

Parsha Story

Stories and Parables from
the famed Maggid of Dubno
by Rabbi Chanan Morrison

The End of Exile

KITAVO

The Banished Son

A high-ranking minister had a son named Jack – an insolent, rebellious young man who seemed to take particular delight in aggravating his father at every turn. When Jack's behavior reached a new low and his defiance showed no signs of relenting, the minister decided it was time to take drastic action. He banished the young man from the house.

It was a harsh move, but Jack had earned it. However, Jack remained his son, and despite the banishment, the father could not simply wash his hands of him. He quietly arranged for money to be sent to Jack, just enough to keep him from starving – no fanfare, no acknowledgment, just a quiet stream of financial support from the shadows.

Weeks passed, and as time wore on, the minister grew increasingly agitated. He missed his son. But could he really write to him? Could he just invite Jack back into his life, when the boy had shown no remorse, no desire to change? How could he

undo the punishment when Jack hadn't even so much as hinted at repentance? Still, the minister's heart ached.

A close friend, seeing his struggle, offered a solution. "I understand your dilemma", he said sympathetically. "It's a delicate matter, but you're right. It would be a mistake to invite Jack back without some sign that he has changed. But I think I know a way to get him back – without you lifting a finger."

The minister looked up, intrigued. "And how, pray tell, do you propose to accomplish that?"

"It's simple", the friend replied. "You're the only reason Jack is surviving right now. He doesn't know it, but everyone else does. The money you've been quietly sending him – well, it's the only thing keeping him afloat. He's living off your generosity, but he doesn't know you're the source. As long as that flow continues, Jack will stay where he is, arrogance intact. But the minute you stop sending him money... well, then he'll have no choice but to return to you and beg for your forgiveness. And then, he'll truly be ready to come home."

Time to Come Home

At the time of the Temple's destruction, God decreed that, due to our failings, we needed to be exiled

from our Land. And yet, even in our dispersion among the nations, our Father in Heaven has never abandoned us. He continues to sustain us, providing for us, so that we may endure – even in the face of hardship.

But there are times, in the depths of our exile, when we feel as if God's protection has slipped away, as if His face is hidden from us. This is not a punishment but a call to come home. As the Sages said in B'rachot 3a, “Woe to the Father Who needed to banish His children from His table!”

After all the wrong things we did, it is not God Who needs to appease us. But if God no longer supports and watches over us, if life in exile becomes unbearable – then it is time for us to return home and ask for God's forgiveness.

The Torah itself predicts this: "When you are in distress, and all these things befall you, then you will return to the Eternal your God and obey Him" (D'varim 4:30).

Adapted from Mishlei Yaakov, pp. 396-397