

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's Parsha Chayei-Sorah, the Torah tells in great detail the account of Avrohom buying the burial plot for his recently deceased wife Sorah. The Torah describes how Avrohom did not bargain on the price; how he paid right away; and how he paid in cash. The Sages tell us that the deeds of the Avos - patriarchs are a sign of the proper behavior for us, the children of the patriarchs. We can therefore learn a lesson from the Torah's lengthy account of Avrohom's honest business dealings; namely, we must always be honest in business. The following two stories illustrate how being honest in business causes Hashem's name to be sanctified in the world.

A number of years ago, the Kleinbarts of Boro Park was expecting their sixth child. When labor began one morning, she told her husband, Yidel, that they had to rush to Mt. Sinai Hospital in Manhattan to deliver their child. "It's rush hour. How will we get there on time?" Yidel asked anxiously. "Don't worry, we'll get there," his wife assured him, a little nervous herself.

Driving through the streets of Boro Park was manageable, but the Prospect and Gowanus Expressways toward Manhattan were frightening. The roads were clogged. Every passing minute increased Yidel's fear and trepidation that they would not get to the hospital in time.

The quickest way to Manhattan is through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, but the lines of cars bottlenecking toward the tunnel seemed endless. In desperation, Yidel turned illegally into the lane reserved for buses and taxis, and sped along, a lone car among yellow cabs and commuter buses. When he reached the tollbooth, Yidel sped into the tunnel, without paying the toll.

As they emerged from the other side, a policeman, notified of Yidel's "crime" by tunnel authorities, flagged down the car. "What's going on?" the officer demanded. "My wife is in labor. We're rushing to the hospital to have a baby," shouted Yidel. "Why didn't you call us?" the policeman called back. "We would have given you an escort. Go!"

The Kleinbarts resumed their rush and made it to Mount Sinai Hospital on time. The baby was born that morning. That night Yidel returned to Boro Park from Manhattan via the Battery Tunnel, and when he reached the tollbooth, he handed two tokens to the toll collector.

"What's this?" the toll collector asked. "I was here this morning and I was rushing — " Before he could finish the sentence, the toll collector said excitedly, "Oh, what did your wife have?"

Yidel was stunned. "How did you know?" he asked the toll collector in amazement. "They told us that a guy like you (a religious Jew) would surely come back and pay!" replied the toll collector. The officers in the tollbooth and the patrol car had seen Yidel for merely moments and yet were confident to make their evaluation of an Orthodox Jew! (p. 130 Echoes of The Maggid Rav Paysach Krohn.)

Before we continue with our second story, let us mention the words of the Sages: "In three ways does a person reveal his true nature: in his drunkenness, the way he spends money, and in the time of his anger." (Eruvin 65b) The Sage also tell us that the first question one is asked when he arrives to his Beis Din - Rabbinical court in heaven, is whether he dealt honestly in business. (Shabbos 30a) Let us now tell the second story.

One early afternoon, a eight year old boy Chaim Sholom boarded the Number 3 bus on Rechov Panim Meirof in the Mattesdorf section of Jerusalem, heading downtown.

Noticing the unusually long line of people waiting to board the bus, the driver opened both the front and back doors and called out, "Tell everyone to get on, and let those in the back pass up their money or cartisiot - bus cards." People jostled their way onto the already crowded bus. Those who entered through the front door had their cartisiot punched as they passed the driver, while those who entered through the back doors passed their cards or money forward.

The eight-year-old boy made his way up to the driver and extended his cartisia to have it punched. "I already punched your card," said the driver. "No, you didn't," protested the boy softly.

It was hot. The driver had lost his patience a few stops earlier and was in no mood for an argument. "Get inside," he ordered. "You are blocking the people behind you." The little boy looked up to the stern-faced driver and said softly, "Ani lo yachol, zeh geneivah. (I can't. It's stealing.)"

"I told you, I punched your card," repeated the driver. "Get inside." The little boy walked towards the middle of the bus, downcast. The bus began moving, and after a few hundred feet the driver stopped the bus. He had looked into his rearview mirror and noticed that the young boy was leaning against a pole in the back, crying.

The driver turned to the boy and called him up front. "What's the matter, young man?" he asked. "Why are you crying?" The little boy came forward, looked up at the driver, and repeated softly, "Ani lo yachol, zeh geneivah. (I can't. That's stealing.)" The driver took out his puncher, took the cartisia from the child, punched it, and gave it back.

He then patted the boy on the forehead and said with amazement and Jewish pride, "Zeh yafeh. (That's beautiful.)" (p.124 Along the Maggid's Journey, Rav Paysach Krohn)

Through dealing honestly in business we will make Jews look good. And more importantly, we will make our Father in Heaven - Hashem look good. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**