

**Good Shabbos Everyone.** The Torah tells us "So Yakov drew close to Yitzchok his father who felt him and said: The voice is the voice of Yakov, but the hands are the hands of Eisav." (Bereishis 27:22) The Midrash explains this powerful verse in an interesting way. The power of Yakov (who represents the Nation of Yisroel) is in its voice with prayer and Torah study, while the power of Eisav and the nations is in its physical strength. (Midrash Eicha Pesichta, Aleph,Beis) As the Prophet tells us "Fear not, O' worm of Yakov." (R.Amonon Yitzchok, Shlita, citing Yeshiyahu 41:14)

Why is Yakov compared to a worm? The power of a worm is in its mouth. A tiny worm can bore through the strongest wood with its mouth. So too, the strength of Yisroel is in its mouth with prayer. (Rashi and Metzudas Dovid on Yeshiyahu 41:14) The nations may be bigger and stronger than we are, but we have the power of prayer, which is much stronger than their physical power. One of the ways we can use prayer is to help others. If we hear that someone is not well, G-d forbid or perhaps someone is looking for a marriage partner, we can help them by davening - praying for them. Sometimes, our prayer can positively affect others without us even realizing it... In 1983, Rabbi Aryeh Rodin, a graduate of Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim in Forest Hills, New York, assumed the spiritual leadership of the newly formed Young Israel of Dallas, Texas. As a dedicated Rabbi he gave shiurim- Torah classes to the community at large, and with his painstaking outreach work, more families than ever before became committed to authentic Judaism.

One day Rabbi Rodin was sitting in his small office when a gentleman he had never seen before walked in. "Rabbi," he said in a deep Texan drawl, "Can I have a word with you?" "Sure," said Rabbi Rodin. "Please sit down." "My name is Leonard Fruhman," the man began, extending Rabbi Rodin a very firm handshake. Leonard and the rabbi spoke about Judaism and after a while Leonard said, "I would like to make a contribution to your synagogue." Rabbi Rodin was surprised. People do not usually walk into a shul off the street and give money without being asked. Rabbi Rodin expected to receive a check for \$100.00. Instead, he was astounded when Mr. Fruhman told him the check would be for \$2,000.00! "I do not have any checks with me," said Leonard with an easy smile, "but I will be back next week. You can count on that, Rabbi." Rabbi Rodin returned the smile and wished Leonard well. In his heart, though, Rabbi Rodin was convinced that Leonard would not be back. He had no synagogue affiliation or commitment to Orthodox Judaism, and \$2,000.00 was a substantial amount of money for a first-time donation. Rabbi Rodin thought that Leonard would probably rethink his pledge and decide he had been too generous. No one gives that amount to a shul with which he is unfamiliar. To the surprise of Rabbi Rodin, Leonard returned, but the check was not for \$2,000.00. It was for three thousand dollars! "I thought about our conversation throughout the week, Rabbi, and I liked what you told me," Leonard said with enthusiasm, "so I increased the amount I am giving." Rabbi Rodin was speechless. When he regained his composure, he asked Leonard jokingly, "Perhaps you would like to come back next week?" That first donation began a long relationship between the Fruhmans and Rabbi Rodin. When the rabbi moved to Far North Dallas in 1986 to establish Congregation Ohev Shalom, Leonard came along. Leonard passed away tragically at the untimely age of 49, and shortly afterwards his mother and family made substantial donations to rebuild and renovate the Ohev Shalom synagogue in his memory.

At the shloshim of Leonard, a memorial held 30 days after his passing, Rabbi Rodin, in a moving eulogy, told the following remarkable story. In 1986 Leonard made his first trip ever to Israel. He was determined to "see all the sights." One morning he went to the Kosel (the Western Wall), where Jews the world over come to pray, and where many write "messages to G-d" on small pieces of paper and insert them in the crevices of the holy Kosel. Unfamiliar with the conventional text of prayers, Leonard walked up to the Kosel, and respectfully put his right hand on the stones of the towering wall. Leonard closed his eyes and in silent prayer expressed to G-d his innermost feelings.

After a while Leonard became aware of a Yerushalmi Jew standing to his right totally immersed in prayer. Wrapped in his tallis, the fellow was swaying gently to and fro, his eyes glued to the worn pages of his Tehillim. Every once in a while, the Yerushalmi Jew would close his eyes, raise his hands to Heaven and sigh. As Leonard observed the orthodox man, Leonard noticed the great happiness on his face, the peaceful simchah of a man connecting with his Maker. Leonard was overcome by a sense of spirituality he had never experienced before. He wished he could sense that bond between man and his Creator. If only he could touch it, feel it, or bottle it. Leonard wished he could give the man some money but he would not even consider interrupting those moments of holiness. Leonard left the uplifted and strengthened, but, in a sense, empty. Suddenly the Judaism he had not been close to meant more to him now than ever before. The noble experience stayed with him for the remainder of his trip in the Holy Land. When he returned to Dallas, Leonard went to the Jewish bakery to meet his friend, the owner, Mr. Abe Preizler. He told Mr. Preizler about his trip to Israel and then he described his emotional experience at the Kosel Hamaaravi. "Tell me," Leonard asked Mr. Preizler, "What synagogue in town do you think that man at the Kosel would feel comfortable praying in?" The reply came quickly, "In the synagogue of Rabbi Rodin." And that is how his friendship with the Orthodox community began, said Rabbi Rodin. And from then on, Leonard and his family grew in their commitment to Judaism.

Rabbi Rodin paused in his hesped - eulogy and then said with emphasis. "Imagine, for a moment, the scene when that Yerushalmi gentleman who was davening - praying at the Kosel comes to Heaven after his prescribed years in this world are complete. Hashem will tell him that he is about to be rewarded for being instrumental in maintaining and refurbishing a shul in Dallas. The fellow probably never heard of Dallas, and if he did he certainly would not know where to find it. Yet, because he davened the way he did, where he did, it turns out that we in this community owe that Yerushalmi so much. And his reward in the Olam HaEmes will be immense." **Good Shabbos Everyone. Good Shabbos Everyone.**