

**Please see below for an exciting opportunity to honor or remember a loved one**

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## **Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates**

Can something that seems bad be something good in disguise? Daniel Gilbert would enthusiastically answer: "YES!!" At the age of 19, Gilbert was a high school dropout who wanted to be a science fiction writer. In an attempt to improve his writing skills, he took a bus to the local community college to enroll in a creative writing class. When he was told that the creative writing class was full, he signed up for the only class that was still open: Introduction to Psychology. It's safe to assume that at the time, Gilbert was at least mildly disappointed that the creative writing class was closed.

However, the field of psychology seemed to agree with the erstwhile creative writer. Gilbert eventually received a B.A. in Psychology and a Ph.D. in Social Psychology. Dr. Gilbert, currently a professor at Harvard University, has won numerous awards for his teaching and research, including the Harvard College Professorship, the Phi Beta Kappa Teaching Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the American Psychological Association's Distinguished Scientific Award. In 2008 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Additionally, Dr. Gilbert is the author of the international bestseller *Stumbling on Happiness*, which has been translated into more than 25 languages and which won the 2007 Royal Society Prize for Science Books.

It is important to train oneself to look positively upon life's situations. Often what appears as 'bad' or 'negative' ends up being a blessing. What can we do to look at challenging situations in a positive light? A Hebrew expression, gam zu l'tova, means 'this too is for the best.' When things don't seem to be going your way, say gam zu l'tova. Dr. Daniel Gilbert would certainly agree that at times, hidden blessings turn out to be the sweetest blessings of all.

## **Parshas Vayishlach Genesis 32:4 -- 36:43**

Jacob and family return from the house of Laban to the land of Israel, only to find Esau heading toward them with 400 men, ready for battle. After preparing his family for war and praying to G-d for help, Jacob attempts to appease his brother by sending him a gift of many animals. After his family crosses the river to await the meeting with Esau, Jacob is left alone for an all-night 'confrontation' with an angel disguised as a man. Although Jacob is victorious, he is left limping from a hip-dislocation. Rejoining his family, Jacob encounters Esau who accepts him with an apparent new-found brotherly love. Jacob and Esau part ways, in peace.

Another crisis arises when Jacob's daughter Dinah is abducted and raped by Shechem, the prince of a town with the same name. Two of Jacob's sons, outraged at the humiliation caused to their sister, trick the town's residents into circumcising themselves (ouch!) on the condition that they would then be allowed to intermarry with Jacob's family. Simeon and Levi (two sons of Jacob) then decimate the entire city and save Dinah. Later in the portion, G-d blesses Jacob and gives him the additional name, Israel. Soon after, Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin, Jacob's

twelfth son. Finally, Jacob returns home and is reunited with his father Isaac. The Torah portion concludes with a lengthy genealogy of Esau's family.

### **Rabbinic Ruminations**

We stand to benefit from good advice others have to offer. Often, though, we're much better at giving advice than taking it. What does the person next door or a colleague at work know, for example, about who we should date? According to a recent study, it turns out they may know a lot more than we think.

Imagine you are about to be introduced to a stranger of the opposite sex. Before meeting, you have a choice of obtaining either: 1) a photograph of them with an autobiography or 2) a 'rating' by someone who previously met this stranger. Which one do you think will better predict how much you'll enjoy your 'speed date'? Your evaluation or that of another person? Most participants in a 2010 study (conducted by Dr. Daniel Gilbert - see above) would prefer number 1 -- their own evaluation. In the experiment, though, the ratings of a previous speed dater were shown to be the best predictor of how much people enjoyed their encounter. Dr. Gilbert called this "The Surprising Power of Neighborly Advice."

Many receive advice, but only the wise profit from it. It may be difficult to know whether advice is good or bad until after we've taken it, but minimally we should weigh all advice carefully to see if it will be beneficial. A business may pay a consultant thousands of dollars for advice and suggestions; why shouldn't we eagerly solicit advice for our personal lives? Proverbs (19:20) says, "Hear counsel, receive instruction, and accept correction, that you may be wise in the future." Don't ignore the power of neighborly advice.

### **Quote of the Week**

It is useless for sheep to pass a resolution in favor of vegetarianism while wolves remain of a different opinion. -- William Ralph Inge (English author 1860 - 1954)

### **Joke of the Week**

Yankel is telling a new joke to Moshe.

"Yitzhak and Hymie were talking one day..."

Right away, Moshe interrupts him. "Always with the Jewish jokes! Give it a rest! Why do your jokes always have to be about Jews? For once, can't you tell a joke about someone other than Jews?"

So Yankel starts again, "Hashimoto and Suzuki were talking one day at their nephew's Bar Mitzvah...."

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**Learning Torah in memory of a loved one, or for a Refuah Sheleima** for a sick person, is an age-old Jewish Tradition. We believe that learning Mishnayot in someone's name acts as a Spiritual Elevation for that person or that person's soul.

At Nusach Hari Synagogue, our Sunday morning learning group is carrying on this tradition by dedicating Mishnayos (part of the Oral Torah) to those in whose names the Torah will be learned. You may sponsor our Learning:

Dedicate Mishnayos for 1 year: \$250

Dedicate Mishnayos for 6 months: \$150

Dedicate Mishnayos for 3 months: \$96

Dedicate Mishnayos for 1 month: \$50

May your loved one be bound up in the bond of eternal life.

May HaShem be filled with compassion to restore the health of your loved one.

To subscribe or for further information, please contact Rabbi Ze'ev Smason at [Pepshort613@gmail.com](mailto:Pepshort613@gmail.com)

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