

Alumni Reflections

Impact of Limud HaTorah

The Runaway Husband

By: Rabbi Dovid Silverberg, Owner of Frankel's World of Judaica

Kollel Member
2006-2011



Owner of Frankel's
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It's one of the most moving moments in the Torah- Yaakov is told that his beloved son Yosef, whom he thought was long dead, is still alive.

The Torah records the incident with the following two somewhat puzzling verses: "They told him saying, 'Yosef is still alive,' and that he is ruler over all the land of Egypt; but his heart rejected it, for he could not believe them. However, when they related to him all the words that Yosef had spoken to them, and he saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to transport him, then the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived." (Bereishis, 45:26-27)

Why couldn't Yaakov believe the original news? Additionally, what was it about the wagons that convinced Yaakov in the end?

Using the following story with the Gaon of Vilna, Rav Elya Baruch Finkel explained Yaakov's reaction.

About 200 years ago, a young man abruptly fled Vilna leaving behind his newlywed wife. After the man failed to return for a few years the woman was resigned to her bitter fate- to remain alone forever- as her husband had not provided her with a get (divorce document). Suddenly, after many years a man arrived in town claiming to be the long lost husband. The woman was shocked at the sudden appearance of this man- greatly aged- who seemed to know everything about their personal life together. Logically, it made sense that this indeed was her husband, but she still had some doubts. She sought the advice of the famed Vilna Gaon.

"Wait until Friday night," the Gaon said, "and watch him as he enters the shul for davening. See if he knows where his seat is."

Sure enough, when the man arrived in

shul that Friday night, he didn't know where his seat used to be.

After further interrogation, the man revealed that he had met the real husband, who fed him the entire story in an attempt to convince this woman to marry him for some ulterior motive. After the imposter was promptly sent away, the Gaon was asked why he thought to inquire about the man's seat in shul.

The Gaon replied that when one is involved in a sinful and despicable act, he isn't thinking of anything holy. "I knew such a man would never think to ask about a seat in shul. It just wouldn't cross his mind!"

When Yaakov first heard the news about Yosef he was deeply troubled. If indeed Yosef was alive and the ruler of the decadent Egyptian society, he too surely must have descended to their ways. Facing that reality, Yaakov would have rather believed him dead than as a regular Egyptian. When Yosef sent wagons back to his father, the Medrash reveals that he was hinting at the last Torah portion he had learned with his father before they were separated- the Parsha of the 'Egla Arufah-axed heifer.' By sending agalos, wagons, Yosef was telling his father, "Even though I am ruler of Egypt, I am still thinking about matters of Torah." Yaakov was relieved.

Torah is the hallmark of a Jew. If a Jew is thinking about matters of Torah, it is the biggest sign that everything else in his life is in order. If one sets aside set times for Torah study he will truly begin to emulate our illustrious Avos, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, about whom it is written that in their entire lives, they never ceased to set aside times for Torah study.

Have a good Shabbos.



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MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY
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Organization Profile



Frankel's
WORLD OF JUDAICA



Frankel's World of Judaica

The Incredible Story of How Frankel's Got It's Name

A native of Husiyatin, Galicia, Rabbi Dovid Frankel was a renowned sefarim merchant based first in his hometown, and then in his new home of Vienna. He would travel in search of rare manuscripts to purchase and resell, gems like Rabbeinu Elchonon on Meseches Avodah Zarah and the Ritva on Bava Basra. So well-known was the Frankel name that with the Nazi rise to power, Eichmann himself, yemach shmo, marched into R' Dovid's home and immediately confiscated the valuable collection, ordering the family to leave within twenty four hours--or else.

R' Dovid eventually reopened his business on the Lower East Side in New York. After his petirah, his son Rabbi Lipa Frankel ran Frankel's Bookstore, moving the storefront to Boro Park. In between selling wares, R' Lipa involved himself in his first love, learning from his sefarim! In the mid-eighties, the Frankel family sold the business to Rabbi Binyomin Kasnett, who ran the bookstore for over twenty years before he closed its doors and went online as JewishUsedBooks.com.

In the summer of 2013, incurable sefarim aficionado Dovid Silverberg responded to an advertisement in the Yated Neeman. "Online Jewish used bookstore for sale." Whom did he reach but the interim owner of Frankel's Bookstore from 16th Avenue in Boro Park! And so it was that the great-grandson and namesake of R' Dovid Frankel, Dovid Silverberg, grabbed the opportunity to bring the business back into the family. Combining business acumen with the hereditary love for sefarim and all things Judaica, R' Dovid has re-established Frankel's World of Judaica in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Stop in and see for yourself!

Frankel's World of Judaica

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HOURS:
M-TH 12-6 FRI- 11-2 SUN -11-4

Insights Into Davening - By: Rabbi Yaakov E. Mandelbaum

**Asher
Yatzar (3)**

"Chalulim, Chalulim" - "Cavities, Cavities"

In Asher Yatzar, we praise Hashem for creating us with "cavities, cavities." The Vilna Gaon points out that the gematria of "chalulim, chalulim" is 248- equal to the amount of limbs in a person's body. This, says the Gaon, reflects the fact that every single organ in the human body has cavities no matter how small. Even hairs have tiny cavities! Based on this, when we mention these words we should thank Hashem for every single one of our organs- not just the ones that we typically think of as hollow.