity to teach?"

"In a manner of speaking."

"How?"

"I just wrote a *sefer* (book) of *chidushei Torah* (original Torah thoughts)."

"That is fascinating! May I see it?"

"Umm. I'm sorry. I don't have a copy with me. I put them all in my suitcase."

"Betzalel, what kind of a businessman are you? A good businessman always carries his merchandise with him."

Betzalel thought for a moment, smiled, and began to speak.

"I will answer you with a Devar Torah from the Keli Yakar on this week's parasha. Yaakov Avinu blesses his sons at the end of his life. To Yissacher he gives the following blessing: 'Yissacher is a strong donkey; he rests between the boundaries' (Bereshis 49:14). Yissacher was a great Torah scholar. Rashi explains that he bore the yoke of Torah as a donkey bears a heavy load. The Keli Yakar elaborates. Just as the donkey and his load are inseparable, so too the scholar and his learning are inseparable. The Torah that he has acquired through diligent learning is always with him. It is not like other merchandise, that can be separated from its' owner. Quite the opposite! He and his Torah never part."

"Betzalel, that is fascinating."

"Would you like to hear more?"

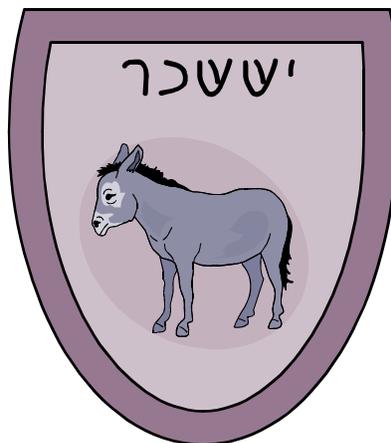
"Yes, please."

"The Keli Yakar continues to darshen the verse, 'He rests between the boundaries.' (Bereshis 49:14). Which boundaries do Yissacher and his cargo rest between? The verse in Mishei (3:16) elaborates: Long life are on its (Torah's) right side, on its left are wealth and honor. One who carries his Torah knowledge with him is always accompanied by the blessings of health, wealth, and honor."

"Wonderful! Betzalel, Please forgive me. I must apologize. I see that you are a very good businessman. Your merchandise is Torah, and your Torah is always with you, on your fingertips. May you grow to be a big talmid chochom, and may health, wealth, and honor always be yours."
"Amen."

Kinderlach . . .

What is the best business to work at? Learning Torah. If you work hard, pray to Hashem and are zoche (deserving), you will acquire a lot of Torah. Those are your earnings. Now you can invest them in merchandise. What is the best merchandise? Torah! It is always with you. Its blessings of long life, prosperity, and respect accompany you wherever you go. It is also the only merchandise that you can take along with you after 120 years into Olam Habbo. Everything else stays behind. When you get there, you will find that your goods are worth far more than gold, silver, and diamonds. So work hard learning and earning Torah, kinderlach. It is an acquisition that gives you benefits now, and stays with you always and forever.



All the Blessings

What are we striving for? What is our goal in life? To get close to Hashem. To do His will, and bask in the glow of His *Shechina* (Holy Presence). This is a relationship that will last forever, bringing us eternal pleasure and reward. What is the best blessing that someone can receive? A blessing for success in accomplishing this goal. This is precisely the blessing that Yaakov Avinu gave to Yosef's sons - Ephraim and Menashe. "Hashem Who guided my forefathers Avraham and Yitzchak before Him; Hashem, who shepherds me from my inception until this day: May the angel who saves me from all evil bless the lads"

(Bereshis 48:15-16)].

The Abarbanel relates that there are three main blessings that a person gives to his fellow man. Firstly, he should go straight along the path of spiritual success. Secondly, he should be blessed with the material means to pursue Avodas Hashem without interference. Thirdly, he should be saved from all tragedies. Yaakov gave these very same blessings to Ephraim and Menashe. "Hashem Who guided my forefathers Avraham and Yitzchak before Him." This is the first blessing; that one should be guided along the path of Avodas Hashem. As the verse states about Avraham Avinu "Walk before Me and be perfect" (Bereshis 17:1). The second blessing is expressed in the next words of Yaakov Avinu. "Hashem, who shepherds me from my inception (*mayodi*) until this (*'hazze*) day". The gematria of the word "*mayodi*" is 130. Hashem provided *parnassa* (livelihood) for Yaakov Avinu 130 years of his life until he came to Mitzraim. "*Hazze*" has a gematria of seventeen. Yosef, the *shaliach* (agent) of Hashem provided for Yaakov and his sons the last 17 years of his life in Mitzraim. The third blessing is the one given to "*kal ha'nearim*" (all of the young boys) on Simchas Torah. "May the angel who saves me from all evil bless the lads". These three blessings include everything, and are appropriate for anyone at any time.

Kinderlach . . .

Blessings are wonderful. We should all give and receive many of them. When you see a friend, give him a blessing! "May Hashem bless you with all good things!" When you go to a simcha (joyous event), bless the baal simcha (host). "May Hashem bless you with many more simchas!" You may see that blessings are infectious. People may begin to bless you. Always answer "amen" to their blessings. Lastly, pray to Hashem for His blessings. He can help you and bless you the most. Kinderlach, may you always merit many, many blessings!

Parasha Questions:

- Who went along with Yosef to bury Yaakov? (50:7-9)
- How many days did Mitzraim cry over Yaakov's death, and why? (50:3 and Rashi)
- Did Paroh know Lason Hakodesh? (Rashi 50:6)
- Which descendants of Binyamin would divide the spoils? (Rashi 49:27)
- Which fruit grew in the portion of Asher? (Rashi 49:20)
- Against whom will Dan take revenge? (Rashi 49:16)