# Chomer Lidrush

*Some ideas to turn your gears heading into Parshas Toldos.*

## Before Anyone Was Paying Attention

*A guest contribution from our chaver R. Zev Shandalov*

"*Vayigdelu hane'arim*" (25:27): Rashi notes that as long as Yaakov and Esav were young, their deeds did not set them apart and no one looked closely at who they were, but at thirteen one went off to the *beit midrash* and the other to *avodah zarah*. Writing a guest post for us, R' Shandalov brings up Rav Don Segal's question: How could two brothers raised in the same home by the same parents turn out so radically different?

Rav Segal, as cited in *Chovas Ha'adam* on the *Iggeres HaRamban*, finds the answer in Rashi's own words, "*ein adam medakdek bahem*." The signs may well have been there; no one read them for what they were. We wave off a child's *lashon hara* or dishonesty with "he's only a child," and what we dismiss as a phase can harden into a trait.

Rav Segal is not asking that children be held to adult standards, only that we not confuse a child who is still developing with a childhood that does not matter. Education is about who a child becomes, not just what he knows, down to the quiet details of honesty, sensitivity, and responsibility, and Rav Segal ties this to "*v'al titosh toras imecha*" (Mishlei 1:8), the lasting imprint of a mother's early teaching. We tend to remember the moment Yaakov and Esav parted ways; Rashi points us to the years before it, when nobody was watching. By the time a child's character is unmistakable, we are seeing the results of lessons taught, or missed, long before.