

Parashas

A PARABLE WITH A MESSAGE

וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם
עַל פִּי ה' וְאֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם.

It was a dark, freezing winter night. It was the kind of night when even the wild beasts of the forest sought refuge in their dens. The fierce winds howled, tore, and wailed with indescribable force, bending the massive, ancient trees of the thick, black forest all the way to the frozen earth until they cracked under the tremendous pressure.

Through the deep, frosty snow trudged a Jew—a broken, desperate father. His heart was weathering a storm far heavier and darker than the winter blizzard raging around him.

This was Reb Yankel, a man whose memory of a rich, or even satisfying, meal had long faded. He was a pauper who toiled day and night to support his large family, yet rarely had more than a piece of hard, dry bread to ease the terrible hunger of his pale, emaciated children. But tonight, his grinding poverty was the absolute least of his worries.

In broad daylight, a horrific and bloodthirsty false accusation—a cruel blood libel—had been hurled upon his innocent head. This quiet, observant Jew was blamed for a severe crime that had never occurred, a pure fabrication invented by wicked men simply to destroy him. Awaiting him were the most gruesome decrees and punishments the cruel local authorities could devise.

Left with no choice and driven by the primal need to survive, Yankel grabbed his little children in the dead of night. Together with his frail, exhausted wife, they fled deep into the unknown, wild paths of the forest. They had no destination; they only knew they had to run from certain death.

They dragged themselves through the biting, piercing frost for days and nights. Their shoes were torn to shreds, and the fresh white snow was stained red from their bleeding, frostbitten feet. As night fell over the terrifying forest like a heavy black curtain, they felt their strength giving out completely.

Suddenly, as if answering a prayer from Heaven, they spotted a tiny, abandoned forest cabin. With their very

Parshas Mattos-Masei

last ounce of strength, they dragged themselves inside to survive the night and escape the lethal wind.

But then, in the deepest part of the night, the unexpected happened. On the freezing dirt floor of that old wooden hut, his wife gave birth. And it wasn't just one child—**she gave birth to twins!**

"Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov!" The joyous words should have echoed with pure happiness, but the joy was heavily tainted with crushing anxiety. A fierce storm of conflicting emotions engulfed Yankel. A spark of joy mixed with a terrifying, unbearable despair that threatened to crush him.

Twins?! Merciful Father, how will we feed them? he thought. We are completely alone in an abandoned hut. We haven't seen a drop of water to wet our dry lips in days, let alone a crumb of bread!

Outside, the wind froze their bones. Inside, the newborn infants wailed—cries that tore at the father's broken heart. The situation was catastrophic. Only a miracle from Heaven could save them.

With a shattered heart and bitter tears melting the freezing snow, the desperate couple made the most agonizing decision parents could ever face.

"We must save at least one child from certain starvation!" they wept, looking at the two innocent, newborn souls.

They devised a plan. They knew that on the edge of a nearby village lived an incredibly wealthy man—a multi-millionaire who swam in riches but who, to his great sorrow, had never been blessed with children. The heartbroken parents comforted themselves with a hopeful thought: if they left one of their sweet babies on the steps of his mansion, the rich man would open his door in the morning, look into the innocent face of the child, and his heart would melt. He would surely take pity on the helpless soul, take him into his warm home, and raise him with love and immense wealth.

With trembling, freezing hands, Reb Yankel took one of the newborns. He stripped off his own torn coat—his only protection against the bitter cold—wrapped it around the frail infant, gave the baby a tear-soaked kiss full of agony and love, and stepped out into the dark night, leaving his wife and the other twin behind in the

cabin.

When Yankel arrived at the magnificent palace, he bowed to the ground. With a silent prayer on his lips, he gently placed his precious treasure on the steps, prepared to vanish into the shadows unseen.

But in that exact second, tragedy struck. As the sages say, *"Poverty pursues the poor."*

Just a few days prior, another starving pauper had the exact same idea! Knowing the rich man was childless, this stranger had left his own infant on the very same doorstep. However, the rich man was not merciful; he was a cruel, stingy tyrant with a heart of stone. Enraged by the discovery of the baby, he had hatched a spiteful plan: *"The insolent father of this screaming brat will surely return to spy on his child. I will wait in ambush and return his 'package' to him with interest!"*

And so, just as our innocent Reb Yankel bent down to place his baby on the steps, the massive wooden door

Yankel stood completely paralyzed in the snow. He had sought to ease his burden and save one child from starvation, and now? Now, he had three hungry infants! One with his wife in the woods, his own child that was just handed back to him, and a third, completely strange child violently forced upon him.

burst open! The furious rich man stood there, his face red as fire, holding the other poor man's child. Seeing Yankel, he began to scream:

"Aha! Caught you! You despicable beggar! Did you think I would raise your gluttons in my home?! Take your child and get out of here before I release the hounds!"

Without an ounce of pity, the rich man violently shoved the stranger's baby straight into Yankel's arms. Then, he bent down, snatched up the newborn Yankel had just placed on the steps, and shoved that one into Yankel's arms too! With a deafening crash, he slammed the heavy door and locked every bolt.

Yankel stood completely paralyzed in the snow. He had sought to ease his burden and save one child from starvation, and now? Now, he had three hungry infants! One with his wife in the woods, his own child that was

just handed back to him, and a third, completely strange child violently forced upon him.

He fell to his knees in the frost, weeping to the Heavens. "Merciful Father! How much longer must I endure this bitter exile? *My spirit is shattered! I beg of You, pull me out of this abyss and send me salvation!*"

His frozen fist pounded on the heavy door, but it was useless. Only silence answered him.

With leaden steps and a mind swirling worse than the blizzard, Yankel returned to the lonely cabin. How could he face his wife? How could he tell a mother who had just given birth to twins that he brought back another mouth to feed in their darkest hour?

But Yankel, possessing a warm, pure Jewish heart, spoke with fiery conviction: **"A Jewish soul is a piece of Hashem! We cannot throw him away to certain death. The same Merciful Father who sustains our children will not abandon this orphan!"**

Despite their unbearable poverty, the couple raised the strange child alongside their own. Even on days when they starved, these noble parents took the bread from their own mouths, giving the last hard crumbs to the adopted child so he wouldn't feel the pangs of hunger.

Years passed. The wheel of fortune continued to turn, yet the heavy grind of poverty still pressed down on the family. The children were growing up, but food remained scarce.

One cold winter day, Reb Yankel sat by the oven, using a thin needle to sew a patch onto the old, worn-out rags that the adopted child had been wrapped in on that fateful night. Suddenly, as his fingers ran over the frayed fabric, he felt something hard hidden deep within the collar.

His heart began to race. He ripped open a hidden, sewn-in pocket, and a small, folded piece of paper fell out. Opening it, his eyes scanned the tear-stained ink:

"Whoever finds this note and cares for this child, know that he is not a poor orphan. He belongs to a wealthy, noble family who had to hide him out of fear! The merciful soul who takes him in and raises him with love should seek out Nachman at [this specific address]. There, he will be welcomed with open arms and rewarded with an immense sum of money for raising and sustaining our child!"

For a moment, the decades of hunger, toil, and blood flashed before Yankel's eyes. Then, his face lit up like a summer sun. The undeniable hand of Divine Providence had been guiding him every step of the way.

Without wasting a single moment, Yankel hitched his horse and wagon and rode to the address. When he delivered the miraculous news, the noble family wept with uncontrollable joy. Their beloved heir was alive and had been raised by such a righteous man!

True to their word, they handed Yankel the astronomical sum they had set aside year after year. He left loaded with heavy sacks of gleaming gold coins—a grand reward for his tremendous self-sacrifice.

Overnight, Reb Yankel, the hunted, humiliated pauper, became a man of immense wealth and influence. His terrible hunger and bitter shame became faded memories, replaced by honor and an incredible peace of mind.

Let us pause and reflect on Reb Yankel's psychological transformation:

In the early years after fleeing his home, Yankel's entire worldview was tethered to his tragic past. He measured time by his pain: *"It has been exactly three months since that dark night,"* or *"I am a hundred miles away from the libel."* His suffering was the center of his existence.

The moment he became wealthy, his perspective shifted entirely. He stopped counting from the day he fled. Instead, his new language was: *"Today makes two years since we became wealthy,"* or *"It's been a year since I entered this great business."*

THE INTERPRETATION.....

This is a profound parable that opens our eyes to the grand sweep of Jewish history, as well as to our personal, daily spiritual journeys. Here is the translation and adaptation of this beautiful lesson.

When the Jewish people were in Egypt—the **"כור הברזל"** - "iron crucible" of suffering and spiritual impurity—their initial mindset upon leaving was exactly like that of

the fleeing pauper. They counted their blessings based on what they had escaped: "Thank God we are out of Egypt! We are finally free from Pharaoh and his whip!" This first stage of their journey is referred to in the Torah as their **מוצאי־הם** - Motzaei-hem (their departures). Their entire joy was simply the relief of escaping the pain.

But the Creator did not take the Jewish people out of Egypt merely to let them wander as "free people" in a barren desert. A Jew is never just a runaway! The ultimate goal was to bestow upon them the greatest possible wealth: receiving the Holy Torah at Mount Sinai, entering the Promised Land, and becoming a "מְמַלְכֵת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ" - "Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation."

Fast forward forty years. The Jewish people are standing at the threshold of the Holy Land. They are no longer broken, battered slaves running for their lives. They have become a Dor Deah (a Generation of Knowledge). They are crowned with the Torah, they carry the holy Mishkan burning with sacred fire within their camp, and they are enveloped by the Clouds of Glory. They are now the ultimate billionaires in spirituality!

At this pivotal moment, the Torah states: "וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת-מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם" - "And Moshe wrote their departures (Motzaeihem) according to their journeys (Lemasaihem)."

Moshe, the faithful shepherd, offers them a profound shift in perspective. He speaks to them with words of fire: "Holy Jews! When you look back at your exodus from Egypt, you must know the deeper truth. It was never just a desperate escape from poverty, grueling labor, or Pharaoh's whip. No! It was truly 'לְמַסְעֵיהֶם' - 'Lemasaihem'—the entire departure was merely a preparation for the elevated, holy journeys you are on right now!"

Standing at the peak of their newfound spiritual wealth, their timeline changes. They no longer look back at the past through the lens of a beaten slave in a dark dungeon. Instead, they measure their entire journey from their current vantage point of greatness. From this summit, they can see with crystal clarity that the entire Exodus, and every bitter tear shed, was a meticulously calculated path leading to the ultimate purpose: to cleave to the Creator and bask in His infinite goodness.

The profound depth of this lesson applies directly to every single soul in its daily spiritual work (Avodas Hashem). In the practical life of every person, there are times when we find ourselves trapped in our own personal "Egypt." Physical hardships and daunting life challenges. Spiritual darkness and feelings of profound emptiness. Feeling chained to a negative desire, a bad habit, or a state of inner exile with no visible way out.

When, through Hashem's boundless mercy, the sea finally splits and a person breaks free from that darkness, what is their first reaction? They often view

their salvation through the eyes of a pauper. They breathe a sigh of relief and say: "*Baruch Hashem! What a relief that I no longer have to suffer through that terrible crisis!*"

But this is merely the perspective of the impoverished man escaping his prison. His mind is still consumed by the past, focused entirely on the darkness he just escaped. Is this truly the ultimate goal? Is this the true perfection of leaving Egypt?

The light of Chassidic teachings reveals a much deeper truth. The Merciful Father does not lead a person into a trial or a dark abyss merely so they can drag themselves out and return to their baseline. Heaven forbid!

"יְרִידָה צֹרֶחַ אֲלִיָּה" - Yeridah tzorech aliyah — Every descent is strictly for the sake of a higher ascent.

Every crisis, downfall, or period of suffering is, in reality, a hidden stepping stone. It is a springboard designed to help you reach towering spiritual heights that you could never have attained without the prior descent. When a person emerges from a trial, they must not settle for ruminating on "what was." Instead, they must breathe in fresh spiritual vitality and transform into a "wealthy" individual—one who seeks higher, holier treasures.

When a person takes this to heart and tastes the true sweetness of Yiddishkeit—experiencing warmth in prayer, deep passion for Torah, and an inner connection through a Mitzvah—their entire mindset shifts.

They no longer constantly look back over their shoulders at the bitter past. They don't spend their days rehashing old problems and merely celebrating how far away they are from them. On the contrary, they measure and value their life exclusively by their current luminous spiritual goals and aspirations.

And then, a tremendous light dawns upon them. Looking back, they realize that their entire personal "Exodus," including the deepest crisis they endured, was precisely Divine Providence (Hashgacha Pratis). Heaven orchestrated everything for one singular purpose: to shake them awake, prepare their vessels, and propel them higher and higher until they reached this beautiful, holy place—their own personal "Mount Sinai."

This is the shift from a life of merely "סוּר מֵרָע" - Sur Mera (fleeing from evil and problems) to a life of "עֲשֵׂה טוֹב" - Aseh Tov (running passionately toward the good and the holy). This is the true wealth of a Jew, and it is this perspective that grants us the strength to endure all the hardships of our exile with immense, unbreakable joy.— Based on the teachings of Rabbi Yaakov Abaron of Aleksander

Copyright 2026 by: **A mushel to learn**
Sign up to receive our weekly publication:
or to send feedback:
Email: musheltolearn@gmail.com