

# SICHA STORY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



*Likkutei Sichos, Volume 15*

## Vayetze, Sicha 4

- Rabbi Yossi Nemes, Metairie, Louisiana

*In section Ches, we learn that though Yaakov's main possessions were sheep (Bittul) when dealing with Eisav, who is impressed by strength, Yaakov mentions first his oxen and donkeys and only then his sheep. Yaakov shares with Eisav that while he practices Bittul (sheep) he also possesses (Oxen) the fortitude to stand strong and firm.*

### The Humble Strength of Reb Chaim Brisker

1) Reb Yoel Kahn, A"h related: When the previous Rebbe heard of the passing of Reb Chaim Brisker, he cried profusely, as he held Reb Chaim in high regard. The Rebbe then related a story that at one of the conferences of Rabonim in Czarist Russia (The Rebbe Rashab was not present), Reb Chaim noticed that the other Rabonim were not properly aware of the great danger in what the Russian Government was proposing.

Reb Chaim stood up and proclaimed, "I am Rabbi Chaim of Brisk. I'm known throughout the entire world. I decree with the power of Torah that I possess, that this proposal be removed from the agenda of this conference." Due to the honor that Reb Chaim was given, the matter was indeed never voted on or approved.

Reb Chaim, as the previous Rebbe himself mentions (See Sichas Achron Shel Pesach, 5702/1942), was a humble person with a broken heart. Nevertheless, when the situation demanded, such as opposing the Czar's government, he became utterly resolute and strong.

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*In section 10 we learn that when Avodah is based on Bittul, it is not measured by what situation we are comfortable with. Any location we find ourselves in or any situation that Hashem brings our way; we fully engage with to fulfill our mission. Here is an abbreviated version of a well-known story. The bold font is for the part of the story most connected*

### The power of Bittul based on pure Emunah

2) As published by the Previous Rebbe in the intro to פוקח עיורים : A Chasid of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Yosef, was a great Torah scholar. Once, when he was in Yechidus - a private audience, with the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe said to him, “For the benefit of your soul, it would be better for you to be a wagon driver than a Rav!” Reb Yosef did not understand this puzzling directive from the Rebbe.

Ten years passed and a delegation arrived from a nearby city, offering him a position as Rav of their town. Reb Yosef remembered what the Alter Rebbe had told him over a decade ago—and he told the delegation that he would not be accepting their offer. Reb Yosef understood that now was the time to become a wagon driver.

After a month of wavering and confusion, he decided that he would go and learn the trade. He approached local wagon drivers to teach him the business. Though the wagon drivers were stunned by the request, one of them volunteered to teach him the trade. He took him to the stable and began showing him how to grease the wheels of the wagon and how to hitch up a horse. Reb Yosef, unfamiliar with this kind of work, quickly got himself all dirty. And on top of that, one of the horses whipped him in the eye with his tail. And so, broken, depressed and dirty, Rabbi Yosef went back home.

When Reb Yosef came home, he found his wife crying as she had already heard the talk of the town that her husband had lost his mind. Reb Yosef went into his room and burst into tears. Reb Yosef came out and told his wife what the Alter Rebbe had told him over ten years ago, that for the good of his soul, it would be better if he were to be a wagon driver, than a Rav. When his wife heard this, she immediately commented: “If the Rebbe told you to do it, then why are you crying? First thing tomorrow morning, I am selling my jewelry so you can go buy a horse and wagon and go off and be successful!”

Reb Yosef was ashamed and humbled. Here he was, a noted disciple of the Rebbe, who heard this directive directly from the Rebbe, and, yet he was unable to do what the Rebbe asked of him. His wife, however, with her sincere Chasidic faith, decided, without hesitation, to happily sell her jewelry to fulfill the Rebbe's wishes.

Reb Yosef became a wagon driver and was accustomed to his work. Ten years later he was at an inn, and a person approached him looking to hire him for a ride. The man asked Reb Yosef if he could take him the next morning and Reb Yosef agreed. The man asked him, "At exactly what time tomorrow morning?" Rabbi Yosef said, "After the morning prayers." But the man mockingly replied: "I am not interested in your prayers! Exactly what time will it be?" As it turned out, this traveler and the wagon driver were staying in adjacent rooms and through his bedroom wall, the traveler could hear Reb Yosef praying and weeping to G-d.

This Jewish traveler had once been a practicing Jew, married with kids. But one day, he left it all, abandoning his wife and children, eventually becoming the personal assistant of an important noble person. As this traveler heard Rabbi Yosef praying, a well of memories opened. He remembered his parents, his wife, and his children. Who knows what their situation is today? Are they even still alive? And if so, do they have any kind of income? What shame has he brought upon them? How much suffering has he caused them? He began feeling powerful urges of remorse, and by the next morning, he came down with an extremely high fever. He called Reb Yosef and shared his entire life story and asked him to help him find his way back to his family, and to the practice of Judaism.

Reb Yosef stayed at the inn until the traveler got better and helped him on his new path in life until he was reunited with his family. Several months later, Reb Yosef traveled to the Mittlerer Rebbe, as the Alter Rebbe had since passed away. When he went into the Rebbe's office for his private audience, the Rebbe told him: "My father just came to me and told me that you completed your mission as a wagon driver. The entire purpose of becoming a wagon driver was to help this one person back to his family and his people."

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