

---

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON PARSHAS TOLDOS - 5757

---

For e-mail of current or back issues contact [cshulman@paulweiss.com](mailto:cshulman@paulweiss.com)

Some Internet Dvar Torah Lists

**VIRTUAL JERUSALEM:** E-mail to: [listproc@virtual.co.il](mailto:listproc@virtual.co.il) In msg type: subscribe <listname> Your\_Name" Some of lists: Aviner-Eng: Ateret Cohanim; Ask: Ask-the-Rabbi; Bircas: Parsha by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz; DafYomi: Ohr Somayach; Halacha: by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt; Parasha - Page: by Rabbi Kornfeld; Parasha-QA: Ohr Somayach; Torah-Talk: Parasha by Rabbi Steinberg; Weekly: Ohr Somayach on Parsha; Yhe-Halak by Rabbi Friedman; Yhe-MB by Rabbi Rimon; Yhe-UndHalakha by Rabbi Bick and Zvi Shimon; Yhe-IntParsha by Zvi Shimon; Yhe-Pesachim; Yhe-Metho by Rabbi Taragin; Yhe-Sichot - of Rav Lichtenstein and Rav Amital; Yhe-Jewhpi - on Jewish philosophy; Yhe-Parsha: by YHE rabbis (& yhe-par.d); YS-Parasha and YS-personalities - from Shaalvim; YITorah; Arutz-7; Shabbat-Zomet. Send command "lists" for complete lists.

**SHAMASH:** E-mail to [listproc@shamash.org](mailto:listproc@shamash.org) In message write " sub 'listname' <your name>" Bytetorah: Zev Itzkowitz; Enayim: YU parsha; Daf-hashavua: London; mj-RavTorah: Rav Soloveichik ZTL on Parsha. Send "lists" for complete list.

**PROJECT GENESIS** E-mail to [majordomo@torah.org](mailto:majordomo@torah.org) with "subscribe listname <your e-mail address>" in message. Lists include: Torah-Forum-digest / DvarTorah / Halacha-Yomi / Maharal / Rambam / Ramchal / RavFrاند / Tefila / YomTov / Drasha. Send "lists" for complete list.

**HEMA YISRAEL:** E-mail to: [listproc@jen.co.il](mailto:listproc@jen.co.il) In msg type: subscribe <listname> Your\_Name" Some of lists: Peninim - on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum; Outlooks on Parsha by Rabbi Zev Leff; Hear - insights from Rabbi Weber; Companion - Shalom Bayis by Rabbi Feinhandler; Yitorah; Daf-insights, Daf-background, Daf-review, etc. by Rabbi Kornfeld. Send "lists" for complete lists.

**CHABAD** E-mail to [listserv@chabad.org](mailto:listserv@chabad.org). In subject write: subscribe me. In text write: "Subscribe <code> (e.g.: code = W-2)" Some of Codes: D-3) Rambam Daily; W-2) Likutei Sichos On Parsha; W-3) Week in Review on Parsha; W-4) Once Upon A Chasid; W-7) Wellsprings - Chasidic Insight into Torah Portion. Send command "lists" for complete list of codes.

**ISRAEL NEWS** To: [Listserv@pankow.inter.net.il](mailto:Listserv@pankow.inter.net.il) Subject: Subscribe Listname <your name> Type "Subscribe <listname> <your name>". Lists include "Israeline" and "Israel-mideast". Must confirm w/i 48 hours by sending to same address msg "OK xxxx" with xxxx the code receive in confirmation. Also Jer1 ([listproc@virtual.co.il](mailto:listproc@virtual.co.il)) has Arutz-7.

**WWW - Shamash** - <http://shamash.org> & <http://shamash.org/tanach/dvar.html>; Jerusalem 1 - <http://www.virtual.co.il>; Maven - <http://www.maven.co.il>; YU - <http://yu1.yu.edu>; YHE - <http://www.virtual.co.il/education/yhe>; OU - <http://www.ou.org>; Chabad - <http://www.chabad.org>; JCN <http://www.jcn18.com>; Project Genesis <http://www.torah.org>; ShamaYisrael - <http://www.shemayisrael.co.il>; Children - <http://www.pirchei.co.il>; Rabbi Leibtag Tanach archives - <http://www.virtual.co.il/torah/tanach>; YOSS Drasha <http://www.yoss.org/whindex.htm>; List - [http://www.yahoo.com/Society\\_and\\_Culture/Religion/Judaism](http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion/Judaism); Israel - <http://www.ac.il>; Good link page - <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~akiva/HOJMI/links.html>; NCYI - <http://www.youngisrael.org>; Upcoming YIJE site - stay tuned!

**5756 Parsha Sheets on Disk** - If you want Internet Parsha Sheets from 5756 drop off formatted disks (6 for complete set - or 1 for just Rav Soloveichik and Rabbi Leibtag) at 184-62 Midland Pkwy

---

From: [jr@novell.com](mailto:jr@novell.com) Shiur HaRav on Parshas Toldos [From 5756 mailing]

"And Yitzchok was forty years old when he married Rivka..." (Bereishis 22:20). Rashi explains that Yitzchok was 37 years old at the time of the Akeida. At the conclusion of the Akeida the news was received of the birth of Rivka. He waited until she was three years old and then married her. Rabbi Soleveitchik explained the reason for this seemingly long delay in marrying:

Yitzchok was the first of the Avos to be Kodosh M'rechem: holy from the time of birth (NOTE: The Rav did not offer a specific source for this statement). This Kedushah was that of an intended Korbon. From the time of his birth Yitzchok was intended to be a Korbon Olah and this was the mission which he had to fulfill. Until this mission was completed Yitzchok could not marry, have children, or engage in any other worldly pursuit, since to do so would have been Me'ilah Bekodoshim-improper use of an intended korbon. Just as Yitzchok could not profane himself with the mundane, likewise Avrohom could not send Eliezer to find Yitzchok a wife because to take a wife would have been me'ilah bekodoshim. Once the Akeida was accomplished, Yitzchok acquired the status of a "Dovor Shena'asis Mitzvoso"-property of Hekdesh whose Mitzva had already been completed. For such property, the prohibition of Me'ila no longer applies and hence Yitzchok could marry.

(c) Dr. Israel Rivkin, Gershon Dubin and Josh Rapps. Permission to reprint and distribute, with this notice, is hereby granted. These summaries are based on notes taken by Dr. Rivkin at the weekly Moriah Shiur given by Moraynu

Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Parshas Toldos

The Torah relates that Rivka discovered that Esav hated his brother on account of the Birthright Blessings that Yaakov received, and intended to murder Yaakov. Rivka called to Yaakov and commanded him to run away to the house of Lavan, her brother, in order to save himself from Esav. Rivka then approaches Yitzchak and tells him that she is disgusted by the prospect that Yaakov might marry a local girl from Bnos Cheis. Yitzchak calls Yaakov and commands him to go the house of Besuel and seek a wife there. Yitzchak continues, blessing Yaakov with the Bircas Avraham that should be handed to him and his children. The Torah then recounts that Yitzchak sent Yaakov to Padan Aram to the house of Lavan.

When Rivka commands Yaakov to flee, she uses the term Berach, to run away. When Yitzchak commands Yaakov to seek a wife he uses the term Lech, to go. Berach is used when one must leave a place to go elsewhere because of some external reason, e.g. he is being pursued and faces mortal danger. On the other hand, Lech, to go, connotes the need to go somewhere else to accomplish a task.

Why was it necessary for Rivka to command Yaakov to flee yet she did not command him to go seek a wife? Why did she ask Yitzchak to command Yaakov to find a wife?

The Rav explained that regarding the aspect of saving the life of a child, a mother and father are equally obligated. The child is required to listen to either parent when they command him to perform an action in order to save himself. However, the father is obligated to marry off his child. Yitzchak, not Rivka, could command Yaakov to carry out the second reason for going to the house of Lavan, to find a wife.

The Rav asked why does the Torah recount that Yitzchak sent Yaakov to Padan Aram to seek a wife? After all, the Torah just previously mentioned that Yitzchak commanded him to go.

The Rav explained: Yitzchak never intended to give Esav the Bircas Avraham. Bircas Avraham is granted to Yaakov only prior to his leaving to Padan Aram, it was not included in the Bircas Habechora, V'Yiten Lecha. However Bircas Avraham could only be passed on when the father was certain that the wife of the son is acceptable to the Hashgacha to be one of the Matriarchs and the wife of a Patriarch. The Mesorah was not only given to the Avos, it was also passed on to the Imahos as well. For example, we find that "Hanefesh Asher Asu B'charan", Avraham converted the men and Sarah converted the women. Also, the matriarchs were granted prophecy as well, as Chazal comment on the verse "Kol Asher Tomar Aylecha Sarah Shema Bekola", Hashem told Avraham to listen to whatever Sarah tells him to do since she was a Neviah. It was therefore important to guarantee that Yaakov, the third of the Avos, had a proper wife.

The Torah says that Avraham gave everything that he had to Yitzchak before he passed away. It is interesting to note that Yitzchak is given this gift only after he has married Rivka. Avraham giving Yitzchak "Kol Asher Lo" refers to the Mesorah. In order for Yitzchak to reach the level of Avos, he required a wife that would help him pass on the Mesorah, Rivka. Only then did Avraham grant it to him.

It is interesting to note that the Torah goes into great detail to describe the mission of Eliezer to Charan to find a wife for Yitzchak. Eliezer was a Shaliach of Avraham, however he also was the Shaliach of Yitzchak (assuming the opinion that a servant can act as a Shaliach Leholacha in issues of Kidushin and Gittin). The Torah clearly indicates this dual role of Eliezer when it says that Eliezer reported to Yitzchak all the vents that occurred to him on his trip to Charan. Clearly, Eliezer reported these details to Yitzchak because he acted as his messenger as well as the messenger of Avraham. For example, we find that the messenger who dispatched the Sair L'azazel on Yom Kippur would report back to the Kohen Gadol that he completed his mission. So the protocol calls for the messenger to report back to the one who sent him, Yitzchak.

The Rav asked: if Eliezer was the Shaliach of both Avraham and Yitzchak,

why does the Torah emphasize the aspect of acting as the messenger of Avraham? The Rav answered that the Shelichus of Avraham was the more important one. Eliezer was sent by Avraham not only to find a wife for Yitzchak, but to find the proper wife who would make Yitzchak worthy of the Mesorah. This is seen from what Avraham commanded Eliezer: And you shall take a wife for my son, for Yitzchak. You must bring back a wife for my son, a wife that will make him worthy to receive the Mesorah.

In this respect Eliezer functioned as a plain Shaliach Lkidushin. In order to be worthy to carry on the Mesorah, the future wife had to fit the mold established by Avraham and Sarah, who were the embodiment of Chesed, "Titen Emes LYaakov Chesed L'Avraham". It is noteworthy that the test that Eliezer set for Rivka was one of an act of Chesed.

When Yitzchak sent Yaakov to seek a wife, he sent Yaakov as his, Yitzchak's, Shaliach to find a wife that would make Yaakov worthy of the Mesorah. The Torah states that Yitzchak sent Yaakov to Padan Aram to find a wife after Yaakov is given Bircas Avraham. The Bircas Avraham that was just granted to Yaakov, depends on his successfully completing the mission of finding a proper wife from the proper family. Therefore the Torah connected the Bircas Avraham with the specific mention of Yitzchak sending Yaakov to find a wife. (Editor's Note: perhaps this explains why Avraham granted the Mesorah to Yitzchak, Vayiten Avraham LYitzchak Es Kol Asher Lo, after Avraham verified that Rivka was indeed a worthy wife for Yitzchak. However, Yitzchak realized that he might never see who Yaakov marries, and in the event that Yaakov's wife was not worthy, he would not merit the Bircas Avraham. Yitzchak therefore says V'yiten Lecha Es Bircas Avraham, in the future, conditionally. After you have fulfilled the mission of marrying a wife capable of carrying on the Mesorah, the Bircas Avraham will truly be yours.)

The Torah then relates that Esav saw that Yitzchak granted Yaakov Bircas Avraham on condition that he find the proper wife and especially one that was not from Bnos Canaan. Esav follows by taking a wife from Bnos Yishmael.

---

This summary is Copyright 1996 by Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, N.J. Permission to reprint and distribute, with this notice, is hereby granted. These summaries are based on notes taken by Dr. Rivkin at the weekly Moriah Shiur given by Moraynu V'Rabbeinu Harav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveichik ZTL over many years. You can receive these summaries via email by sending email to listproc@shamash.org with the following message: subscribe mj-ravtorah your\_first\_name your\_last\_name

---

"ravfrand@torah.org" Rabbi Frand on Parshas Toldos  
"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Toldos

Rabbi Frand respectfully requests that people should daven [pray] and learn for the benefit of Rabbi Yitzchak Isbee, that he should have a refu'ah shellayma [complete recovery]. Rabbi Isbee is a well known talmid chacham [Torah scholar] and is a respected Rav who has a congregation in Brooklyn, NY and is a personal friend of Rabbi Frand. Good Shabbos!

Parshas Toldos:

The Crooked Will Be Made Straight -- Yaakov Will Become Yeshurun

In this week's parsha, we find a section that is one of the hardest sections to understand in the entire Torah. We find the parsha of Yaakov deceiving his father and 'stealing' the blessings from Eisav, for himself. This is a difficult parsha to understand, especially in terms of what we are taught -- "Give Truth to Jacob..." [Michah 7:20]. Yaakov Avinu is the Patriarch that represents Truth and here we find Yaakov involved in this charade, in which he 'steals' the Brochos.

A Zohar at the beginning of the parsha helps us understand this section. The Zohar comments on the verse "And afterwards his brother came out and his hand was holding on to the heel of Esav; and his name was called Yaakov"

[Bereshis 25:26]. The Zohar states that Esav is compared to the Original Snake (nachash kadmoni). The force in this world that represents the Original Snake that tricked Adam and Chava into eating from the Tree of Knowledge, the personification of that Snake in this world, is Esav. How does the Torah tell us to deal with that Original Snake? "And you will strike him in the heel" [3:15]. Against the powers of that Snake, you will not be able to make a frontal attack. To be successful against him, you must grab him by the heel, from behind. This is the only way to deal with the Snake and with Esav.

The Zohar says that when the verse tells us here that Yaakov's hand was holding Esav's heel, the Torah is setting the stage and is telling us how Yaakov Avinu -- in the future -- will have to deal with Esav. He is going to have to deal with him by attacking at the heel; he is going to have to deal with him, sometimes, deceitfully and surreptitiously. That is the only way one can deal with that Snake.

This is what our Sages mean when they say (on the verse [Samuel II 22:27] "With a pure one, You show Yourself pure; but with a perverse one, You deal crookedly.") that you cannot always be up front and straight forward with a person who is a liar. Even Yaakov, the man of Truth, has a mandate from the Torah, that the way to deal with Esav is by 'heel,' which is connoted in Yaakov's name.

This, the commentaries say, is what the verse means when it says "And Yaakov was an 'ish tam' (a man who was simple) who dwelt in the tents" [25:27]. It does not say Yaakov was 'tam' (simple), it says 'ish tam' (a man who was simple). The former implies someone who is naive -- that is not what the Torah tells us about Yaakov. It says he is an 'ish tam' -- he has control over his 'temimus' (simplicity). He can control and use that simplicity. There are occasions when Yaakov will be straight and must be straight. But he is also a person that can control his simplicity and attack at the heel, if the occasion so requires.

This describes the whole history of Yaakov and Esav, and their respective descendants. There will be times in history that we as a Jewish people will not be able to deal with the descendants of Esav on a 'one on one', straightforward basis. We will have to duplicate the behavior of our father Yaakov.

No more clearly do we see this than in the chapter of the Blessings. In that chapter the verse says "Go please to the flocks" [27:9]. The Medrash says Rivka is hinting "Go take care of the needs of the nation, which is compared to sheep." Performing this masquerade and deceitful act sets the stage. The actions of the forefathers foreshadow the actions of the children. Your children, Rivka says, are sometimes going to have to deal with the more powerful Esav, with the Roman Empire, with the nations of the world. Sometimes, as a nation, we will have to resort to surreptitious types of acts. Why? Because the Torah tells us that there are times when that has to use the behavior of Yaakov.

But, points out Rav Elie Munk, Yaakov undergoes two name changes in the Torah. First, Yaakov is changed to Yisrael. Rash"i, over there, says that 'Yaakov' refers to a person who waits in ambush, but there will come a time when you will be called 'Yisrael' -- connoting an officer and a prince. You will then be able to deal with Esav, no longer surreptitiously, but as an equal. However, we find, that even after Yaakov was called Yisrael, the Torah still, sometimes refers to him as 'Yaakov' and sometimes refers to him as 'Yisrael.'

Why? Because Yaakov can not yet totally abandon the practices of 'Yaakov'. Throughout Jewish history, there were times when we as a people had to fall back on the tactics of 'Yaakov' and could not go with the name 'Yisrael.' When we are surrounded by 140 million people wishing to destroy us, we cannot always go with the 'high-road' behavior. We have to come back to the practices of 'Yaakov.'

In the End of Days, however, our Sages tell us that Yaakov will go from the name of Yaakov and Yisrael to the name of Yeshurun, meaning straight (from the word 'yashar'). When the nations of the world will finally come to recognize the greatness of Israel, then Yaakov can be transformed into the name Yeshurun and will no longer have to deal with Esav with deceit and tricks.

This is what Yeshaya HaNavi means [Isaiah 40:4] when he says "... and the crooked will be made straight..." [v'haya ha'akov l'mishor]. Rav Munk says this refers to the name Yaakov becoming the name Yeshurun. We will abandon the practices which were forced upon us, those of 'Yaakov' and will strictly conduct ourselves according to the practices of 'Yeshurun' (straightness).

### To BE and Not To DO -- That Is the Question

The verse says "And Yitzchak loved Esav, for game was in his mouth; and Rivkah loves Yaakov" [Bereshis 25:28]. There is a strange use of grammar in this verse. By Yitzchak it says "va'ye-eh-av", meaning "and he loved" -- in the past tense. By Rivkah it says "o-heves" meaning "she loves" -- in the present tense.

The Dubno Maggid once asked why there is this grammatical discrepancy. He answered with a powerful truth which is very applicable, particularly in our time: He said that one of the differences between the non-Jewish world and ours, is that in the former people are evaluated by what they do, whereas the Jew is evaluated not by what he does, but by what he is.

If one ever asks a child what he wants to be when he grows up, the child will answer "I want to be a..." doctor or lawyer or teacher. This is improper usage! The child was asked what he wants to BE, and instead he answers with what he wants to DO.

'Doctor', 'teacher', and 'lawyer' are professions, what you DO -- not what you ARE. However, we are conditioned in this country that one's whole importance or value is based upon what one does.

A columnist recently wrote a piece in the Baltimore Sun complaining about the conversations at cocktail parties. While standing at a cocktail party, drink in hand, he will introduce himself to someone. When the conversation is not fifteen seconds old, he will be asked, "What do you do?"

The columnist writes that "in America you ARE what you DO." If one does something important, then he is important. If one does something menial, then he's not important. The type of person that someone is makes no difference whatsoever.

He writes that he is so turned off by this line of questioning, that now, if anybody asks him what he does, he says he is an undercover agent for the IRS [U.S. Internal Revenue Service], at which time the conversation ends. However, this writer identified a tremendous truth. We are preoccupied not with who we ARE, not with what type of person I AM, but with what we DO.

This reflects a very non-Jewish outlook. It does not reflect the outlook of Judaism.

This is what the verse is hinting to us. "Yitzchak loved Esav (past tense) for game was in his mouth" -- because Esav, reflecting non-Jewish values, evaluated himself based only upon what he does. If he is only what he does, then if he ceases to do what he does (e.g. -- hunt), he loses his value.

A grandson of Esav [Pete Rose] once said "You're only as good as your last 'at bat'" [Pete Rose]. He accurately reflected his society's values. He saw no inner importance, only the pragmatic importance of what he does. When he stops doing what he does "the love is nullified" [Avot 5:16].

However, a Jew is not what he does, but what he is. Whether he makes a lot of money or he doesn't make a lot of money; whether he does something which has status in the world or whether he does something menial - it makes no difference. If one is an ethical person and a mensch and one who Fears Heaven and Loves Israel, that is what counts. One is what he IS, not what he DOES.

"And Rivkah LOVES Yaakov." Because Yaakov was loved not for what he DID, but for what he WAS. The character of Yaakov, the qualities of Yaakov, the Truthfulness of Yaakov. These are constants. These are forever. Therefore the love for such a person is forever.

----- Transcribed by  
David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@scn.org Technical  
Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Balt, MD dhoffman@clark.net

-----  
RavFrاند, Copyright (c) 1996 by Rabbi Y. Frاند and Project Genesis, Inc.

"office@etzion.org.il" , , "yhe-sichot@jer1.c... SICHOT - 05: Parashat Toldot

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH PROJECT(VBM)  
PARASHAT TOLDOT SICHOT OF HARAV AMITAL SHLIT" A

\*\*\*\*\* We  
mourn the tragic loss of Maily (Sarah Gittel bat Yisrael Nachman HaCohen)  
Katz and hope the family knows no more sorrow. HaMakom yenakhem  
etkhem be-tokh she'ar avelei Zion v'Yerushalayim. -Friends

\*\*\*\*\*

"Behold, the Scent of my Son..."

Summarized by Rav Eliyahu Blumenzweig

"And [Yitzchak] smelled the scent of [Ya'akov's] CLOTHES ... and he said, "Behold - the scent of my SON is like the scent of a field which God has blessed...." At first, we are told that Yitzchak smelled his son's CLOTHES. Why, then, does he mention the scent of his SON in the blessing?

In this connection, we learn in the gemara that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said of himself that he had not reached Esav's level of fulfillment of the mitzva of honoring parents. Each time Esav came to perform this mitzva, he would change his clothes in honor of his father, while Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel would only change his clothes when he went out to the market. Esav, therefore, excels in honoring parents, and it seems that this characteristic is apparent in his descendants too - as is evidenced by the story of Dama ben Netina of Ashkelon, who refused to wake his father from his sleep even for all the fortune in the world (Kiddushin 31a).

The mitzva of honoring parents was accepted by Esav and the nations of the world on an intellectual basis - as a logical obligation. Since the number of such mitzvot is limited, they are able to practice them strictly and accurately and to achieve admirable levels in their fulfillment. The nation of Israel, on the other hand, has 613 mitzvot to fulfill, including some which have no apparent logical explanation, e.g., the laws pertaining to the red heifer. Therefore, the story of Dama ben Netina stresses the idea that Israel repays him the full value of his monetary loss (what he could have earned had he woken his father) in their purchase of his red heifer - as if to purchase, as it were, mitzvot lacking a logical explanation with mitzvot having a sound intellectual basis.

Indeed, those mitzvot which are performed by the Gentile nations out of their own understanding are external actions, performed in accordance with their thinking. For this reason Esav changes his clothes - for clothes are man's outermost manifestation. The mitzvot which characterize the nation of Israel, on the other hand, and those in which they excel, come from their innermost nature - whether they have an explanation or not, and under any conditions. They are derived from Israel's very essence, and hence even though Yaakov wears Esav's clothes and surrounds himself with that physicality, his internal essence remains the same and still leaves its imprint. Even when the scent of the hunting clothes enters with Ya'akov, Yitzchak "smells the scent" of his son. The scent of the innermost essence prevails over the outer appearance.

"And he smelled the scent of his clothes" - do not read 'begadav' (his clothes) but rather 'bogedav' (his deceivers) - this refers to the sinners among Israel."

If the mitzvot are external then they are dependent on external factors, and when these change, then the mitzvot collapse together with the person's character. If the mitzvot are internal, then even when external factors change, the internal reality remains firm. Ya'akov wears Esav's clothes as a mere garment concealing his internal essence - "the scent of my son" - and all his mitzvot are derived from that essence. It survives and remains forever, in all his descendants - even the sinners among them, who are in truth no more than garments (concealing the true nature of the nation).

(Originally delivered at Seuda Shelishit, Shabbat Parashat Toldot 5732.  
Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

\*\*\*\*\*

Yeshivat Har Etzion's Eighth Annual Shabbaton with our Rosh HaYeshiva  
HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN at the Riverdale Jewish Center,

Riverdale, NY November 22-23, 1996 For reservations and more info, please contact our NY office 212-732-GUSH (4874)

"75310.3454@compuserve.com" , "halacha@jer1.co.il" Parshas Toldos  
SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS TOLDOS

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

Is it ever permitted to lie?

Yaakov Avinu was the Amud Ha'emes, the pillar of truth. Indeed, according to the Talmud(1), the greatest fear that Yaakov Avinu had was that he may encounter life situations where we would be forced to lie. When Rivka commanded Yaakov to falsely present himself to his blind father as Eisav, he protested, for our Sages(2) compare lying to idol worship. It was only when Rivka told him that it was the will of Heaven that he be the one to receive the blessings from his father Yitzchak, that Yaakov relented and allowed his mother to disguise him to appear as Eisav.

What is the definition of lying? R' Yona(3) lists nine different categories of lies. In order of severity, they are: a) People who cheat in business, causing others financial loss; b) People who exploit others after gaining their trust through deception; c) People whose lies cause others to lose out on some gain or benefit that was coming to them; d) People who fabricate stories merely for the sake of lying; e) People who hold out the promise of giving another person material goods while never intending to follow up on their promise; f) People who intend to keep a promise but do not honor their commitment; g) People who act as though they did a favor or a good deed for another; h) People who praise themselves for virtues that they do not possess; i) People who change minor details when retelling an episode.

A careful analysis of these nine categories shows that all of the lies are told either for the purpose of cheating another person, or for no apparent reason. R' Yona, however, does not list those who lie for a "good" purpose or for a "good" reason. Thus, we may ask, is it ever permitted to lie?

Throughout Talmudic literature, we find stories about our Sages veering from the truth for "good" reasons(4). Obviously, however, only the Poskim can draw practical conclusions from such cases, since these very episodes can be understood on various levels. Moreover, not everything quoted in the Talmud is applied in practical Halacha, as we often rule differently from an opinion stated in the Gemara. The following, however, are some real-life situations with which the Poskim deal:

If one is asked information about a matter that is supposed to remain secret, he may answer, "I don't know"(5). Similarly, although one is not allowed to lie in order to avoid telling bad news(6), it is permitted to say, "I don't know"(7).

During an appeal for funds, one is not allowed to announce a donation in an amount greater than he is planning to give, even if the aim is to spur others to commit themselves to larger donations(8).

A wealthy man is permitted to lie about his wealth if he fears "the evil eye" (Ayin H'ara) or if he does not want to arouse jealousy(9).

It is forbidden for an adopted son to be called to the Torah as the son of his adoptive father. Although this may not be considered a lie(10), it is forbidden because it may lead to confusion when matters of inheritance and Chalitzah, etc., arise(11).

When collecting funds for a poor Talmid Chacham, one may say that he is collecting for Hachnasas Kallah if he thinks that people will be more receptive to that cause(12). It is also permitted to raise funds for Hachnasas Kallah, even when the collection is primarily for the benefit of the Chasan(13).

It is prohibited to lie for the sake of financial gain, even when no stealing is involved(14).

If one fears that a package will be mishandled, it is permitted to write "glass" on it, even though it does not contain any glass(15).

If one sees that his wife will be late for Shabbos, he is permitted to tell her

that the hour is later than it really is. This is permitted only when it is clear that she is procrastinating. If, however, she is rushing and harried and telling her that the hour is later than it really is will only pressure her further, it is forbidden to do so(16).

If, by refusing to receive a visitor, the visitor's feelings will be hurt, one is permitted to leave instructions saying that he is not home(17). One should not, however, instruct a minor to lie about his parents' whereabouts, since that teaches the child to lie.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Makos 24a. 2 Sanhedrin 92a. 3 Shaarei Teshuva 3:178-186. 4 See, for example, Berachos (43b), an episode with R' Papa; Pesachim (112a), attributing a statement to a made-up source so that it will be readily accepted; Sukkah (34b) quoting Shmuel's threat to the Haddasim merchants; Yevamos (65b) in regard to lying for the sake of peace; Bava Metziah (23b), concerning departing from the truth for the sake of humility, modesty or discretion.; Bava Metziah (30a), an episode with R' Yishmael. There are many other such examples. 5 Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv quoted in Titen Emes L'yaakov pg. 76. 6 YD 402:12.

7 Harav S.Z. Auerbach, Harav S.Y. Elyashiv and Harav Y.Y. Fisher quoted in Titen Emes L'yaakov pg. 89. See also Metzudos Dovid Shmuel 2 18:29. 8 Minchas Yitzchok 3:97, based on Ma'harsha Sukkah 29a. 9 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv quoted in Titen Emes L'yaakov pg. 78. 10 See Rama Choshen Mishpat 42, Shu"t Chasam Sofer 76 and Shu"t Ha'amek Sheila EH 98. 11 Minchas Yitzchok 2:115; 4:49; Harav S.Z. Auerbach quoted in Titen Emes L'yaakov pg. 96. 12 Shu"t Mishne Sachir (end of vol. 1) quoting a story with the Chasam Sofer. Part of the ruling is based on the Midrash Rabba (Ki-Sisa) that compares a Talmid Chacham to a Kallah. In that story the Chasam Sofer allowed a Tzedaka fund intended for Hachnosas Kallah to support a well-known Talmid Chacham. 13 Harav S.Z. Auerbach quoted in Titen Emes L'yaakov pg. 55. 14 R' Yona (Shaarei Teshuva 180 & 186); Rashas"h (Shabbos 140b) and Sdei Chemed (vol. 4 pg. 87) opposing the Ma'harsha (Shabbos 140) who implies that it is permissible; Chofetz Chaim (Sfas Tomim 2). 15 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv, Harav Y.Y. Fisher and Harav Chaim Kanievsky, quoted in Titen Emes L'yaakov pg. 66. 16 Harav S. Y. Elyashiv quoted in Titen Emes L'yaakov pg. 86. 17 Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv quoted in Titen Emes L'yaakov pg. 76. See also Machtzis Ha'shekel OC 156 that if one has no time to answer a question about a particular subject, he may say that he is not learning that subject now and cannot answer the question.

HALACHA is published L'zchus Hayaed Doniel Meir ben Hinda.

Please say Tehillim for a 9 month baby girl who will have surgery on Friday for a brain tumor-----HAYALDAH, ELIANAH ESTHER BAS RIVKAH Also REFAEL PINCHAS BEN MIRIAM, a cancer patient.

---

"ohr@jer1.co.il" "weekly@jer1.co.il" Torah Weekly - Toldos

\* TORAH WEEKLY \* Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Toldos

...

Insights

Voice Control "With the skins of the goat-skins she covered his arms and his smooth-skinned neck." (27:16) When Yaakov appeared before his blind father Yitzchak and Yitzchak felt his arms and hands he said "The voice is the voice of Yaakov, but the hands are the hands of Eisav." Why didn't Yaakov also alter the tone of his voice and make it sound like Eisav's? In other words, if Yaakov took pains to conceal the physical differences between himself and Eisav, why didn't he also disguise his voice? Although everything is decreed in Heaven, Man is commanded to make efforts on his own behalf (hishtadlus). However, this effort doesn't mean he has to change his entire personality. The voice is the essence of Yaakov. His hallmark is the voice of Torah, the voice of prayer. The voice defines who Yaakov is.

Thus, he was not obliged to go to the extent of changing his essence in order to deceive Yitzchak. (Heard from Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram)  
A Simple Man "And Yaakov was a simple man." (25:27) A man needs to be

able to control and dominate his character traits -- to exercise the appropriate characteristic in the appropriate situation. For there will be times when he will need to apply a "bad" trait for the right reason, as our Sages teach us "Anyone who is merciful when the situation demands hardness, will end up being hard when he should be merciful." (Koheles Rabba Ch. 7) That is why Yaakov is called a simple man. Man -- implying that he was able to control his character, rather than his character controlling him. Yaakov could apply his simplicity when appropriate, but when dealing with trickery and deceit, he could be as wily and cunning as he was simple... (HaRebbe HaKodosh M'Lublin in Mayana shel Torah)

I'm so Tired "...and Eisav came in from the field and he was exhausted." (25:30) If there's one thing that can destabilize a normal person and make him irritable and irrational -- it's being tired. We can all be saintly after a good night's sleep. But what are we like after the baby has woken us up five times in the night? The essence of the Jewish People is that they serve Hashem even when they are exhausted. Even when they have black rings under their eyes, they don't give up and say -- "I'm too tired!" When Eisav is wearied, he immediately sells his birthright -- the mantle of spiritual responsibility -- without a second thought. However, when the Jewish People are pursued by Amalek (the epitome of everything that stands against Hashem in this world), in spite of being "tired and weary," they turn and fight. Commitment is not a fair-weather affair. When the chips are down and the going gets tough -- that's when the tough get going. (Heard from Rabbi Moshe Carlebach)

Haftorah: Malachi 1,2 A Quirk of History? When forced to examine the curious history of the Jewish People, historians have always found themselves at a loss, for there is no logical reason why a small tribe from a land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea should have survived and prospered through two thousand years of oppression and assimilation. No historical theory can explain why the Jewish People have outlived the Persian, the Babylonian, the Greek and the Roman empires. As Mark Twain once wrote "The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and he is today what he was then... Everyone is mortal in this world, except the Jew... What is the secret of his eternity?" The Jewish People can answer this question with the words of this week's Haftorah "They may build, but I shall tear down... Your eyes shall see and you shall say 'Hashem is great beyond the boundary of Israel.'" However invincible Edom/Rome, and the other spiritual heirs of Eisav may seem they will not prosper eternally. Eventually Eisav will fall and Yaakov will take his rightful place -- "I loved you, said Hashem... But I hated Eisav and I made his mountains a desolation, and his heritage for the desert serpents."

Favored-Nation Status "'I loved you' said Hashem, and you said, 'How have you loved us?' Was not Eisav a brother to Yaakov -- the word of Hashem -- yet I loved Yaakov. But I hated Eisav and I made his mountains a desolation..." (1:2-4) When a servant faithfully performs the bidding of his master in every way, humbling himself before his master, one cannot discern the love that the master has for him. After all, why shouldn't he love him -- he is the perfect servant. However, when the servant disobeys the will of his master, and yet the master still loves him, then the master's love for his servant becomes apparent to all. Thus it is with the Jewish People and Hashem. For even if we are a "brother to Eisav" -- i.e., our sins are comparable to his -- Hashem still shows his love for us and forgives us. He treats us as a master treats a loved but errant servant, forgiving us, even though our behavior would warrant a harsh response if done by someone else. (Adapted from the Chasam Sofer)

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor:  
Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer  
(C) 1996 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

"parasha-qa@jer1.co.il" Parsha Q&A - Toldos  
\* PARSHA Q&A \* Parshas Toldos Ohr Somayach <http://www.ohr.org.il>

## Parsha Questions

1. Who did Yitzchak resemble? 2. How old was Yitzchak at the time of the akeida (binding)? 3. Why does the Torah stress that Rivka was the daughter of Besuel and the sister of Lavan? 4. Whom did Rivka consult concerning her difficult pregnancy? 5. What are the two differences between Tamar's pregnancy and Rivka's pregnancy? 6. Yaakov was born grasping Eisav's heel. What does this symbolize? 7. Who gave Yaakov his name? 8. How did Eisav deceive his father? 9. In which tents did Yaakov dwell? 10. Why did Hashem cause Avraham to die prematurely? 11. Why are lentils a food for mourners? 12. What was the birth right that Yaakov bought from Eisav? 13. Why was Yitzchak not permitted to go to Egypt to escape the famine? 14. Why did the Philistines plug up the wells? 15. To which animal is Eisav compared? 16. What caused Yitzchak to lose his sight? 17. What did Yaakov do with the second goat that Rivka prepared for him? 18. From whom did Eisav receive his special garments? 19. Why did Eisav leave his special garments with Rivka rather than keep them at home? 20. What made Yitzchak suspect that it wasn't Eisav bringing him food? 21. What fragrance did Yitzchak detect on the garments of Yaakov? 22. When will Eisav be released from his subjugation to Yaakov? 23. What inspired Eisav to marry the daughter of Yishmael? 24. Why does the Torah state that Eisav married the sister of Nevayos? 25. How long did Yaakov learn in the Yeshiva of Ever before going to Lavan's house?

Bonus QUESTION: "And he called it 'Shiva.' Therefore the name of the city is 'Be'er Sheva' till this very day. (26:33)" When Yitzchak named his seventh well 'Shiva,' the city became known as 'Be'er Sheva.' But hadn't Avraham already named that place 'Be'er Sheva' for a different reason -- as it says "Therefore, he called that place Be'er Shava, because they both took an oath there." (21:31)?

I Did Not Know That! "On the face of all his brethren he (Yishmael) fell... And these are the offspring of Yitzchak..." (25:18,19) This hints that when Yishmael will fall in the end of days, then Mashiach Ben David -- who is an offspring of Yitzchak -- will flourish. (Baal Haturim)

Recommended Reading List Ramban 25:23 Two Nations 26:1 Yitzchak in Exile 26:5 The Avos and Mitzvah Observance 26:20 The Wells and the Future 27:4 Rivka's Secret 27:33 Why Yitzchak Trembled Sforno 25:24 Eisav's Name 25:26 Yaakov's Name 27:1 Yitzchak's Blindness 27:29 Yaakov's Portion

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 25:19 - Avraham. 2. 25:20 - 37 years old. 3. 25:20 - To proclaim her praise, that even though her family was evil she was righteous. 4. 25:23 - Shem the son of Noach. 5. 25:24 - Rivka gave birth at full term to two children, one righteous and one wicked. Tamar gave birth after seven months to two righteous children. 6. 25:26 - That Yaakov would eventually rise to rule over Eisav. 7. 25:26 - Hashem. 8. 25:27 - Eisav deceived Yitzchak by asking questions that suggested that he was very strict in mitzvah observance. 9. 25:27 - In the tents of Shem and Ever. 10. 25:30 - Avraham died five years prematurely, at 175, so that he should not see his grandson become wicked. 11. 25:30 - They are round like a wheel and mourning is like a revolving wheel that eventually touches everyone. 12. 25:31 - The right to bring korbanos (sacrifices). 13. 26:2 - Through the akeida he had attained the status of a korban and was forbidden to leave Eretz Canaan. 14. 26:15. They felt that either marauders would attack to capture the wells, or if attacking for other reasons, they would use the wells as a water supply. 15. 26:34 - The pig. Just as the pig appears to be kosher but lacks the internal sign, so too Eisav appeared righteous but internally is evil. 16. 27:1 - The smoke from the incense offered by Eisav's wives to their idols. 17. 27:9 - He offered it as a Korban Pesach. 18. 27:15 - From Nimrod. 19. 27:15 - He suspected that his wives might steal them. 20. 27:21 - Yaakov mentioned the name of Hashem too readily. 21. 27:27 - The scent of Gan Eden. 22. 27:40 - When the Jewish People transgress the Torah. 23. 28:7 - When he saw that his father despised his current wives, he resolved to take a wife from his

father's family. 24. 28:9 - To indicate that Yishmael died before the wedding and that it was Nevayos who gave his sister in marriage to Eisav. 25. 28:9 - Fourteen years.

Bonus ANSWER: In the time of Avraham, the place was named only for the oath (shevuah) between Avraham and Avimelech. Therefore, it was called Be'er Shava (spelled with a kamatz). In the time of Yitzchak, the name gained new significance, signifying not only the oath of Avraham, but also Yitzchak's seventh (shiva) well. Therefore, its name was changed to Be'er Sheva (spelled with a segol), signifying both the oath and the number seven. (Sforno)

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer (C) 1996 Ohr Somayach International

<http://www.shemayisrael.co.il>

Peninim on the Torah Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Toldos

... "And the boys grew up and Eisav was a man who knew hunting, a man of the field; Yaakov was a wholesome man dwelling in tents." (25:27)

With these few words, the Torah characterizes the essence of Yaakov and the essence of Eisav. Indeed, it seems that the text pinpoints the predominant difference between the two brothers. One question is readily apparent. Eisav was a rasha m'rusha, evil incarnate. Even before his birth, in his mother's womb, his wicked tendencies were already manifest. Chazal teach us that when Rivkah passed by a house of idolatry, Eisav gravitated towards it. All this while he was still in the womb! On the day that he sold his birthright, he committed five cardinal sins. Is this a man who should be described as "a man who knew hunting"? Let the Torah tell it like it is: Eisav was an evil man throughout his life. In contrast, Yaakov, who is the bechir ha'Avos, the chosen one of the Patriarchs, is described so humbly, "A wholesome man dwelling in tents." One would think that referring to the Patriarch who fathered the Shivtei Kah, the twelve tribes, the individual who established the foundation of Am Yisrael, the Torah would present more noteworthy praise.

Horav Yechezkel Levinstein, zl, infers a fundamental lesson from this ambiguity. The essence of an individual's greatness is not determined by actions but rather by his fundamental nature. Eisav was the requiem rasha because of his evil roots. We are inclined to believe that sin is determined by observable action. The greater and more iniquitous the behavior, the more pronounced is the sin and the more evil is the perpetrator. The truth is that one's evil roots -- and the actions that originate from them -- determine the level of one's malevolence. Eisav became a rasha m'rusha as a result of his origin. Had his roots not have been so corrupt, he would not have become the notorious Eisav. One does not become a sinner as result of his behavior. Rather, the innate evil within him is manifest through his actions. One whose roots are evil will become a sinner!

Let us return to the Torah's characterization of Eisav and Yaakov. When the Torah describes Eisav as "a man who knew hunting," it is emphasizing Eisav's roots, the source of his nefarious behavior. He was the essence of sheker, falsehood. He was a cunning hunter; trickery, deceit and treachery were the prime components of his personality. One who possesses such character traits is destined for evil. Eisav was exposed to a father and mother who were paragons of virtue and morality, as well as a grandfather who fought paganism and set the standard for the middah of chesed. He lived in a home in which the sight of Divine angels was commonplace. Nevertheless, he descended to the nadir of depravity. Unless the roots of such an individual are expunged, he does not have a chance. He can be aware of the greatness of Hashem and of the power of a tzaddik's blessing, as Eisav was. Yet, it all loses meaning in light of his compulsion to remain the epitome of evil. Eisav knew hunting; his cunning was his downfall, for it originated in falsehood and ended in blasphemy.

The Torah notes another aspect of Eisav's character. He was an "ish sadeh," a man of the field. Rashi interprets this to characterize a man of leisure who hunts to his heart's content. Eisav led an easygoing lifestyle, rejecting the yoke of responsibility, doing whatever he pleased. He lived for the moment,

ignoring the consequences tomorrow might bring. This frivolous attitude has become common. Such an absence of focus stems from an individual's lack of maturity. Fun is not an intrinsically negative concept, providing that one establishes and adheres to appropriate limits. One who disdains responsibility reverts to childishness, ignoring the consequences of his actions. At times, children may do terrible things, paying no attention to the person whom they have hurt or the seriousness of the injury. So, too, the "ish sadeh" does whatever he wants, wherever he desires to do it --regardless of whom he has affected.

Eisav was a man of the field who lived for today with no thought of tomorrow. He disdained authority, ignored responsibility, and scoffed at retribution. Do we have to search far to find this type of person or this attitude? Indeed, without realizing it, many fall into this category. Whether it is individuals who spurn responsibility, or others who simply refuse to grow up to accept the role of mature individuals, a drop of "Eisav" exists in many of us. It has become a trait to which some aspire. Our society has venerated those who have lived without fear of consequence, acted without compunction or restriction, responding with utter contempt towards those who scrutinize their behavior.

Horav Levinstein suggests that actually Eisav's characteristics are interrelated one to another. One who is truthful is concerned with the future. He sees the underlying goal in every act. Therefore, he seeks to reconcile the present with the future. The liar lives by, and for, the fleeting moment. His life is one of consummate deceit toward others, but ultimately he deceives himself the most.

Yaakov Avinu, the "ish emes," man of truth, who dwelled in the tent of Torah, knew the essence of life. He apportioned his time wisely, realizing that every minute was an eternity in a spiritual sense. He truly lived for the future. The reality of the present is found in its function as an investment in the future.

...

"And he said (Yitzchak), 'Your brother came with cleverness and took your blessing.'" (27:35) Probably one of the most difficult narratives in the Torah to understand, is the one which depicts Yaakov as "taking" the blessings from Yitzchak, through a manner uncharacteristic of someone who is considered to be the epitome of veracity. We do not understand the ways of Hashem. Why did He choose that Yitzchak be unaware that he was actually blessing Yaakov -- and that Eisav was actually not fit for blessing altogether. The Zohar HaKadosh comments that this scenario was essential so that the blessing would come directly from Hashem to Yaakov via the medium of the unsuspecting Yitzchak.

The Sfas Emes cites the Targum Onkelos who differentiates between the word, which is translated as wisdom, and the word which is commonly defined as cunning or deceit. Yaakov did not come with deceit to cheat Eisav out of his blessings. Rather, he applied the wisdom of the Torah that he had studied. B'heter, with halachic permission, he cleverly took the blessings that should rightfully have been his. The Midrash comments that when Yaakov approached his father to receive the blessings in a manner which may be viewed as inappropriate, he implored Hashem with the pasuk in Tehillim (120:2), "Rescue my soul from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue." This is enigmatic! Yaakov is prepared to use whatever "cleverness" he can to receive the blessings. He was about to make statements which could be viewed as lies. Yet, at the same moment he entreats Hashem to save him from a deceitful tongue. Does this not seem slightly insincere? Where is the "emes" in the "ish emes" that Yaakov Avinu purported to personify?

Horav Gedalyah Shorr, zl, explains Yaakov Avinu's behavior in the following manner: The purpose of a nisayon, a trial from Hashem, is to help man attain perfection in his middos. A nisayon is successfully completed when one has finished the task, while demonstrating that no blemish exists in his character. Each of the Avos withstood nisyonos focusing on the individual middah which they exemplified. Avraham Avinu was tested in the area of chesed to see if his devotion to chesed was sincere to the point of self-sacrifice. He withstood the test. Yitzchak personified din, the middah of justice. He desired that others deal with him on the level of pure justice

without the "buffer" of rachamim, mercy. Chazal tell us that Yitzchak demanded yesurim, severe pain, which he withstood without complaint.

Yaakov was tested in the middah of emes. Yaakov was to take the blessings from Yitzchak in a manner that was totally atypical for a man of his integrity. His mother assured him that he was behaving in a correct manner, that she was Divinely inspired to guide him in his endeavor. Yet, it was not "emesdik" to act in this manner. Yaakov feared that some of the sheker, falsehood, deceit that he would be obliged to use, would taint him. He entreated Hashem, "Ribono Shel Olam, help me that I do not become affected by the mirmah that I must use. Guide me out of the muck of falsehood and deliver me back safely to the solitude of emes."

This world is called the "almah d'shikra," the world of falsehood. Everything is imaginary; nothing is real. Falsehood surrounds us wherever we go. At times, we must resort to act with ormah - cleverness - in dealing with the yetzer hora or with reshaim in general. We pray that what we must do does not become a part of us, merely a tool which is necessary to utilize in order to maintain our spiritual position. We pray that we will derive no benefit from the use of continued cleverness -- and that it will leave no mark on us - whatsoever.

"kornfeld@netmedia.net.il" "parasha-page@jer1.co.il" Parashat Toldot 5757 - "Two proud nations" The Weekly Internet P A R A S H A - P A G E by Mordecai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem (kornfeld@jer1.co.il)

=====

= Please mention in your prayers: \*Alter Yisrael Elimelech ben Rachel (a 15-year old boy [from Belgium] who is lying unconscious in intensive care after cardiac failure) \*Aharon Yitzchak ben Devorah Leah (a young Talmid Chacham in Jerusalem who was diagnosed with leukemia) \*Chaim Yakov Nachmiel ben Sarah Dubbah (Coby Levi, who just underwent a bone-marrow transplant in Milwaukee)

=====

=

Parashat Toldot 5757

## TWO PROUD NATIONS

The two children [who would later become known as Yakov and Esav] struggled with each other inside their mother Rivka, and she said, "If it is like this, why am I...?" Rivka went to seek the counsel of the prophets. The prophet explained to Rivka, "There are two nations ["Goyim"] inside of you, and two kingdoms shall derive from you. One kingdom will constantly try to overcome the other.... [Bereishit 25:22-23] Two nations ["Goyim"] -- The word "Goyim" in this verse is missing a Vav, and can therefore be read "Geyim," or "proud ones." The two "proud ones" were Antoninus Caesar and Rabbi Yehudah Hanassi, who both had various delicacies on their tables all year long. [Rashi ad loc., based on Gemara Avodah Zarah 11a] Why did Chazal single out Rabbi Yehudah (aka "Rebbi") and Antoninus as the two "proud ones" from among all the descendants of Yakov and Esav? If Chazal meant to choose the wealthiest and most powerful representatives of the two nations, there were certainly more appropriate examples from which to choose. The Midrash Rabba (63:7) does, in fact, contend that the two "proud ones" were King Solomon and the Emperor Hadrian, who were certainly "prouder" than the former two. Why, then, did the Gemara in Avodah Zarah select Rebbi and Antoninus? Secondly, how could Chazal justify their interpretation with the context of the verse? Why would the prophet point out to Rivka that her descendants would be the wealthy Rebbi and Antoninus? How would that allay her anxieties?

II We may suggest an answer to the first question based on a Gemara in Yoma. We are taught that the two goats used for the Yom Kippur services in the Beit Hamikdash must be similar in appearance, height, and price. They are even to be purchased at the same time. This is derived from the fact that the Torah tells us to take "two goats." Why must it mention \*two\* goats? The plural form alone -- "goats" -- is enough to convey to us the need for at least two, since a well established rule teaches us to presume the lower limit when interpreting a word that may include a range

of numbers. From the addition of the word "two" we can extrapolate that the goats must share common characteristics -- they must be "two of the same." (See also Kol Eliyahu to Parashat Bereishit par. # 2, Rashi to Devarim 9:10 quoting from Midrash Tanchuma). We can understand our verse in a similar manner. Why did the verse specify \*two\* nations [Goyim], or proud ones [Geyim]? We would have inferred from the plural form, "nations," that the verse is referring to two nations! The additional word "two," teaches us that the two will be \*equally\* powerful, and that they will partners. At which point in history do we find Yakov and Esav's descendants on equal footing? Doesn't Rashi (Bereishit 25:23) tell us that the two will never be equally powerful? When one rises, the other will fall! And as far as peaceful coexistence is concerned, "It is a well known fact that Esav and his descendants will always hate Yakov!" (Rashi to Bereishit 33:4) The only time in history that the leaders of Esav and Yakov were both powerful and cooperated with each other was during the times of Antoninus and Rebbi, as described in detail by the Gemara in Avodah Zarah 10b (and Tosafot). It was these two who were the two "equally proud ones" to which the Torah refers, not King Solomon and Hadrian! (see Maharal in Gur Arye, and Maharsha in Avodah Zarah who suggest a similar approach.)

## III Was the era of Rebbi just a fluke of history?

Why did this seeming change of human nature, whereby Yakov and Esav coexisted peacefully, occur in Rebbi's days? Far from a random occurrence, it is clear evidence of Divine intervention in the forming of Jewish history. Rashi describes the background to this period of history.

In the generations preceding Rebbi, there was so much disunity in the interpretation of the Torah, that the Torah was as two Torahs. This was due to the cruelty of the Roman empire and their anti-religious decrees. The Jewish leaders were not able to calmly analyze the Halachah due to the prevailing situation.

The situation remained as such until the times of Rebbi, when Hashem caused Rebbi to find favor in the eyes of the Roman Caesar, Antoninus, who relaxed the evil Roman decrees. Rebbi gathered all the Rabbinical students of Eretz Yisrael... and calmly analyzed all of the halachic opinions, organizing them into the Mishnaic code. [Rashi Bava Metzia 33b]

By the times of Rebbi, the oral Mesorah was in such a sorry state that it appeared as though it would be totally forgotten (cf. Rambam's introduction to Mishneh Torah; Gemara Ketuvot 103b "Gedolim Ma'asei Chiya..."; the story of Rebbi Yehudah ben Bava and the Semichah in Sanhedrin 13b). But Hashem already promised us that "the Torah will never be forgotten from Yakov's children" (Devarim 31:21, and Rashi). In keeping with his promise, Hashem intervened with the natural course of history and caused Antoninus to be best of friends with Rebbi (Avodah Zarah 10b). In this manner the Jews were given a chance to reorganize the Mesorah and establish it in a permanent manner.

IV We may now answer our second question: How did the prophet's statement regarding Rebbi and Antoninus answer Rivka's questions? Let us re-analyze Rivka's question. Rivka deduced that one of her children would be a righteous person who would learn Torah while the other would be attracted to houses of idol-worship (see Rashi to 25:22). Since "our forefathers' lives set a historical precedent for our own destiny" (Tanchuma, quoted and expounded upon by Ramban Bereishit 12:6, see Parasha-Page, Lech Lecha 5756), it was already clear that the two nations that would derive from Rivka would be opposites. What bothered Rivka was "If it is like this, Why am I?" -- i.e., why should two such opposites be carried by the same woman, at the same time? Such an intimate association would seem to hint that the descendants of the two would be inseparable companions, while nothing could be farther from the truth! Why then, she wondered, were the two of them born to one mother, in a single birth? The prophet answered, "These are Rebbi and Antoninus." If not for this temporary togetherness, there would be no opportunity for such opposing nations to share any common destiny. Hashem had them share a birth, because He foresaw the need for Yakov and Esav to unite during that one period in history when their unity would be necessary for the survival of Judaism. The prophet answered Rivka, "There are two equally powerful

nations inside of you -- Hashem wants to unite your offspring during the times of Rebbi and Antoninus. Aside from that period, however, the two will part ways -- "Mimei'ayich Yiparedu" (see Rashi). May Hashem return Yakov to his former glory, speedily in our days!

"rmk@torah.org""drasha@torah.org" BUTTER BATTLES -- DRASHA PARSHAS TOLDOS DRASHA PARSHAS TOLDOS BUTTER BATTLES 11/14/96 Volume 3 Issue 6

This week the Torah tells us of the great dichotomy of character between Yaakov and his older brother Esav. Yaakov sat and studied while Esav hunted. Though it is difficult to understand the roots of this great divide, their parents' reaction to this diversity is even more confusing. The Torah tells us that "Yitzchak loved Esav for there was game in his mouth, and Rivka loved Yaakov." (Genesis 25:28)

The variance in their opinions manifested itself in the fight over the blessings. Yitzchak intended that Esav receive his blessings for worldly goods, intending to save the spiritual ones for Yaakov. Rivka pushed her son Yaakov to attain the blessings for the worldly goods, too.

What was the fundamental difference between Yitzchak's and Rivka's view of their children? Why was there such a diverse notion as to who should inherit the wealth of this world? How is it possible that Yitzchak, who epitomized the very essence of spirituality, favored Esav, a man steeped in worldly desires?

Vice President Al Gore tells a story about outgoing Senator Bill Bradley. Senator Bradley once attended a dinner at which he was a guest speaker. The waiter set down a side dish of potatoes, and placed a pat of butter upon them. The Senator asked for an extra portion of butter. "I'm sorry sir," the very unyielding server replied tersely, "one pat per guest."

With a combined expression of shock, scorn, and disbelief, Senator Bradley looked up at the formal steward.

"Excuse me," he said. "Do you know who I am? I am New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley." The Senator cleared his throat. "I am a Rhodes scholar and a former NBA star. I currently serve on the International Trade and Long-Term Growth Committee, and the Debt and Deficit Reduction Committee, and I am in charge of Taxation and IRS Oversight. And I'd like another pat of butter on my potatoes."

The waiter looked down at the Senator. "Do you know who I am?" he asked. "I am the one in charge of the butter."

Yitzchak understood the great contrariety between his children. However, he felt that Esav, the hunter-child, understood the mundane world much better.

So it was only fitting that Esav be gifted with the blessings of a mundane world. Esav would then supplement Yaakov's needs, and a true symbiosis would emerge. Rivka, on the other hand, was pragmatic. She felt that putting Esav in charge of the material world would lead to selfish hoarding that would hardly give Yaakov a portion.

She understood that while Yaakov's sustenance was basically from spirituality, he still needed a little butter to survive. And she could not rely on Esav controlling the butter: she knew the personality all too well. There would be no parity or sharing. Esav would take it all.

Everybody has a job, whether it be spiritual or menial, and each job must be executed with a sense of responsibility and mission. The argument between Rivka and Yitzchak was complex, but it was simple too. Esav may be more astute in churning the butter; however, will he make sure to give Yaakov his fair share? Rivka knew that the world would be a better place if we all shared our respective portions. But she wouldn't count on it.

Dedicated by Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Luxenburg in memory of Jesse Aronson -- Reb Yeshaya Zvi ben Reb Tuvia O"H

Mordechai Kamenetzky - Yeshiva of South Shore rmk@torah.org  
Drasha, Copyright (c) 1996 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis

## PARASHAT HASHAVUA PARASHAT TOLDOT

by Rav Ezra Bick

\*\*\*\*\* This shiur is dedicated in memory of the first yearzeit (Kislev 4) of our husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, R' Gavriel Yitzchak Pacanowski ben R' Yisroel Alter, by his wife Fela, children Sara and Yossi Franck, Gita and Moshe Goodman, Yisroel Alter and Miriam Pacanowski, and Hindy and Elie Lederman, and grandchildren and great-grandchild in Israel and Australia.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Today's shiur refers to three articles published by Yeshivat Har Etzion: Rav Menachem Leibtag, "Parashat Toldot" (VBM 5756) Naava Guttman, "HaKol Kol Yaakov" (Megadim 21,17) Rav Ezra Bick, "Parashat Toldot" (5756) The three articles may be found at <http://www.etzion.org.il/toldot.htm>

The question of why Yitzchak wanted to give Esav the berakhot (blessings) is one of the most widely discussed by commentators on Bereishit, most recently in last year's Parasha shiur (Rav Menachem Leibtag). Several commentators have suggested that Yitzchak never intended to deny Yaakov the spiritual legacy of Avraham, including the promise of the Land. The berakha intended for Esav, ultimately usurped by Yaakov, was a different and parallel one to that given to Yaakov at the end of the parasha. Yitzchak was fully aware that the spiritual stature of Esav disqualified him from being the bearer of the mantle of Avraham.

There are several versions of this double-berakha theory. Last year, R. Leibtag suggested that Yitzchak thought that both children would together share in "Jewish" identity. Both would receive personal blessings, just as all of Yaakov's twelve children were blessed, each according to his nature. There is no reason not to bless both, though the "bechira," the "birkat Avraham" of "zera" (offspring) and "aretz" (homeland), was reserved for Yaakov alone. Rivka, on the other hand, knew that the two sons were destined to be two nations, not one - God had told her before they were born that "Two PEOPLES are in your womb and two NATIONS shall separate out of your bowels, and one nation shall be stronger than the other and the older shall serve the younger." Knowing that Yitzchak's plan cannot be fulfilled, she acts to divert the berakha from Esav. The main support for this contention lies in the comparison between the berakha intended for Esav, and the one Yitzchak gives Yaakov at the end of the parasha, right before Yaakov departs for Charan. The first refers only to prosperity and power. There is no mention of the Land of Israel (birkat ha-aretz) and none of the promise of children, or the future people of Israel, the two elements of the repeated blessing given by God to Avraham. The second, on the other hand, is explicitly called "birkat Avraham" - And Kel Shakkai shall bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you should be a MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE; and give you the BLESSING OF AVRAHAM, to you and your seed with you, that you should INHERIT THE LAND in which you dwell, which God gave to Avraham."

What is still left unexplained in this scheme? One perplexing point is the apparent belief of Yitzchak that the berakha given to Yaakov (Esav) cannot be shared - there is nothing left to give Esav after this has been given to Yaakov. Why not? Why cannot both have a blessing of prosperity and riches? In fact, Yitzchak soon recovers and does bless Esav. The difference between the berakha given to Yaakov and that given to Esav seems to lie in the element in the first berakha of "You shall be the superior of your brother and the sons of your mother shall bow before you." This can be given only once. But that itself is puzzling. Why did Yitzchak see fit to subjugate one brother to the other? Yaakov, in giving blessings to all his children, did not divide the physical benefits in such an exclusive manner. If the disagreement of Yitzchak and Rivka was whether to follow the example of Avraham-Yitzchak, or to anticipate the path of Yaakov-twelve tribes, Yitzchak's choice and the attendant tension does not correspond the subsequent form taken by Yaakov.

A second point relates to the prophecy received by Rivka before the birth of the children. It must be argued that Rivka had not shared this prophecy with Yitzchak. Two weeks ago, in the shiur on Vayeira, a similar question

arose whether Avraham had told Sara about the impending birth of Yitzchak before the arrival of the angels. I argued then (against the Ramban) that it is inconceivable that Avraham would not have told Sara. In the case of Rivka, silence has admittedly a greater probability. Unlike the earlier case, this prophecy does not directly concern Yitzchak. Specifically, the element of Sara's name change, which I believe could not possibly have not been retold to Sara, is absent here. Nonetheless, the necessity of concealing a prophecy given to one of the foreparents from the other is troubling. Why should Rivka have never told Yitzchak?

Finally, I have a methodological problem. The basis of the story is a simple mistake, out of ignorance of God's plan? What is the significance of this story then? The passing on of the blessing is the central story of the parasha, in fact, the central story of Yitzchak's life (after the akeida, which is schematically part of Avraham's life). Yitzchak's mistake is a logical one, and in fact is only wrong by a few years, by one generation. I believe it is not enough to interpret Bereishit as a logical personal narrative; it must be a story of the Avot, of the creation of the Jewish people, of the spiritual community. What was the important ISSUE that divided Yitzchak and Rivka?

In an article printed in Megadim, Naava Guttman ("Hakol Kol Yaakov," Megadim 21, pp. 17-22) offers an interesting twist on the double-berakha theory. Yitzchak believed that it is necessary to separate the two aspects of a "holy people," the spiritual and the political. The Jewish nation would be a political entity with a spiritual destiny, a nation living on the earth with a *raison d'etre* centered in heaven. Yitzchak thought it not only possible to divide the berakhot between Yaakov and Esav, he thought it necessary. One son would devote himself to the life of the spirit, to being an "ish tam" who dwells in the tent, the other would be the political leader, molding the nation's fortune in the world, IN ORDER TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF THE FORMER. In other words, "ha-kol kol Yaakov ve-hayadayim yedei Esav," there is a man of hands and a man of words. The two cannot exist in the same individual. The two tasks are mutually exclusive. This is the distinction between king and priest, between court and temple. The need to be concerned with the problems of the world will ruin and contaminate the man of spirit and kedusha. Yitzchak recognized the personality of Esav and planned to utilize the strengths of that personality in order to further the future of Am Yisrael. Yitzchak loved Esav because "tzayid be-fiv" - he was practical, a provider, a hunter. Giving him a blessing of property and power is not merely a father caring for his son, it is part and parcel of the future of "and I shall make you a great nation." Hence, he grants him not merely wealth, but dominion as well, for Yitzchak believes that one aspect of Jewish life must be in control of the other. The practical side, the side that must exercise power, shall rule, and "your mother's sons shall bow down before you." This does not mean that Esav will subjugate Yaakov, merely that he will be the ruler, much as Yosef dreamed that his brothers would bow down to him. Once this berakha is given to Yaakov instead of Esav, however, Yitzchak has nothing left to give to Esav, for he is surely not worthy of receiving the blessing of Avraham, the spiritual leadership of sanctity.

According to this theory, Rivka did not merely oppose Yitzchak's choice, she disagreed with the theory behind it. It is possible that she is influenced by the message of God she had received before the birth of the children, knowing not only that they would be "two peoples," which could be understood as two tribes, two parts of a greater unit, but also that "one nation shall be stronger than the other," which she understood as "one nation shall struggle against the other" (ye'ematz). It is also possible that, as Guttman claims, Rivka misunderstood, thinking that Yitzchak planned to give Esav the spiritual berakha. Guttman's proof for this is that whereas Yitzchak tells Esav that he wishes to "bless you before I die," Rivka tells Yaakov that Yitzchak said he wishes to "bless you before God before I die." The blessing "before God" is reminiscent of the status of a kohen, who "stands before God." But I think that even if Rivka had understood Yitzchak's intentions perfectly, she would have opposed them. The disagreement between Rivka and Yitzchak was one of principle. Rivka opposed separating the two

aspects of Jewish existence so totally. Knowing Esav's character, knowing how totally dominated he was by the practical mundane side of life, she did not believe that separation of realms was the way to achieve a more perfect union of Jewish destiny.

Rivka aspires to unity, to completeness, in one individual. In this she is the complete opposite of Yitzchak. Why did Yitzchak believe that Yaakov should be left without any practical control over his life, dependant on his brother for food, sustenance and political leadership? The answer, I think, lies in Yitzchak's own personality. Last year, in a shiur I sent to this list, I described Yitzchak as being purely spiritual, inward, contemplative, withdrawn from the world, and detached. In other words, in his own life, Yitzchak's immense spiritual stature had been achieved by withdrawing from the sphere of the practical. He was a dreamer, a comtemplative. We find no incidents in Yitzchak's life comparable to the drama of Avraham's or Yaakov's - in fact, we find nearly no incidents in Yitzchak's life at all, as retold by the Torah. Yitzchak was an "ola temima" (a flawless, "pure" sacrifice - the term used by Chazal to describe his special status, which, among other things, prevented him from leaving the sacred grounds of Eretz Yisrael), sanctified, hallowed, separated. It is only natural, then, for Yitzchak to believe that Yaakov's spiritual destiny as a "yoshev ohalim" must be protected by finding someone else to carry out those functions that require contact with the hurly-burly of everyday life. Esav is the perfect candidate. Yitzchak imagines that Yaakov will be able to carry on and perfect his own life work, while Esav will lay the practical foundations to transform solitary Jewish existence into nationhood. What's more, Yitzchak believes that power and sovereignty should be granted to Esav, since his role requires it, and Yaakov has no need for it. This is one of the great spiritual positions in history - an absolute divorce between power in the world and personal spiritual development, echoing the plaint of Wordsworth, "the world is too much with us." Yitzchak knows from self-inspection that practical concerns, conflicts, and struggles would have destroyed him. In fact, God has shielded him from them all his life, leaving us with a rather eventless biography to read, encapsuled all in one parasha.

Rivka, on the other hand, is practical, with a bit of those qualities, such as deviousness and stealth, that are completely foreign to the "pure" nature of Yitzchak. She understands that Yaakov will complete the development of the avot, not by being more like Yitzchak, but by combining the "ohel" (tent) of Yitzchak with practical skills to change the world. (Getting a bit ahead of ourselves, Yaakov is the first to build a house, "bayit," and not live in a tent. He builds!). She knows that dividing the aspects of Jewish national life will not lead to a greater whole, but to conflict. The relationship she had with Yitzchak cannot exist between Esav and Yaakov, and Yitzchak's plan will lead to conflict and struggle, not harmony. Even if she had told Yitzchak what God had told her earlier, he would have understood it differently, given his character. She had not only heard the message of God, she had felt the boys' struggle in her womb, in her body, and could harbor no illusions about the outcome of giving Esav dominion over Yaakov. Hence, demonstrating her own practical side, and involving Yaakov in her scheme as well, she acted to correct the situation, to insure that Yaakov would bear within himself, and pass on to his many children, the unified dream of "tal ha-shamayim u- mishmanei ha-aretz" - the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth - together with "birkat Avraham", the inheritance of Eretz Yisrael.

That her plan will be accomplished with trickery, with all the attendant moral ambiguity, is itself indicative of the nature of what is happening here. Yitzchak shuns any involvement with what could be possibly morally ambiguous, with anything that could affect his status as "ola temima." He is not permitted to have contact with the mundane, to go to chutz la-aretz, lest it detract from the purity of his heaven-bound vision. The "trick" of getting the berakha is itself the contradiction to Yitzchak's plan, irrespective of the result in changing the intended recipient of the berakha. Hence, the response of Yitzchak:

"Isaac trembled very excessively and said, 'Who, then, was it who hunted the provision, and brought it to me that I should eat from all

before you came, and I have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed."

The trembling, the anxiety of Yitzchak, has troubled commentators since Chazal. The midrash, feeling the dread implied in the word "charada gedola," says this refers to a feeling of gehinom; he felt the opening of hell, of death, before him. Yaakov had brought the world, its deceit, its ambiguity and lack of clarity (see Rashi on "ani Esav bekhorekha") into Yitzchak's life; indeed, he had fed it to him, and Yitzchak had eaten it "from all." This was a contradiction, a desecration, of the foundation of Yitzchak's whole existence, a corruption of his special purity. "Charada gedola" (a great trembling), asks the midrash, is greater than what? - "greater than the trembling he experienced on the altar at the akeida." The akeida defined Yitzchak as *ola temima*; deceit rocks, as an underlying anxiety and dread, that foundation.

Yitzchak, however, recovers. "Gam barukh yihyeh" - yea, and he shall be blessed. In one second, Yitzchak sees that the next stage is not as he thought, a further deepening of spiritual detachment, but rather a widening of spiritual dimension to encompass and sanctify the practical side of life. The berakha he gave Yaakov CAN coexist with Yaakov's spiritual blessing. He shall be blessed, it is not impossible, it is not a contradiction. Yaakov shall leave the house of Yitzchak to wander, to struggle, with Esav, with Lavan, with the problems of his children, with galut and tum'a, and by doing so he will complete the building of "beit Yisrael." As the angel who blesses him and names him Yisrael says, "For you have struggled with God and men and you have prevailed."

"zomet@jer1.co.il Shabbat-B'Shabbato -- Parshat Toldot

THE NAME OF THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION

by Rabbi Yehudah Shaviv

The word "Toldot" has two different meanings: offspring, or historical events. In the beginning of the portion of Noach, Ibn Ezra takes the word to mean history, and the Ramban translates it as children. There is a similar disagreement over the passage "These are the 'toldot' of Yaacov" [Bereishit 37:2]: the Rashbam explains the word as children, attacking his grandfather Rashi for interpreting it to mean events. However, most of the commentaries agree that in the opening phrase of week's portion the word "toldot" refers to Yitzchak's children, "Yaacov and Esav, who are mentioned in the portion" [Rashi, Bereishit 25:19]. One reason for this is that the passage would seem to be a continuation of last week's portion, which concludes with Yishmael's "toldot," clearly referring to children. However, the Sforno still explains the opening of this week's portion as referring to the events of Yitzchak's life.

The name "Toldot" is a good name for a Torah portion if its main subject is the children, Yaacov and Esav. Similarly, the name "Noach" is best for a portion which is concerned with activities and events in which Noach participated. However, if the portion is concerned with the children, it is not clear why the Torah should immediately continue with: "Avraham gave birth to Yitzchak" [Bereishit 25:19]. The Ramban explains that this is to emphasize that Yitzchak is more important than Yishmael: "This tells us that only Yitzchak has the status of offspring and no other is to be considered, as is written, 'For Yitzchak will be your offspring' [Bereishit 21:12]".

>From looking at the history of succeeding generations, it is clear that Avraham gave birth to Yitzchak, who continued Avraham's unique qualities. This is different from Yishmael, where the passage "These are the offspring of Yishmael" is simply followed by: "... the one who Hagar the Egyptian, maidservant of Sarah, bore to Avraham" [Bereishit 25:12]. The sequence of events over the generations bears witness to the testimony of what was said to Avraham on the occasion of the sacrifice of Yitzchak, "your ONLY son, the one you love, Yitzchak" [Bereishit 22:2].

The Torah not only gives praise for Yitzchak's lineage, it also praises Rivkah: "Rivkah, daughter of Betuel the Aramite, from Padan Aram, sister of Lavan the Aramite" [Bereishit 25:20]. This emphasizes her outstanding character, in that she was able to withstand her family and surroundings and still maintain her righteousness (see Rashi). However, this mention of the different

backgrounds of the two parents may be a hint of things to come, and help to offer an explanation of the strife that would eventually develop between the two brothers (see Rabbi Hirsh's commentary).

In the end, however, it is not possible to explain the character of the children only on the basis of heredity. Just as it is not only the milestones of one's life that establish one's traits, so the family influence cannot be considered the only factor that shapes the children. The most important factor is the person and how he decides to handle himself, as is so aptly shown by our ancestor Rivkah.

"bircas@netmedia.net.il" Toldos

Selected, translated and arranged by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz

"Feed me (literally pour down my throat) some of this red red (food)" (25,30)

Rash"i notes: "On that day, Avraham died, so that he would not see Eisav his grandson turn to wicked ways, and this would not be the 'good old age' which HaKadosh Boruch Hu had promised him (15,15) . . . and Ya'akov cooked lentils to feed to (Yitschak, who was in a state of) mourning."

The Chasam Sofer points out that this was destined through D-ivine Providence. For Ya'akov had no possessions of his own at that time, since he was living in his father's home and was supported by him, so he owned nothing. Thus he did not have any means with which to purchase the rights of the first-born.

But (halocho dictates that) the seudas havra'ah, (the ritual first meal which the mourner eats after the funeral) has to belong to someone else (who gives it to him). So it had to be that Yitschak gave the lentils to Ya'akov (to prepare and then give back to him to eat). (Thus Ya'akov owned the lentils) and as a result, he was able (to use them) to buy (the rights of the first-born) from Eisav.

toldot Enayim L'ETorah Parshat Toldot

Publication of Student Organization of Yeshiva University

Flying High by Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen

The Baalei Musar asked how Yaakov knew that Esav would be willing to sell his birthright for the paltry price of ôsome red substanceö? One could also question the risk taken by Yaakov in making such a cheap offer to Esav. Perhaps Esav would refuse and in the process become aware of Yaakov's intentions and forever be on guard against Yaakov's attempts to acquire it from him? The answers to these questions lies in a distinction based on two types of human nature.

In the Talmud (Brachot 35b), we find the sharp distinction between the dorot harishonot - earlier generations, and the dorot ha'Eacharonot - later generations. Earlier generations would deliberately focus their attention on how to become obligated in mitzvot such as terumot and maasrot. The later generations sought halachic exemptions from mitzvot. The earlier generations fit the description of the ohavei Hashem as depicted in Chovot Halvavot (perek 7 sha'Ear ôahavaö). The ohavei Hashem are compared to eagles, attempting to fly higher and higher in the Heavens. They are not content to be exempt from the performance of mitzvot and therefore involve themselves in learning the laws of those mitvot which they are not obligated to perform. The later generations fit the depiction of the bat who flees and hides from all daylight; they attempt to avoid light û i.e. mitzvot û whenever possible. Yaakov is compared to an eagle, while Esav is compared to a bat. With this character distinction in mind, let us look at the dialogue between Esav and Yaakov over the red substance.

When Esav came from the field tired and hungry, he

referred to the food in the pot as ôred substance.ö The Sforno points out that Esav could not recognize the food in the pot, only its color. From EsavÆs perspective, it did not matter what type of food was in the pot. Any substance would help sustain Esav here on this world; all that mattered to him was his living on and in this world û olam hazeh. Yaakov Avinu understood EsavÆs request for food as indicating EsavÆs strong desires for olam hazeh. This insight by Yaakov Avinu was later reinforced by EsavÆs statement, ôAni holech lamut.ö He expressed his awareness of the natural limitations on the desires of olam hazeh (i.e. until death); he had no wish to accept more mitzvot and obligations on himself. Yaakov took this opportunity to acquire the birthright û to obligate himself in more mitzvot, as a firstborn. Yaakov Avinu offered the deal to Esav after recognizing EsavÆs character trait, a trait similar to the later generations, of seeking to escape from the yoke of the mitzvot an responsibility.

G-d desires that we direct our lives to paths filled with obligations and responsibility. Our avot hakedoshim inspire us to sense a stronger urgency towards this goal. Yaakov and Esav came from the same mother and father and yet were worlds apart. Yaakov Avinu strove to become closer to shamayim by elevating himself through more and more mitzvot whereas Esav sought to escape those responsibilities.

When learning these beautiful parshiyot pertaining to the maÆasei avot, all bnei torah should think to themselves ômatai yagiu maÆsai lÆElaÆasei avot?ö

---

Packouz@aol.com" AISH HATORAH'S

Shabbat Shalom Weekly

DVAR TORAH: based on Love Your Neighbor by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

The Torah states, "And Yitzchok (Isaac) called Ya'akov (Jacob) and blessed him, and commanded him saying: You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan." (Genesis 28:1) What can we learn from Yitzchok blessing Yakov before commanding him not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan?

The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, the greatest rabbi of the last generation taught that this passage instructs us on the most effective way of admonishing others. Before Yitzchok warned his son Ya'akov what not to do, he blessed him. He showed that he truly cared about his welfare and therefore Ya'akov was more inclined to listen to his admonition.

Giving reproof is an art. Often people "think" that by raising their voice, their words will enter more effectively. A mother may yell at her son, "You slob, make your bed, shame on you!" and expects that her son will respond, "Gee, Mom, thanks for pointing that out. I never thought about that before; now I am going to make my bed every morning!" Instead, the son replies, "It's my room, I'm just going to sleep in it again soon anyway. It shouldn't bother you." The son expects that the mother will say, "Wow! You are really grown up. You think for yourself and I see now that you are truly an independent thinker." Neither is getting the message across because they are resorting to raised voices rather than expressions of appreciation for the other person and soft words.