TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



תולדות

לעילוי נשמת



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תולדות

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Hamaayan is prepared by laymen and published weekly for the edification and enjoyment of the reader who is lacking the time or ability to study the weekly parashah on his own. Hamaayan's goal is to acquaint the reader with a broad spectrum of traditional Torah commentary — classical, recent and "obscure" — as well as with aspects of Jewish history and thought. The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah")

An Astonishing Midrash

אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹקֵי יִצְחָק וֵאלֹקֵי יַעֲקֹב ***"The G-d of Avraham, the G-d of Yitzchak, and the G-d of Yaakov"*** (Amidah) – *this is the meaning of the verse (Tehilim 124:1),* **לוּלֵי ה' שֶׁהָיָה לָנוּ יֹאמַר־נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל** ***"If not that Hashem was with us, we would say, 'Yisrael'."***

Of Yaakov's two names, Yaakov and Yisrael, the latter refers to his greatest spiritual accomplishments. Why, then, did the authors of Shemoneh Esrei use the name "Yaakov" in the above phrase?

The phrase, **אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹקֵי יִצְחָק וֵאלֹקֵי יַעֲקֹב** has 26 letters, which is the gematria of Hashem's Name. If not for the significance of the number 26 – causing "Hashem" to be "with us" – the name Yisrael (which is longer) could have been used.

אִם־תַּעֲשֶׂה עִמָּנוּ רָעָה כַּאֲשֶׁר לֹא נְגַעֲנוּךָ וְכַאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂינוּ עִמְּךָ רַק־טּוֹב וַנְּשַׁלֵּחֲךָ בְּשָׁלוֹם אַתָּה עַתָּה בְּרוּךְ ה׳ *" If you do evil with us . . . ! Just as we have not molested you, and just as we have done with you only good and have sent you away in peace – Now, you, O blessed of Hashem."* (26:29)

Throughout the Torah, the word "only" signifies a limitation. Thus, the midrash comments on the above verse that the good which the Plishtim did with Yitzchak was only a partial good. How so?

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (19th century) explains as follows:

The gemara (Berachot 64a) states **הַנִּפְטָר מֵחֲבֵרוֹ אַל יֹאמַר לוֹ "לֵךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם", אֶלָּא "לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם"**, - that one who parts from another should say, "Go to peace," and should not say, "Go in peace."

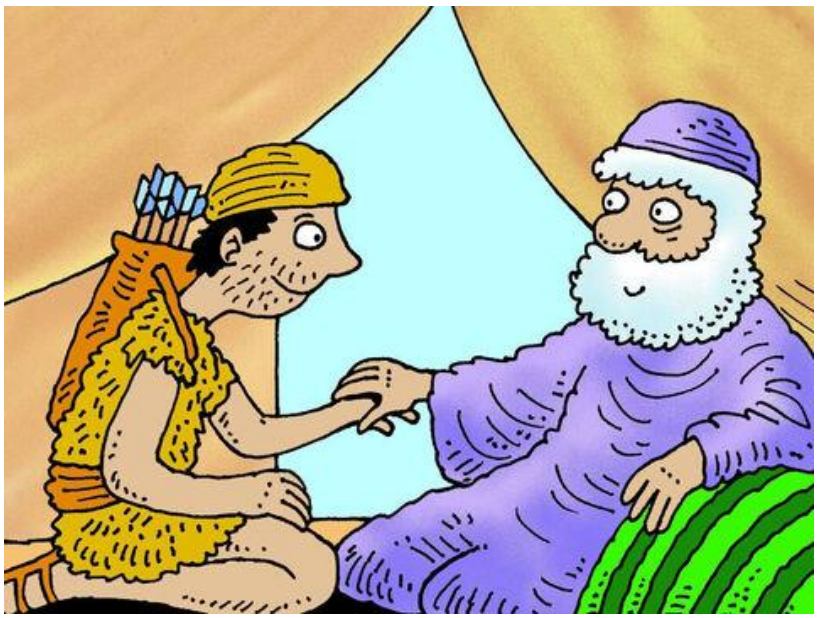
The gemara demonstrates that those who were sent "to peace" succeeded thereafter, while those who were sent "in peace" did not. Thus, the Plishtim who sent Yitzchak "in peace," as our verse states, did him only a partial good. (**Imrei Shefer**)

Why is it harmful to say, "Go in shalom," rather than, "Go to shalom"?
R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l (20th century) explains:

When one says, "Go in . . . ," one gives his friend the illusion that the road before him will be easy. This is not the case, as life is full of spiritual and material stumbling blocks. A person who incorrectly believes that the road will be easy will be unprepared and will come to harm. - Rather, one should say, "Go to . . ." Shalom can be attained eventually, but it is far off. Only at a funeral do we say, "Go in . . .," for the deceased can have shalom. (Ain Ayah, Berachot 64a)

"Before you become friends with someone, observe him when he gets angry." – Orchos Tzadikim.

וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו בָּרְכֵנִי גַם־אָנִי אָבִי "***Bless me too, my father.***" *(27:34)*



Three times Esav asked Yitzchak to bless him. Twice Yitzchak responded that this could not be done, yet the third time he did bless Esav. Why?

R' Yitzchak Karo z"l (15th century; uncle of R' Yosef Karo) explains the progression of the verses as follows:

Yitzchak blessed Yaakov that he would be a lord over his brother. Obviously, such a blessing could be given only once; therefore, in response to Esav's first request, Yitzchak said (27:35), בָּא אָחִיךָ בְּמִרְמָה וַיִּקַּח בִּרְכָתֶךָ "***Your brother came . . . and took your blessing.***"

But Yitzchak did not specify to Esav what that blessing was, so Esav did not understand Yitzchak's meaning. Thus, Esav responded (27:36), הֲלֹא־אָצַלְתָּ לִּי בְּרָכָה - "***Have you not reserved a blessing for me?***"

Yitzchak then explained (27:37), הֵן גְּבִיר שַׂמְתִּיו לָךְ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֶחָיו נָתַתִּי לוֹ לַעֲבָדִים וְדָגָן וְתִירֹשׁ סְמַכְתִּיו - "***Behold a lord I have made him over you . . . ; with grain and wine I have supported him.***"

Esav retorted (27:38), הַבְרָכָה אַחַת הִוא־לְךָ אָבִי בָּרְכֵנִי גַם־אָנִי אָבִי - "***Have you but one blessing, father?***" What you just said is not one blessing, but two, and the second one can be given to both of us!

Yitzchak agreed, and he blessed Esav (27:39), הִנֵּה מִשְׁמַנֵּי הָאָרֶץ יִהְיֶה מוֹשָׁבֶךָ וּמִטַּל הַשָּׁמַיִם מֵעָל -"***Behold, of the fatness of the earth shall be your dwelling.***" **(Toldot Yitzchak)**

R' Meir Leibush Malbim z"l (19th century) explains the phrase - וַיֹּאמֶר בָּא אָחִיךָ בְּמִרְמָה וַיִּקַּח בִּרְכָתֶךָ - "***Your brother came . . . and took your blessing***" (27:35) to mean: "I had intended to bless you with wealth only so that you could support your brother Yaakov in his Torah study. However, now that I have blessed Yaakov with wealth, I have no more reason to bless you. Indeed, any wealth you might attain would not be a blessing, but a curse, because you would have no good use for it."

To this Esav responded, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" "Surely you have not given Yaakov every possible form of success! Surely Yaakov still needs me in some respect!"

Yitzchak responded that this was not the case; Yaakov did not need Esav's support at all.

Esav then asked, "Have you but one blessing?" "Can I not receive a blessing on my own without regard to Yaakov's needs?"

To this Yitzchak, as a loving father, agreed, and he blessed Esav. (**Hatorah Ve'hamitzvah**)

R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin z"l (19th century) states that Yitzchak did not bless Esav. He simply foretold prophetically that Esav would live off the fat of the earth. (**Maharil Diskin Al Hatorah**)

R' Yehuda ibn Chayug z"l born approx. 950 – died approx. 1020

R' Yehuda ben David ibn Chayug was a grammarian and a pupil of R' Menachem ben Saruk. He is known both for defending his teacher's views against R' Donash ben Lavrat and for his own grammatical theories.

Whereas earlier scholars recognized roots of two letters, or even one, R' Yehuda argued that all words are derived from three letter roots. He showed that even words consisting of two letters stem

from a three-letter root, with one letter dropping out in the conjugation. For this discovery, R' Yehuda was widely acclaimed.

R' Yehuda wrote four works: Sefer Hanoach Ve'hameshech, concerning verbs which drop letters in conjugation; Sefer Poalei Ha'keifel, concerning verbs which have doubled root letters; Sefer Hanikud, on vowelization; Sefer Harikchah, which is lost and whose precise subject is unknown. (Source: The Artscroll Rishonim)



וַיָּזֶד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד וַיָּבֹא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיֵף "***Yaakov simmered a stew, and Esav came in from the field, and he was exhausted***." (25:29)

Rashi z"l writes that Esav was exhausted from having committed murder that day. Rashi writes further that Avraham Avinu had died that very day. Hashem took him five years early so that he would not see his grandson Esav turn bad.

Midrash Rabbah appears to understand the sequence of events differently. According to the midrash, it was Avraham's death that caused Esav to sin. Esav reasoned that the death of someone so righteous as Avraham indicated that the world has no Judge and no justice.

R' Isser Zalman Meltzer z"l (1870-1953; rosh yeshiva in Slutsk and Kletsk, Poland, and later in Yerushalayim) explains that there is no contradiction. Esav was in any case on a path that would lead him astray, so Hashem did Avraham a kindness by taking him from this earth so that he would not see what became of his grandson. However, people who do bad things generally seek a way to rationalize their behaviour, and Avraham's death gave Esav the excuse he needed.



וַיָּרַח אֶת־רֵיחַ בְּגָדָיו וַיְבָרֲכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר רְאֵה רֵיחַ בְּנִי כְּרֵיחַ שָׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַכוֹ ה׳ - "***He [Yitzchak] smelled the fragrance of his [Yaakov's] garments and blessed him, saying, 'See, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field which Hashem has blessed'.***" (27:27)

Rashi z"l comments: "Surely there is no more offensive smell than that of washed goat skins. However, the Torah implicitly tells us that the perfume of the Garden of Eden entered the room with Yaakov."

Why would Yitzchak call the fragrance of Gan Eden "the fragrance of a field"?

R' Yitzchak Isaac Liebes z"l (noted American posek) explains:

The Torah relates that just before Yitzchak met his wife Rivka, "Yitzchak went out to pray in the field towards evening."

For what was he praying?

He was beseeching G-d that his forthcoming marriage would produce worthy children who would serve Hashem. Until the moment described in our verse, Yitzchak did not know whether his prayer had been answered, but when he smelled the fragrance of Gan Eden, he knew. – Then he said, "The fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field." This is what I prayed for that day in the field. (**Quoted in Otzrotaihem Shel Tzaddikim**)

וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם ***"Yaakov was a wholesome man." (25:27)***

The word "tam" literally means perfect or complete.

R' Yechezkel Sarna z"l (1890–1969; Rosh Yeshiva of the Chevron Yeshiva) observes that there is a Mitzvah (Devarim 18:13), "Be tamim!" R' Sarna explains:

One might brush-aside his inadvertent sins, saying, "It was an accident. I didn't mean it, so how much can it count?" However, just as one who breaks his wrist by accident is no longer perfect in a physical sense, so one who sins, even inadvertently, is no longer

perfect in a spiritual sense. The mitzvah to be tamim instructs us that it is a blemish on one's soul if he lets his spiritual guard down even to a limited extent. (Daliot Yechezkel Vol. II, p. 24)



וַיֵּצֵא הָרִאשׁוֹן אַדְמוֹנִי כֻּלּוֹ כְּאַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו. וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וְיָדוֹ אֹחֶזֶת בַּעְקֵב עֵשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב *"The first one emerged red, entirely like a hairy mantle; so they named him 'Esav.' After that his brother emerged with his hand grasping on to the eikev / heel of Esav, so he named him 'Yaakov'." (25:25-26)*

Why does the verse say regarding Esav, "They named him," while of Yaakov it says, "He named him"?

R' Zalman Sorotzkin z"l (1881-1966; rabbi of Lutzk, Poland; later in Israel) answers: Esav was a very unusual-looking baby, and many curious people came to look at him. They all agreed that Esav was a fitting name for such a baby, as that name means "fully formed." Yaakov was a normal-looking baby, so no one paid attention to him. Only his father named him. (**Oznayim La'Torah**)

Rashi z"l writes about Yaakov: "The Holy One, blessed be He, so named him. Another explanation is: his father called him Yaakov because he was grasping Esav's heel."

R' Pinchas ben Pilta z"l (rabbi of Wlodowa, Poland; died 1663) asks: Rashi explains that Yitzchak called his son "Yaakov" because he was grasping Esav's heel. Why doesn't Rashi say that Hashem called the child "Yaakov" for that reason?

He answers: Maybe, in fact, Hashem called him Yaakov for a different reason, i.e., because he was destined l'akov / to outwit Esav (see below). In contrast, it is obvious from our Parashah that Yitzchak did not know what interactions Yaakov and Esav would have, so he could not have named Yaakov with that reason in mind.

In this light, R' Pinchas adds, we can understand the verse (27:36): "[Esav] said, 'Is it because He named him "Yaakov" that he outwitted

me these two times? — He took away my birthright and now he took away my blessing!'" [Esav did not say, "You named him Yaakov," but rather "He named him Yaakov," referring to Hashem.] Esav meant: I understand that Yaakov's name indicates that he was destined to outwit me, but did he have to outwit me twice? Hashem's decree would have been fulfilled if Yaakov had outwitted me only once. (**Berit Shalom**)

R' Ovadiah Sforno z"l (1470-1550; Italy) offers a different reason for why Hashem named our patriarch "Yaakov." He writes: [The eikev / heel is the "end" of the person.] Yaakov's name alludes to the fact that his descendants will be the nation that remains at the end of time, as is written (Yirmiyah 46:28), "I shall make an end of all the nations where I have scattered you; [but] of you I shall not make an end." (**Be'ur Seforno**)



וְכָל־הַבְּאֵרֹת אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ עַבְדֵי אָבִיו בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו סִתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיְמַלְאוּם עָפָר ***"All the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Avraham his father, the Pelishtim stopped up, and they filled them with earth." (26:15)***

Why did the Pelishtim fill up the wells that Avraham dug?

R' Yehonatan Eyebuschutz z"l (Central Europe; 1690-1764) explains:

We read (20:1), **וַיִּסַּע מִשָּׁם אַבְרָהָם אַרְצָה הַנֶּגֶב וַיֵּשֶׁב בֵּין קָדֵשׁ וּבֵין שׁוּר וַיָּגָר בִּגְרָר** "***Avraham journeyed from there to the region of the south and settled between Kadesh and Shur, and he sojourned in Gerar.***"

Rashi z"l explains: "When Avraham observed that the cities [of Sdom and Amorah] had been destroyed and travellers ceased to pass by he went away from there."

Avraham–and, likewise, Yitzchak–wanted to live in a place where there were travellers so that they could perform chessed and teach people about Hashem. Avraham dug wells to encourage travellers to pass that way.

The Pelishtim stopped up the wells to foil Avraham's plans and prevent him from spreading knowledge of Hashem. (**Tiferet Yehonatan**)



וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־רִבְקָה אִמּוֹ הֵן עֵשָׂו אָחִי אִישׁ שָׂעִר וְאָנֹכִי אִישׁ חָלָק ***"Yaakov replied to Rivka, his mother, `But my brother Esav is a hairy man and I am a smooth-skinned man."*** (27:11)

R' Yechezkel Levenstein z"l (Mashgiach of the Mir Yeshiva in Shanghai and the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak; died 1974) writes: The Torah's account of how Yaakov received the blessings which Yitzchak had planned to give to Esav demonstrates the delicate balance between our obligation to have emunah / to place our trust in G-d, and our obligation to act on our own behalf.

Rivka knew through prophecy that Yaakov was to receive the blessings, and that Yaakov's attempt to deceive Yitzchak would not result in his being cursed (notwithstanding Yaakov's fears). Furthermore, it is evident that a great miracle was occurring at this time: Yaakov and Esav were 63 years old at the time of this episode, yet Yitzchak was still unable to tell them apart! (Even his blindness should not have had such an effect after living together with Yaakov and Esav for more than six decades.)

The only possible explanation is that Hashem "blinded" Yitzchak's other senses, as well, because He wanted Yaakov to receive the blessings. Even though Yitzchak tried to identify the person who

stood before him claiming to be Esav, and even though Yitzchak recognized Yaakov's voice, Hashem ensured that Yitzchak would nevertheless be fooled.

And yet, Yaakov was constantly afraid of being recognized. Despite the prophecy that had been revealed to his mother, Yaakov took the precaution of dressing in Esav's clothes and covering his arms with hairy goats' skins. Why? Because even though everything is in Hashem's hands, a person is obligated to strive on his own behalf.

Why? There are two reasons: firstly, a person thus becomes a "partner" with Hashem in the running of the world. Also, this is Hashem's way of increasing the reward of those who do achieve a high level of emunah. As long as man appears to succeed based on his own efforts, emunah is more difficult to achieve, and therefore deserves greater reward.

R' Levenstein adds: When a great tzaddik or talmid chacham dies, everybody feels the loss; it seems as if a certain amount of Torah and spirituality are lost forever. However, this is not true. This feeling is only a test devised by Hashem, designed to see who will make the added effort required to grow spiritually now that an obvious source of support is gone. - So, too, Hashem hides the aid that He gives us, making it appear as if we are alone, waiting to see who will find Him. (Ohr Yechezkel)

"The Torah is meant to make a person happy in this world. Don't make any mistake about it. When a person learns Torah it helps him to be happy in this world… And if it doesn't then you're missing something from your Torah." ~ R' Avigdor Miller zt"l.

In the Friday night zemirot composed by the Arizal- **אֲזַמֵּר בִּשְׁבָחִין** we read: **יְמִינָא וּשְׂמָאלָא וּבֵנַיְהוּ כַּלָּה** "***To the right and to the left, and in between them, the bride***." The "bride" presumably is Shabbat, but what is "to the right and to the left"?

Rav Pinchus David Horowitz z"l (the "Bostoner Rebbe") explains:

In kabbalah, the "right" and the "left" represent the attributes of "chessed" (loving-kindness) and "gevurah" (strength) respectively. In our history, Avraham epitomized chessed (the right) and Yitzchak, gevurah (the left).

The nations on the right and the left observe their sabbaths to the right and the left of Shabbat, i.e., on Friday and Sunday, respectively. It is to this that the Arizal's song refers.

Each of these three nations–Yishmael, Esav, and ourselves – claims to have the true Torah of Avraham. When we observe Shabbat, says the Bostoner Rebbe, we add to it a few minutes from Friday and a few minutes from Sunday in order to solidify our claim.

עֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמַרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקּוֹתַי וְתוֹרֹתָי "***Because Avraham obeyed My voice and observed My safeguards, My commandments, My decrees and My teachings.***" (26:5)

The gemara (Yoma 28b) derives from this verse that Avraham observed the entire Torah before it was given, "even," says the gemara, "the mitzvah of Eruv Tavshillin" (setting aside a bit of food before yom tov which falls on Friday and reciting the formula that permits one to prepare on yom tov for Shabbat). Why is the mitzvah of Eruv Tavshillin singled out?

R' Yerucham Levovitz z"l (the "Mirrer Mashgiach"; died 1936) explains: One of the greatest wonders of the world is that G-d has made the achievement of spiritual greatness dependent upon the performance of seemingly mundane, even dry, deeds. Even a "chore"

such as preparing for Shabbat and Yom Tov can be spiritually uplifting.

However, whether one's deeds will succeed in uplifting him depends upon his observance of the laws, even laws as simple as Eruv Tavshillin. Avraham, the gemara is teaching, understood this well.



וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו ***"Yitzchak loved Esav for game was in his mouth . . ." (25:28)***

Why is no Berachah recited on the Mitzvah of honouring parents?

R' Aharon Aryeh Katz shlita (Yerushalayim) cites three reasons mentioned by earlier sources:

(1) A parent is permitted to forego his or her honour; thus, if there were a Berachah, a child might recite it only to find that there is no Mitzvah to perform.

(2) The standard formulation of a Berachah on a Mitzvah is: "Who has sanctified us [i.e., distinguished us] through His Mitzvot." Since gentiles also honour their parents, this is not a Mitzvah that distinguishes us.

(3) Our Sages recognize that a child's obligation to his parents is so far-reaching that it is virtually impossible to perform the Mitzvah properly; therefore, no blessing is recited. *(Pesakim U'teshuvot 240:1)*



"You don't get happiness by looking elsewhere. It's inside of you. You have within you an endless fountain of joy. And when you discover this secret, then you need nothing else. There's no experience in life that can even remotely compare with the happiness within your own mind." ~ R' Avigdor Miller zt"l.



וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ צַיִד אִישׁ שָׂדֶה וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים ***"Esav became one who knows hunting, a man of the field; but Yaakov was a wholesome man, dwelling in tents."*** *(25:27)*

Why doesn't the Torah say, "Yaakov was a wholesome man who knows Torah," just as it says that Esav "knows hunting"?

R' Shmuel Halevi Wosner shlita (one of the elder rabbis of Bnei Brak) explains: A Torah student's future success is determined not by what he knows, but by his diligence. Yaakov was not content to know the Torah. Rather, he sat in his tent and toiled to reach greater and greater heights.

הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב ***"The voice is Yaakov's voice . . ."*** (27:22)

R' Yochanan Luria z"l (Germany; 15th century) writes: The first occurrence of "kol" is written without the letter "vav," so it can be read "Ha'kal."

I have heard that this teaches that even the prayer of a "kal" / simpleton can be effective when it is said with proper concentration. (Meshivat Nafesh)

The gemera in Shabbos 32a warns that we should be careful not to stand in a place where we are endangering our lives.

The Chazon Ish commented that this is true with physical dangers, all the more so should we be careful not to place ourselves in a situation where our souls are in danger. ~ Emuna Ubitachon

"Don't make change too complicated. Just begin." ~ Rabbi Noach Weinberg zt"l.

וַיָּזֵד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד וַיָּבֹא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיֵף. וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הַלְעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדֹם הָאָדֹם הַזֶּה כִּי עָיֵף אָנֹכִי "***Esav came in from the field, and he was exhausted. Esav said to Yaakov, `Pour into me, now, some of the very red stuff, for I am exhausted'.***" (25:29-30)



Why did Esav want Yaakov to pour the stew down his throat rather than serving it to him in a bowl?

R' Pinchas Halevi Horowitz z"l (1730-1805; rabbi of Frankfurt am-Main and noted Talmud commentator) explains:

We read in Mishlei (25:25), מַיִם קָרִים עַל־נֶפֶשׁ עֲיֵפָה -"***Cold water on a tired soul***." This, writes R' Horowitz, alludes to the power of netilat yadayim / ritual hand-washing to cleanse a soul that is weighted down by impurity.

Esav desired a life of impurity, so he did not practice the mitzvah of netilat yadayim. At the same time, he knew that halachah forbids eating with hands that are not washed, and that Yaakov would refuse to offer him food for that reason. - Therefore he said, "Pour it down my throat!" (**Panim Yafot**)

Even though enthusiasm is extremely praiseworthy, one must be careful not to be overly hasty in his service, for one who rides too quickly is very apt to stumble, and one who runs too quickly falls. And things cannot be done correctly in haste, but with patience. ~ Orchot Tzaddikim.

וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב אֶל־יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיְמֻשֵּׁהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדַיִם יְדֵי עֵשָׂו
"Yaakov drew close to Yitzchak his father who felt him and said, 'The voice is Yaakov's voice, but the hands are Esav's hands'." (27:22)

Rashi z"l explains: Because Yaakov spoke politely ("Please, arise") rather than harshly like Esav (verse 31 – "My father should arise").

R' Michel Zilber shlita (Rosh Yeshiva of the Zvhil yeshiva in Yerushalayim) asks: Since Yaakov went to such lengths to disguise himself, why didn't he disguise his manner of speech as well?

He answers in the name of R' Shmuel Betzalal shlita (rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Porat Yosef in Yerushalayim): This teaches an important lesson, namely that proper speech and good middot / character traits should be so ingrained in a person that he is unable to pretend not to have them even if he wants to. (*Tippah Min Ha'yam*)

Shabbos

R' Eliezer Papo z"l (1785-1827) writes: The benefits of observing Shabbat are well-known. For example, our Sages taught: "If one observes Shabbat, even if he practices idolatry like the generation of Enosh, he is forgiven." Our Sages taught further: "If only the Jewish people would keep two Sabbaths properly, they would be redeemed immediately." They also said, "Shabbat is equivalent to the entire Torah."

R' Papo continues (quoting the earlier work Kikar La'aden): It is absolutely essential to observe Shabbat so that the redemption will occur in the near future. It is not possible to cure our wounds in any way other than through Shabbat observance. Even if we repent from all our other sins, all is dependent on Shabbat observance.

Thank G-d, the work Kikar La'aden continues, most people do observe Shabbat in our times. Nevertheless, our pain is great because of two things which cause our downfall. One is that people

do not refrain from speaking of weekday matters on Shabbat. The verse (Yishayah 58:13-14), "If you proclaim the Sabbath `a delight,' and the holy [day] of Hashem `honored,' and you honor it by not engaging in your own affairs, from seeking your own needs and discussing the forbidden [literally, `speaking speech'], then you will delight in Hashem…" Only if you guard yourself from speaking of weekday matters on Shabbat will you delight in Hashem.

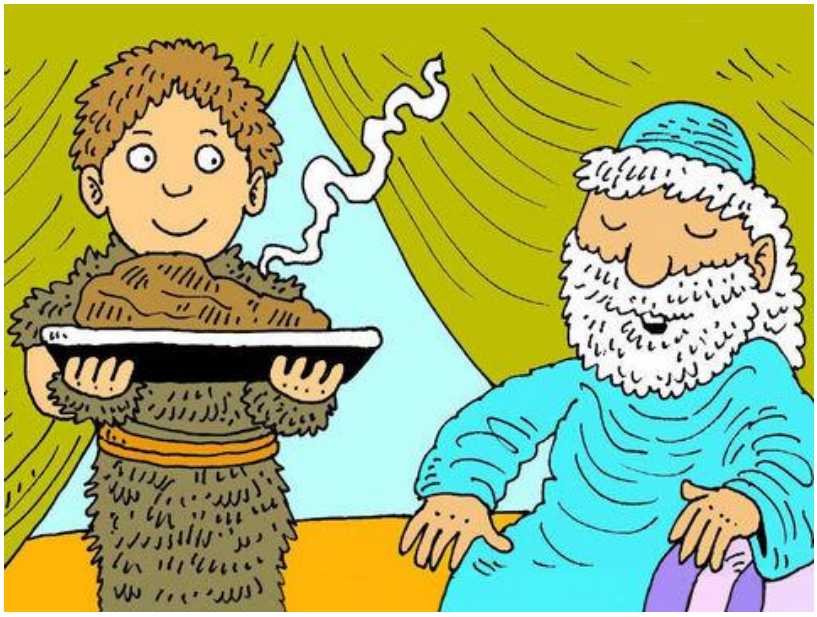
R' Papo continues: Unfortunately, people do not believe that speaking of weekday matters desecrates the Shabbat. Consider this: The Torah says (in a number of places), "Rest on the seventh day, for six days did Hashem create the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh He rested." What does it mean that Hashem rested? He means he stopped speaking, for what was creation other than a result of Hashem's speech, as we read (Tehilim 33:6), "By the word of Hashem the heavens were made . . .!" We are commanded to rest as He rested, and this means not speaking about weekday matters. [Ed. note: Please consult a halachic work or your rabbi for guidance as to what speech is and is not permitted on Shabbat.]

R' Papo adds: Some people think that if they preface their words with the phrase, "Not to speak of this on Shabbat but . . . ," then their discussion is permitted. This is, of course, foolishness, for the fact remains that they are discussing the forbidden matter on Shabbat.

[The second common error that R' Papo discusses relates to having a non-Jew perform work on Shabbat. (This subject too is a complex halachic matter.) R' Papo concludes:] What then is Shabbat for? For studying Torah. All week long we make excuses that we are too busy to study. If Shabbat comes and we still do not study, our excuses will be discredited, and we will be punished for failing to study all week long. (**Pele Yoetz: Shabbat**)

וַיְהִי כִּי־זָקֵן יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶיָן עֵינָיו מֵרְאֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ הַגָּדֹל וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בְּנִי. וְעַתָּה שָׂא־נָא כֵלֶיךָ תֶּלְיְךָ וְקַשְׁתֶּךָ וְצֵא הַשָּׂדֶה וְצוּדָה לִי צָיִד (כתיב צידה)

"And it came to pass, when Yitzchak had become old, and his eyes dimmed from seeing, that he summoned Esav, his older son, and said to him, "My son! ... Now sharpen, if you please, your gear ... and go out to the field and hunt game for me." *(27:1-3)*



Rashi explains: Yitzchak told Esav to sharpen his knife so that he could slaughter an animal and would not serve Yitzchak non- kosher meat.

Asks **R' Hillel Lichtenstein z"l** (1815-1891; rabbi of Kolomyya, Ukraine): By this time, Esav had been hunting and feeding meat to Yitzchak for 50 years! Why, all of sudden, was Yitzchak concerned about the kashrut of Esav's shechitah?

R' Lichtenstein explains: The Shulchan Aruch (Y.D. 18:17) rules that every shochet must periodically present his knife to a Torah scholar for inspection. That inspection consists of two parts – the Torah scholar runs his fingernail over the blade to feel any nicks, and he makes a visual inspection.

Presumably, Esav used to present his knife to Yitzchak for inspection. However, as the verse relates, "when Yitzchak had become old, his eyes dimmed from seeing." He could not inspect the knife any longer, and that is why he reminded Esav to sharpen his knife.

R' Lichtenstein adds: The word tzayid / game is spelled in our verse with a silent "heh" at the end. The gemara (Menachot 29b) states in another context that the letter heh alludes to teshuvah. Why would

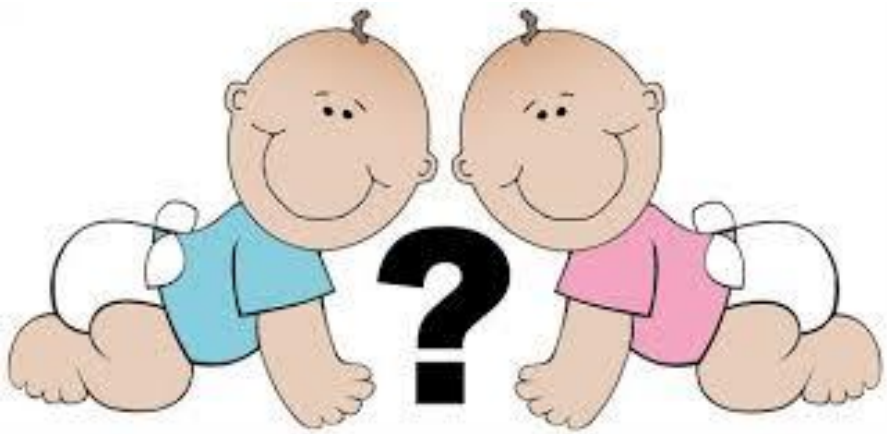
Yitzchak remind Esav on this occasion to repent before going to hunt?

Kabbalists say that the more righteous a person is, the more delicate are his senses. Thus, since Yitzchak could not inspect Esav's knife, he wanted Esav to repent, and thus refine his own sense of touch, before he inspected the knife himself. (Makrei Dardaki)

וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ צַיִד אִישׁ שָׂדֶה וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים "***The lads grew up and Esav became a man who knows hunting, a man of the field; but Yaakov was a wholesome man, residing in tents.***" *(25:27)*

R' Moshe Hager shlita (the Vizhnitzer Rebbe in Bnei Brak) commented: This verse is teaching each of us, descendants of Yaakov, that we are expected to apply the same level of effort to our "residing in tents" (i.e., Torah study) that an Esav applies to his worldly activities.

וַיִּתְרֹצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ ***The children agitated within her . . .*** *(25:22)*



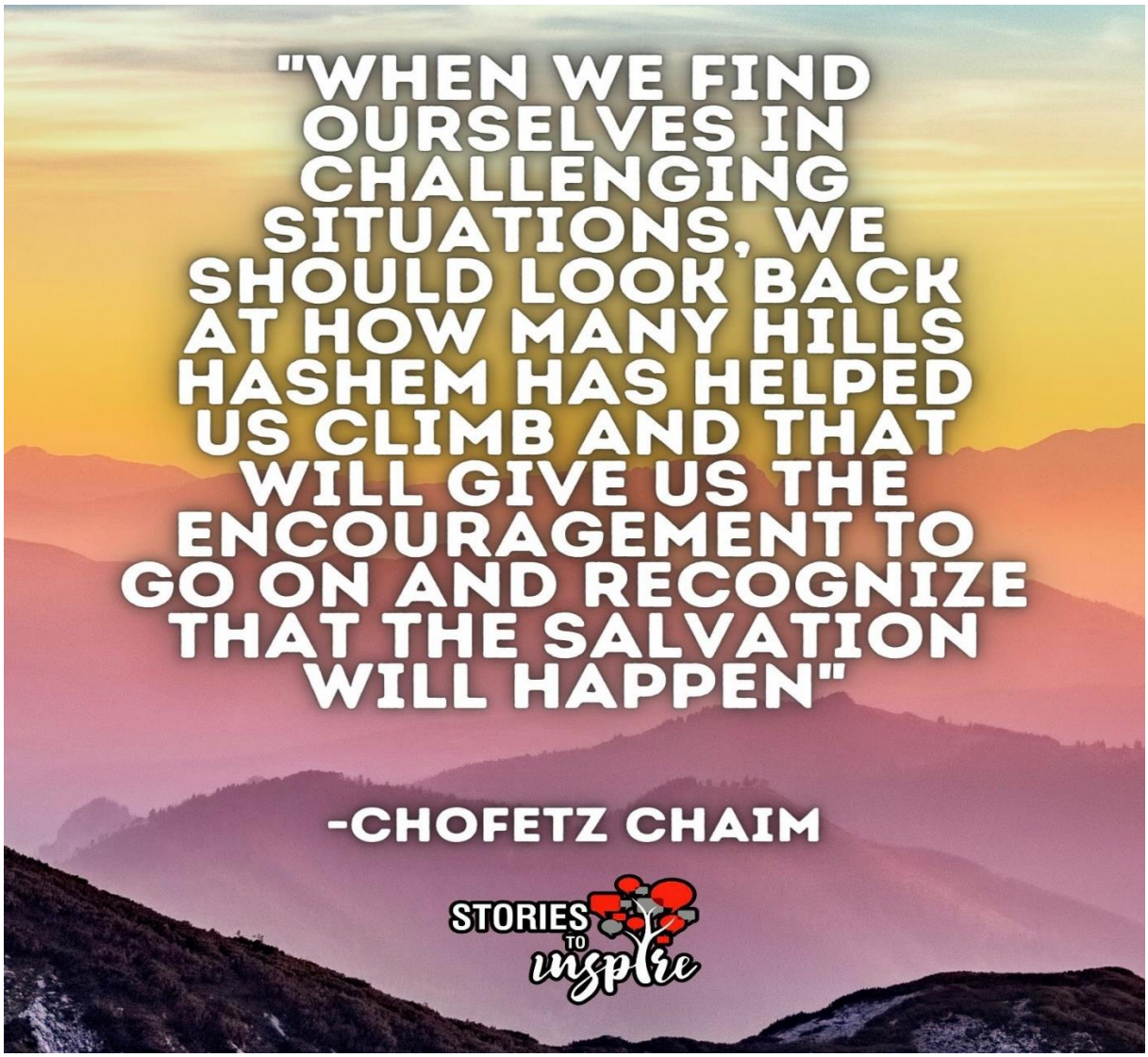
Rashi z"l writes: "Whenever she passed the doors of a place where Torah was studied, Yaakov moved convulsively, trying to be born. Whenever she passed a pagan temple, Esav moved convulsively, trying to be born."

Commentaries ask: We can understand if Esav was in a hurry to leave the womb to go worship idols, but why would Yaakov need to leave in order to go study Torah? Doesn't the Gemara teach that an angel

studies Torah with a baby in the womb? Could Yaakov have found a better teacher elsewhere?

R' Shimon Sofer z"l (1821-1883; rabbi of Krakow, Poland) answers: The negative effects of having bad classmates outweigh the benefits of having a good teacher. Therefore, Yaakov was willing to forego studying with an angel in order to get away from his classmate, Esav.

How do we know this is true? Our Sages say in Pirkei Avot (chapter 1), עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב, וּקְנֵה לְךָ חָבֵר "***Make a teacher for yourself and purchase a friend for yourself***." This demonstrates that a good friend is more important than a good teacher. (**Michtav Sofer**)







What is this Ayin Hora concept that I always hear people talking about?

I spoke about *ayin hora* many times already. Ayin hora is when a person parades his success in front of others. He parades his prosperity for others to see. It hurts other people. Are you that insensitive to other people's feelings?!

It hurts other people. That's all. It's a tzaar. Not everybody is as successful as you are. So, make sure not to parade your good fortune in front of others.

That's why when you're walking in the street and there's a man sitting in a wheelchair. He can't walk anymore. He once used to be able to walk in the street like you. And now he can't walk. As you come close to him, walk slowly. Walk slowly as you go by. You have to be careful with his feelings.

And you're going to parade your good fortune of having two fully functioning legs, in front of this man?! When you get further out and he can't see you anymore, then you can walk fast again.

And by the way, don't miss that very important opportunity to thank Hashem that you're able to walk. And say it with your mouth. Don't just think the words. That's laziness. Say, "I thank you, Hashem, for

my healthy feet. I'm so happy that I can walk and that I don't need to use a wheelchair to get around."

But when you pass by him, walk slowly. He shouldn't see you striding past, showing off your strength. A person has feelings, and you have to always be considerate of those feelings.

That's why it's very important to never parade your success before anybody else. It's a *tzaar*. And don't be *mitza'er* other people. Don't distress others with your success, with your happiness.



What is your opinion about celebrating the holiday of Thanksgiving tonight with a turkey dinner?

Thanksgiving is a holiday that was manufactured by gentiles for the purpose of going to church. That's what the original purpose was. And therefore it's avoda zara and Jews are forbidden to participate in such a thing.



If you eat turkey especially for Thanksgiving, you're an oveid avoda zara. That's my opinion. Now, some people are weak in this matter; but I think it's real avoda zara; I think it's **יהרג ואל יעבור**. I think a Jew shouldn't eat turkey on Thanksgiving at all! He should make a sacrifice not to eat turkey. Because it's a Christian observance you understand. It's not a legal holiday alone. It's only

recently that it became a 'legal holiday.' But it used to be a Christian holiday and that's what it is, all the way down till today.

However, there's somebody who permits it, and even though I say it's all wrong, I'm not going to force my opinion on you. But if anybody in my synagogue would ask me such a question, I would give it to him. But since you're not in my synagogue, so I'll let you go.



Can the Rav please explain the Chazal that Adam Ha'Rishon was a heretic, a kofer b'ikar (Sanhedrin 38b)?

I want to tell you something. If we would be anywhere near the level of Adam Ha'Rishon, who was kofer b'ikar, we would be tzadikim gedolim. Only, that for him, it was called kofer b'ikar. According to his opportunities, it was considered kofer bi'ikar. Like Eisav, for example. Eisav was not a rasha the way we think about it. Like Raban Shimon ben Gamliel said, "I never honored my parents to the high level that Eisav Ha'rasha did".

So the question is – Why then, does Raban Shimon ben Gamliel call Eisav Ha'rasha a "rasha"? If Eisav honored his father even more than Raban Shimon ben Gamliel, why call him a "rasha"?

The answer is that when considering his opportunities, Eisav could be called a rasha. He was the brother of Yaakov. And the son of Yitzchok and Rivkah. And he had a zeide like Avraham Avinu. With such parents and such a family, much more is expected of you.

You must know that if you fail to live up to the opportunities presented to you, you're called a rasha. And therefore you have to know, that many times when the Am Yisroel is blamed and criticized,

it is not because they were "ra". They weren't bad in the eyes of people. They were "ra b'einei Hashem"!

Hashem has different standards for how he measures people. And every person must take his opportunities and use them to become more and more perfect in the eyes of Hashem.

So was Adam Ha'Rishon a kofer b'ikar?! I'm telling you, that if he was here in this room with us, he'd be the biggest ma'amin in this room. Nobody here is anything like him. Not even close.



What does it mean to give Hashem nachas?

You have to understand that Hashem is so high above us that He cannot be affected by our deeds at all. Our deeds have no effect on Him at all! But still, we have to act according to the teachings of the Torah. And the Torah tells us that Hashem does have nachas from our deeds. "Yismach Hashem b'maasav." And therefore, we have to act that way.

It's very important to act with this in mind. So, when you do something, you should say, "I'm doing this to make a nachas ruach for my Creator."

This is a very important function of our lives. And therefore, whenever you do something, if you can, you should say, "I'm doing this to make Hakodosh Boruch Hu happy." And don't rely on just thinking it because then it won't happen. Say with your mouth, "I'm doing this to make Hashem happy." And Hakodosh Boruch Hu is happy! "Yismach Hashem b'maasav." Hashem is happy with us when we do His will.

Now, the Rambam asks, "What is "kavod Hashem?" And he says that thinking about Hashem – that's kavod Hashem. The more you think about Hashem, the more you are honoring Hashem. A person must train himself to think about Hashem all the time. And when you think about Hashem and honor Him"Yehi chevod Hashem l'olam", then "yismach Hashem b'maasav."

And this is how we have to live our lives. We have to live with the teachings of the Torah. Not with the teachings of the Philosophers. Although with Philosophy we would say that Hashem is too sublime to be affected by our deeds, we live by the words of the Torah always, and we feel a hargasha, an actual feeling, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is rejoicing when He sees His children doing the things that they are supposed to be doing.



Dvir was one of the soldiers murdered on **שמיני עצרת**. He had bravely used his own body to shield his friend, whose life he saved in the process. Unfortunately, it took a while for the authorities to identify his body and the *shiva* could only take place last week.

Dvir's father was informed that the soldier who had been saved was on the way to the *shiva* house to be **מנחם אבל**. Despite his own terrible grief, Dvir's father realised that the visiting soldier may be feeling terrible sadness or even guilt that he was alive while Dvir had died protecting him.

He went to his neighbours and told them that this soldier was on the way to be **מנחם אבל** and he then made an unusual request. He asked for them to all come to the *shiva* house and dance with the soldier and sing **מצוה גדולה להיות בשמחה**, to dispel any feelings of sadness that the soldier may have.

20 minutes later, visitors were dumbstruck at the surreal scene of a **רקידה** at a *shiva* house and learnt the lesson of what it means to be *Yid*. Despite being in extreme pain, Dvir's father had the capacity to think about a fellow *Yid* and how he may be feeling.

This is just one example of the **גבורה** which has been on display during these past few weeks and should give us **חיזוק** that despite what our enemies do to our bodies, they cannot touch our holy **נשמות**, which shine even brighter during times of adversity.

The Weekly Vort

● **ויגש יעקב אל יצחק אביו וימשהו ויאמר הקול קול יעקב והידים ידי עשו** – ***Yakov approached Yitzchak his father, and [Yitzchak] touched him. He said, 'The voice is the voice of Yakov, and the hands are the hands of Eisav.'*** (27:22)

Rashi understands from Yitzchak's words, "the voice is the voice of Yakov," that when Yakov spoke, "the Name of Hashem was fluent in his mouth." Additionally, Yakov would always speak very respectfully to his father. Eisav would never mention Hashem's Name and would show little respect in his impolite and crass manner of speaking.

If Yakov was trying to fool Yitzchak, why didn't he adopt these mannerisms of Eisav? Moreover, Yitzchak apparently gave his blessing to a person of whose identity he was in doubt. Shouldn't he have established who this person was before giving his blessing? Finally, if Yitzchak's actual intention was to bestow his blessing upon Eisav, why did Yakov think the blessing would be beneficial to him, as an insincere blessing is meaningless?

The Ksav Sofer explains that Yakov knew that in order for Yitzchak's blessing to benefit him, it would be necessary for Yitzchak to direct his blessing to Yakov. By not initiating Eisav's

manner of speech, Yakov hoped to create a doubt in Yitzchak's mind regarding which son he was addressing.

Yakov understood that despite Yitzchak's doubt as to who actually stood before him, Yitzchak would put his faith in Hashem. He would rely on Hashem to guide him in bestowing his blessings upon the son who truly deserved them.

Yakov's assumption proved correct. When Yitzchak pronounced the blessings, his intention was that they be bestowed upon whichever of his sons stood before him. (**A Gut Vort**)

● **לך מעמנו כי עצמת ממנו מאד** – ***'Go away from us, for you have become much mightier than we.'*** (26:16).

This *pasuk* reveals to us, said the **Chofetz Chaim**, the true reason for the hatred that the nations of the world feel toward the Jewish people. Where does the animosity stem from? - From the claim, "You have become much mightier than we."

Thus, the Egyptian advisers told Pharaoh, "The Children of Israel are more numerous and stronger than we."

It is such jealousy that causes the nations of the world to hate us so. (**A Shabbos Vort**)

"The best relationship between husband and wife will obtain when both achieve and practice the virtue of giving. Then their love will never cease, and their lives will be filled with happiness and contentment for as long as they live on this earth. ~ R' Eliyahu Dessler zt"l.

Striving to make giant leaps all at once will trigger the yetzer hara's counterattack — true growth is often humble, steady, and 'low-profile'. ~ R' Shlomo Wolbe (Alei Shur, Vol. II).

Israeli Soldiers

In an interview **R' Ovadia Yosef** gave when he was elected chief rabbi, the interviewer from the newspaper Yediot Achronot asked him if he believed that yeshiva students should be exempt from serving in the IDF?

He answered, "Yes! We believe that the Torah over which these students toil day and night protects the IDF soldiers in whatever battles they may face, as it says (Zecharya 4:6), *lo b'chayil v'lo b'koach ki im b'ruchi amar Hashem* ("not through might or power but through My spirit said Hashem")."

[When a Channel 12 News reporter spotted a secular Jew among the hundreds of thousands of participants at the funeral of **R' Chaim Kanievsky**, he asked him his reason for being there. The man said, "I merited to be by R' Kanievsky about 20 years ago in the middle of the night. It was an experience not possible to explain."

He then said, "I view all the righteous *avreichim* here around us as indispensable. Toras Yisrael is what holds up the world, what enables it to exist."

The secular Jew then spoke aloud to the Chareidim surrounding him: "Chizku V'imtzu. Continue in your path. I served in the IDF for 25 years. I'm still friends with IDF Chief Aviv Kochavi. And I'm telling you that without you, Am Yisrael wouldn't continue to exist. Without the light that you spread, Am Yisrael couldn't exist."]

During Operation Defensive Shield in 2002 (which was a large-scale operation during the second intifada) that occurred during the Pesach intercession, R' Ovadia Yosef publicly called all yeshiva students to cancel Pesach vacation and "report for duty at the 'army

base' of Torah study." R' Ovadia said, "The soldiers of the IDF do holy work, safeguarding Israel. Only because the IDF soldiers put their lives on the line to guard us can we study Torah, can we daven in shul and the like. Without the army, would our enemies let us sit peacefully and learn Torah? No! Only through the kindness of the IDF soldiers is this feasible. May Hashem guard them forever! May they return to their homes to live good, peaceful lives!

Everyone must appreciate this and bless and pray for them. If you see a soldier, you can only kiss him: After all, he is protecting every Jew in Israel with his very life."

How should we view those Israeli soldiers who have been killed while trying to defend their Jewish brethren?

A student in the Kol Torah yeshiva in Yerushalayim approached his Rosh Yeshiva, **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach**, and asked him if he may leave his Torah studies in the yeshiva to travel to the North in order to daven at the graves of tzadikim in the Galil.

R' Auerbach answered, "It is better to say in yeshiva, and study Torah."

The student asked further, "Isn't there a time I could go to visit the graves of tzadikim?"

R' Auerbach answered, "In order to daven at the graves of tzadikim, one doesn't have to travel up to the Galil. Whenever I feel the need to daven at the graves of tzadikim, I go to Mount Herzl, [the national cemetery for fallen IDF soldiers in Yerushalayim], to the graves of the soldiers…who fell '*Al Kidush Hashem*.'"

R' Yisroel Salanter used to say, "Honour is really nothing." The desire for honour is much stronger than the actual pleasure of receiving honour. ~ R' Zelig Pliskin

Mezuzos and Shabbos

A few weeks ago, a moving company did a job for somebody who went to live in Moshav Kissufin, which is near the Gazza border. The manager told this person – "You just built such a nice house, why not put up a mezuzah? It's a shemirah."

"I have three shemirot, he answered. One, there is a strong fence between Gazza and the State of Israel. Two, we have a strong army. Three, Kissufim has a strong fence surrounding it."

Unfortunately, we see just how strong those 'shemirot' were.

After a brief discussion, he managed to persuade him, adding that if he is going to put one up, make sure that it is a high-quality mezuzah. - He purchased two mehudar mezuzos.

His whole family was saved while neighbours were killed Hy"d.

Shabbos

Shovia, a town near the border, also had a gate, like the other two famous kibbutzim that were not infiltrated. However, here the difference is – the terrorists could have entered by foot, as there was a door open. - There is no explanation – these were terrorists who broke through fences.

Rav Moishe Brand said - When I go around saying drashos, I relay the words of **Rebbe Moishe Leib of Sassov**, who described how Hashem skipped over the houses of the Yidden on the night of Makkas Bechoros: "***Du voint a Yid – a Yid lives here***!"

In places where Shabbos was safeguarded, so were the lives of the people there!

"Nature: Miracles that occur more often." ~ R' Yerucham Levovitz zt"l.

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger



To a chasid who arrived in Karlin, the Rebbe R'Shlomo said, "I do not have the key to open your heart."

'Then the Rebbe should break it open with a sledgehammer!" – replied the chasid.

From then on, the Rebbe held that chasid in the highest regard.



וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו יָקֻם אָבִי וְיֹאכַל מִצֵּיד בְּנוֹ בַּעֲבֻר תְּבָרֲכַנִּי נַפְשֶׁךָ ***He said to his father, "Let my father rise and eat of his son's game, so that your soul will bless me***. (27:31)

The commentators (Midrash Tanchuma) note the stark disparity between the manner in which Yaakov Avinu addressed his father and the way that Eisav spoke to him.

Yaakov spoke to his father with the words, **קוּם־נָא שְׁבָה וְאָכְלָה מִצֵּידִי בַּעֲבוּר תְּבָרֲכַנִּי נַפְשֶׁךָ** ; "***Rise up, please, sit and eat of my game***" (27:19).

Eisav ha'rasha said, **יָקֻם אָבִי וְיֹאכַל מִצֵּיד בְּנוֹ**; "***Let my father rise and eat of his son's game***" (ibid. 27:31). Yaakov said, "**Please**;" Eisav demanded, "***Get up***." Yaakov spoke with humility. Eisav arrogantly commanded, insisting that his father eat.

We are well aware that the mitzvah of Kibud av, honoring one's father, held great significance for Eisav. It was the one mitzvah he observed with all of its stringencies.

The holy Tanna, Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, declared, "All of my days I honored and served my father, but it was not even one-hundredth of the manner in which Eisav served Yitzchak Avinu.

This being the case, why did Eisav speak to Yitzchak in a manner unbecoming a person who respects his father? One speaks to a father with humility – not arrogance. Why did Eisav not speak like Yaakov?

Furthermore, if Yaakov were to succeed in his ruse of presenting himself as Eisav, he should have spoken in the same doltish, crude manner, in which Eisav spoke. Why speak in a refined manner?

Also, Yaakov used Hashem's Name in attributing the quick success of his mission to the Almighty. The real Eisav would never do that.

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, explains that the answer is quite simple. The tongue, man's speech, is the quill of the heart. In other words, one cannot transform his manner of speech. It is an expression of his heart, his essential self. Eisav could put on a show, make himself appear righteous and observant, but he could not alter his speech. He was a brute who lived in the field, living with the animals and wild beasts, preying on innocent people. He could change everything, but not the way he spoke.

So, too, Yaakov could don Eisav's clothes. He could appear to be a hunter, but he still spoke with refinement, attributing everything to Hashem. The intrinsic Yaakov did not change.

"We create nothing new. All is within ourselves. We must draw it out." ~ Kotzker Rebbe zt"l.

וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה׳ Hashem allowed Himself to be entreated by him. (25:21)

Hashem "allowed" Himself: Was it so difficult to listen to Yitzchak Avinu's pleas? We pray and pray, and, unbeknownst to us, what we ask for might not be good for us – or it might adversely affect someone else, someone very dear to us.

Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zl, explains that this is what happened concerning Yitzchak Avinu's prayer. Avraham Avinu lived to be 175 years old – five years short of Yitzchak's lifespan. - Why did Avraham live five years fewer than Yitzchak?

Rashi explains that Hashem spared him the pain of watching his grandson, Eisav, go off the derech, renege the faith which had been taught to him in his home. On the day that Eisav became fifteen, Avraham became 175. That day Eisav committed several serious sins, cardinal sins, for which he deserved the death punishment. Hashem took Avraham from this world prematurely in order to protect him from such terrible news.

Now, imagine had Eisav been born five years later; had Hashem delayed in listening to Yitzchak, Avraham would have been able to live out his life. He would still be walking around healthy and vibrant.

He died prematurely as a result of Yitzchak's emotional entreaty. Hashem could not tell Yitzchak why He was delaying Eisav's birth, so He "allowed" Himself; He gave in. Eisav was born; the parents were overjoyed, and, fifteen years later, Yitzchak sat shivah prematurely!

We pray and pray, and, at times, we know neither for what we are praying, nor the far-reaching effect of our prayers.

Everyone has something to teach, even a thief: if he fails, he tries again, if he finds nothing of value, he takes what he finds. ~ Kotzker Rebbe zt"l.

וַיְהִי֙ כִּֽי־זָקֵ֣ן יִצְחָ֔ק וַתִּכְהֶ֥יֶן עֵינָ֖יו מֵרְאֹ֑ת ***And when Yitzchak grew old, his eyesight failed and he could not see***. (27:1)



One is hard pressed to believe that our Avos, Patriarchs, succumbed to the natural frailties of ill health and infirmity that are often associated with the aging process. Yet, here we see Yitzchak Avinu, the Olah Temimah, perfect sacrifice, becoming a victim to old age.

The Rashi (quoting Midrash Rabbah 65:10), to which we are all acquainted, explains that Yitzchak's waning eyesight, his premature myopia, had not been naturally induced; rather, he was a victim of the "side-effects" of the Akeidah, Binding.

Apparently, when he was lying bound on the Altar of the Akeidah, and his father, Avraham Avinu, stood poised over him, knife in hand, prepared to slaughter him, the sight was too much for the Ministering Angels. They cried bitterly, and their tears fell into Yitzchak's eyes. As a result, in Yitzchak's old age, his vision weakened.

Obviously, Chazal's words are steeped in allegory. Nonetheless, it behoves us to understand what unique ingredient of the Angels' tears could have induced Yitzchak's blindness. Furthermore, I have always been bothered by the delayed effect of the Angels' tears. Why did it take a lifetime, until Yitzchak became old and infirm, for his diminished eyesight to set in?

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, offers an insightful explanation: The above Midrash is based upon a pasuk in Yeshayahu 33:7, "*Angels cried out openly; messengers of peace wept bitterly.*" The second half of this pasuk is the key to understanding Chazal's statement

concerning Yitzchak's premature blindness. Like all angels, these "messengers of peace" were just that: angels sent by Hashem with a singular mission, peace. These angels of mercy were the epitome of shalom, the ultimate personification of peace. They were intensely compassionate and incapable of any negative perspective on any given subject. Their tears were tears of pure compassion – no room for tough love, just total mercy.

When these angels looked down at the Akeidah, at an elderly father about to slaughter his only son – they began to weep. Their tears, which were a manifestation of their extreme compassion, fell onto Yitzchak's eyes, resulting in altering his ability to perceive anything but compassion.

Yitzchak could see only good in others, unable to comprehend anything negative about another person, regardless of his apparent faults and shortcomings. Thus, Yitzchak was prepared to bless Eisav, regardless of his son's deficiencies.

Perhaps this is why his eyesight diminished most with age. When the angels gazed upon the Akeidah, they saw a traumatic scene, an old father about to slaughter his only son. While these were angels of peace and compassion, their compassion was related most to the scenario of an aged father.

Ostensibly, Yitzchak's perception of anything negative was stunted, but his true Angel-induced compassion peaked when he was an old father about to bless his son. The compassion of the Angels jumpstarted at this moment. He may not have seen until then all of the negative activities of his errant son, Eisav, but, at this moment, Eisav was as distant from sin (in Yitzchak's stunted eyes) as Yaakov. So, why should he withhold blessing?

וַיֶּאֱהַ֥ב יִצְחָ֖ק אֶת־עֵשָׂ֑ו *Yitzchak loved Eisav.* (25:28)

Yitzchak Avinu loved his son, Eisav, despite his nefarious ways.

The Satmar Rav, zl, once commented about this. It happened that a student in Yeshivah Torah V'Yirah of Satmar/Williamsburg went off the derech, left the fold. Everyone in the yeshivah was devastated by this tragedy – especially the Rav.

One of the rabbanim connected with the yeshivah suggested to the Rav that the reason that this tragedy occurred (in Satmar) might be the size of the yeshivah. The institution was bursting at the seams, and it was no longer possible for each rebbe to give individual attention to every student. As a result, students became lost in the shuffle, falling through the cracks. Perhaps it was a Heavenly message to decrease the size of the yeshivah.

The Rav listened and immediately responded, "I feel that we have superb supervision in our yeshivah. This is not the reason that this young man went off the derech. Take a look at Eisav ha'rasha, the wicked. Surely he had an excellent education living in the home of Yitzchak Avinu. He could not have asked for a better chavrusa, study partner, than Yaakov. [Clearly, the reason that Eisav became an apostate at a young age had nothing to do with his upbringing.]

Conversely, Avraham Avinu grew up in the home of Terach, an idolater, whose business was the proliferation of idols. One could not have asked for a worse environment. Yet, our holy Patriarch emerged unscathed from an environment that was an unholy alliance between moral corruption and paganism.

"Therefore," continued the Rav, "we must say that, at times, it is a gezeirah min haShomayim, Heavenly decree, that a child go off the derech. Al pi derech ha'teva, according to the laws of nature (the normal pattern of life), a child who follows paganism is not the product of a home steeped in piety and righteousness. Likewise, we rarely find a righteous, committed child emerging from a home that

is the paragon of moral and spiritual corruption. Yet, these phenomena do occur. It must be, as Ramban writes (in his commentary to Parashas Netzavim), that this is one of the mysteries of the workings of Heaven. We do not understand why Hashem decreed this. It is beyond our ability to grasp."

In conclusion, the Rav said, *Avada, darfmen tuen ales vos men ken tzu rateven a Yiddishe neshamah. Men darf mussaren a bachur, reden tzu em, un zen vos men ken oiftuen. Fundesvegen, zeht men amol az noch alle peulos vos men tuet bleibt men mit gornisht. Muz dos zein di sibah*; "Veritably, we must do everything possible to save a Jewish soul. We must rebuke, speak to him and see whatever we can do (to help him). Nonetheless, we see that, upon occasion, despite everything that we do, we remain with nothing. (Under such circumstances,) we must assume that this (Heavenly decree) is the reason (source of the problem)."



וַיְהִי֙ כִּֽי־זָקֵ֣ן יִצְחָ֔ק וַתִּכְהֶ֥יֶן עֵינָ֖יו מֵרְאֹ֑ת ***And when Yitzchak grew old, his eyesight failed and he could not see***. (27:1)

Rashi explains that Yitzchak Avinu's premature vision loss was due to the smoke that Eisav's wives raised when they burned incense for their idols.

Alternatively, when he was bound upon the Altar of the Akeidah, as Avraham Avinu was about to slaughter him, the Heavens opened up and the Ministering Angels saw what was happening to him. They began to cry, their tears descending and falling on Yitzchak's eyes, causing them to dim later in life.

In his hesped, eulogy, for his son, who had died an untimely death, **Horav Shmuel Birnbaum, zl**, asked why it was necessary for the Heavens to open in order for the Angels to see Yitzchak. The Heavenly Angels' perception is quite acute, allowing them to see what transpires on our world without the 'aid' of the Heavens opening up?

The Rosh Yeshivah explained this based upon a well-known incident that occurred concerning the **Ramban**, who had a student who became ill and passed away at a young age. Prior to his death the Ramban had asked him specific questions, for which he sought a "Heavenly" response. (There were questions concerning issues and occurrences which take place in this world with which the Ramban grappled philosophically.) He asked his student to appear to him in a dream with the answers.

The student died, and, shortly afterwards, appeared to the Ramban, who asked him for the explanations to his queries. The soul of the student replied that, in Heaven, these are not questions. This means that the Heavenly perspective encompasses such a wide scope of data – past, present and future – that whatever questions one might have (in this world) are no longer relevant in the World of Truth.

In Heaven, reward and punishment take on a new appearance. One is privy to a global perspective which circumvents any ambiguity since everything is now crystal clear and unambiguous.

The Rosh Yeshivah explained that this is why the Heavens required opening in order for the Angels to weep. Otherwise, they could not sense the compelling emotions that emerged as a result of the Akeidah.

The question that arose was: how a father who had been childless for most of his life could be asked to sacrifice his only son – his future legacy – the very seed of the nation that was to be built from him. Can anyone imagine the emotional trauma that coursed through Yitzchak, knowing that his aged mother and father would now be bereft of their child, their destiny?

So much pain, so much tragedy, so much equivocality. In Heaven, however, the orientation is different. There are no questions. There, the Akeidah is viewed from an entirely different perspective. Unless the Heavens were opened, so that the Angels could view the Akeidah from an earthly perspective, they could not weep, because they had

no reason to express emotion. When they saw the Akeidah through the human lens, they saw questions, they saw pain; they wept.

We are confronted daily with questions for which we have no answers – other than we have these questions only because we see the surface. Our perspective is not all-inclusive; we see a limited image of reality. We may rest assured that, in Heaven, there are no questions. Everything makes sense.



וַיִּתְרֹצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ ***The children agitated within her***. (25:22)

Rashi cites Chazal who explain that the word וַיִּתְרֹצְצוּ, "***And they (the children) agitated***" is derived from the word *rotz*, to run. When Rivkah Imeinu passed the Yeshivah of Shem and Eivar, Yaakov "ran" and struggled to go forth; and when she passed a house of idol worship, Eisav "ran" to go out.

Each child had a certain proclivity representative of the cosmic forces within Creation – forces that are not connected to normal personality development but transcend it.

Yaakov Avinu gravitated towards the bais hamedrash, while Eisav was more comfortable in the house of idol worship. As they grew into adulthood, their personal inclinations were developed; Eisav was attracted to the base and ignominious, while Yaakov was drawn to the spirit and good.

The various commentators wonder why Eisav did not just "leave." As the biological firstborn, he was first in line to be born. Nothing stood in his way. Yaakov, however, could not leave, because Eisav blocked his exit.

Horav Yechezkel, zl, m'Kozmir, explains that Eisav "parked" himself at the entrance in order to block Yaakov's exit. Why would he want to stay in the womb with the righteous Yaakov, when he could have left and begun a life of worshipping his idols?

He explains that it was worth it for Eisav to forgo his pleasure as long as he had the satisfaction of preventing Yaakov from achieving greater spiritual perfection.

I think this is a powerful truth and a sad commentary concerning those who purport to adhere to other religions. Any rational person with a modicum of intelligence understands that the major world religions are confronted with serious questions concerning their validity.

This is the not the forum for discussing comparative religions, but any scholar-- or even a knowledgeable layperson-- must have serious questions concerning how and when his religion began, and how to reconcile a religion of love with two thousand years of brutal murder, pogroms, holocausts and jihads.

Apparently, they really have no idea or do not care. They just want to see to it that we, representing the only true religion of the world, are not able to exist.

Yes, Eisav was willing to forgo his spiritual service, to even live the life of a lies, as long as he could prevent Yaakov from serving Hashem.

In an alternative exposition, the commentators state that Eisav's greatest source of satisfaction was to be in Yaakov's proximity and make his life miserable. It is not even an issue of preventing him from serving Hashem. Eisav simply derived his greatest enjoyment from seeing Yaakov suffer – and what greater source of misery was there to Yaakov than his inability to serve Hashem?

The Maggid, zl, m'Dubno was going through a difficult time financially. It reached the point that he was relegated to packing his bag to travel from city to city, delivering inspirational lectures for which he received a paltry recompense. It was hardly sufficient, and certainly unbecoming a man of his stature, but it paid the bills.

The Maggid's first stop was Berditchev, where he gathered his friends and asked them to put together a venue for him to deliver a lecture. Hopefully, he would draw a sizable audience that would appreciate his efforts and, in turn, express gratitude with some financial support.

This was the way many of Europe's greatest rabbinic scholars earned their meager livelihood. No one became wealthy, but it definitely delayed the hunger.

One of his close friends asked him, "You are well known for your brilliance. How is it that you left your home, your city where you surely had a multitude of supporters, to come here to 'knock on the door' of our wealthy citizens? Certainly, had you remained at home, your supporters would have put together a communal fund to assist you in your present financial challenge."

The Maggid replied, "Our Torah describes the agitation that took place within Rivkah Imeinu's womb. Every time she passed by a house of idol worship, Eisav "ran"; likewise, when she passed a bais hamedrash, Yaakov "ran." She could have solved her problem by staying at home! Who asked her to take a stroll?

Obviously, she realized that at home the pain would be greatly exacerbated. Likewise, for me to remain at home and have people collect for me would increase my pain."

Gratitude is not just a nice gesture or a worthy personal quality. It is a real obligation like any other in the code of law. [Furthermore,] if you withhold it, you are a thief. ~ R' Yerucham Levovitz zt"l

שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבִטְנֵךְ וּשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֵּעַיִךְ יִפָּרֵדוּ וּלְאֹם מִלְאֹם יֶאֱמָץ וְרַב יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר

Two nations are in your womb; two regimes from your insides shall be separated; the might shall pass from one regime to the other, and the elder shall serve the younger. (25:23)



Rivkah Imeinu was informed of the reality: she was carrying twins. It was not one mixed-up child that she was carrying; it was two children: one righteous and one evil. Her unborn infants represented two powerful nations, each with his own individual, conflicting ideology.

The turmoil within her womb was not the result of a single child who was lost and indecisive concerning his religious future. Should he gravitate to the bais ha'medrash, or should he follow his inclination which was pulling him to the house of idol worship?

No, it was much simpler. Her two sons were mighty enemies from before their births, their natural tendency of each controlling his destiny. Eisav gravitated to idol worship because that was where he felt most comfortable. Yaakov, however, found solace only in the bais ha'medrash.

Chazal teach that the two will never be mighty simultaneously. When Eisav reigns, Yaakov is his subject. When Yaakov prevails, Eisav is the underdog. They each represent a theology and a moral posture which is incongruous with that of the other.

Morality, justice and ethics cannot coexist with licentiousness, vulgarity and faithlessness. They are opposites and, thus, totally incompatible.

Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita, comments that these two opposing values – the holiness dimension versus the dimension of impurity - have a similar frictional relationship within each and every one of us. This is the meaning of, וּלְאֹם מִלְאֹם יֶאֱמָץ, "*the mighty shall pass from one regime to the other.*" A person can ascribe to only one dimension. He cannot have it both ways. It is either kedushah, sanctity, or tumah, impurity. Just as fire and water cannot coexist within a single entity, neither can kedushah and tumah. One cannot have his mind on Olam HaBa, the World to Come, if his body is submerged in the lusts of This World.

Rivkah Imeinu confronted this challenge via her two sons. Her choice was much easier than ours. She understood that Yaakov was a tzadik, righteous person, and Eisav was a rasha, evil person. It was clear - cut and dry.

We, however, hear two voices; we are compelled by two gravitational pulls: To which one do we listen? Which one do we ignore?

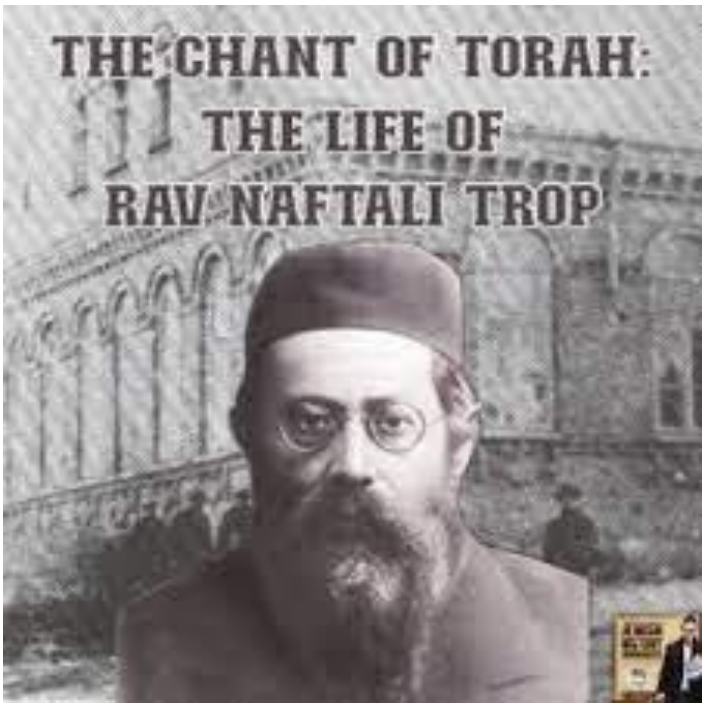
Perhaps, the mere fact that we understand that we cannot have it both ways, helps in our decision-making process. Once we ascribe to kedushah, the lusts and desires which would pull us down are quieted. If we give in to our base desires, however, there is no place for kedushah in our lives.

We each have a little bit of Yaakov and a little bit of Eisav in our lives. To which one do we want to give ascendancy? If we would realize how daunting the question is, we would be able to acknowledge the simplicity of the answer.

"We have no idea what power our prayers hold. Hashem has more pleasure from the praises of one single Jew than all the praise of all the heavenly angels combined," ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

וַיָּזֶד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד וַיָּבֹא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיֵף ***Yaakov simmered a stew, and Eisav came in from the field, and he was exhausted***. (25:29)

Yaakov Avinu was not cooking red lentil soup because he had a yen for eating legumes. Lentils are round, and hence, an appropriate food to be eaten in the house of a mourner. Round brings to mind the cycle of life. A circle has no opening – no beginning – no end. A mourner is cloaked in grief; thus, he has no mouth. They were mourning the passing of Avraham Avinu who had died that day. - To Eisav, however, it was nothing more than a quick fix: grab a bite and go on his merry way.



The world is mourning the passing of its great spiritual mentor. Eisav, his grandson, is busy going about his usual daily endeavour of evil in order to satisfy his base desires.

Chazal teach that Avraham's passing was actually untimely. He had originally been destined to live five more years. His life was cut short, so that he would not witness his grandson's wicked ways. Five years is an incredibly long time. So much can be achieved in five years – especially if one is Avraham! - Time is Hashem's greatest gift to man.

When **Horav Naftali Trop**, the Rosh Yeshivah of Radin, became gravely ill, the yeshivah students made an appeal, requesting each student to donate part of his life to the Rosh Yeshivah. Together, the students donated a considerable number of years to the Rosh Yeshivah. Although it was highly unusual to do this – Rav Naftali Trop was an unusual person. They even dispatched one of the students to the home of the **Chafetz Chaim** to ask if he would also participate.

When the bachur, student, presented the request, the Chafetz Chaim replied that he would think about it. A short time later, the Chafetz Chaim asked the student to return. He then said that, after deep thought and thorough introspection, he was willing to contribute five minutes!

To the Chafetz Chaim, five minutes was an eternity! He could achieve so much in five minutes, because he never wasted a second. Yet, for the Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Naftali, he would part with five minutes!

Now, with this in mind, **Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl**, points out that Avaham Avinu's time was certainly no less valuable than that of the Chafetz Chaim. Indeed, a righteous person's time becomes more valuable as he ages, and his spiritual plateau becomes elevated. Thus, Avraham's service to Hashem at age 175 years old was more than anything we could imagine. During the next allotted five years of his life, he could have soared to spiritual heights beyond the scope of our ability to perceive. Yet, Hashem granted him a 'special favour' by shortening his lifespan by five years.

All this was just so that he would not see his grandson, Eisav, go off the derech, alienate himself from Judaism.

Do we now have any idea concerning the suffering of a parent when their child turns away? We have just witnessed the pain of a grandfather. Certainly, the pain of a parent supersedes even that.

We might take the above into consideration when we meet someone who has undergone such an experience. Perhaps a little empathy might be in order.

"Tefillah is always necessary. Even when Heaven decreed something, it won't happen without tefillah." ~ R' Tzaddok HaCohen zt"l.

וַיָּזֶד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד וַיָּבֹא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיֵף - Yaakov simmered a stew, and Eisav came in from the field and he was exhausted. Eisav said to Yaakov, הַלְעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדֹם הָאָדֹם הַזֶּה "Pour into me, now, some of that very red stuff. וַיַּעֲקֹב נָתַן לְעֵשָׂו לֶחֶם וּנְזִיד עֲדָשִׁים וַיֹּאכַל וַיֵּשְׁתְּ Yaakov gave Eisav bread and lentil stew." (25:29, 30 + 34)

Eisav asked for soup. Yaakov Avinu was a magnanimous host, and he gave him soup and bread! Why did Yaakov give Eisav bread in addition to the soup?

This question was asked of **Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Zt'l**, who rendered a halachic response. There is a question in Meseches Berachos concerning which brachah one should recite on beans that have been cooked for a long time. Should it be Borei pri ha'adamah, since beans grow from the ground; or, because they have been cooked so long, should the berachah be, She'ha'kol ni'heh'yeh b'devaro?

To avoid any halachic issues, one should wash on bread and make the brachah, Ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz, a blessing that would include almost anything eaten during the meal. To circumvent any problems Eisav would have concerning the berachah, Yaakov gave Eisav bread.

This reply intimates that Eisav was a halachic scholar who might have been concerned with the blessings he recited on food.

Horav Eliyahu Mann, Shlita, then asked Rav Kanievsky concerning a comment he once made regarding a statement made by the **Meshech Chochmah**. Apparently, this comment was not consistent with his present explanation of Yaakov's actions.

The Meshech Chochmah observes from the text of (24:54, 55) that Lavan and his mother did not eat together with everyone at Rivkah's seudas eirusin, festive meal, in honor of her betrothal to Yitzchak. Apparently, Besuel, their husband and father, had suddenly died, rendering them aveilim, mourners. Thus, they could not partake of the festive meal.

Rav Chaim commented that the Meshech Chochmah turned them into bigger lamdanim, scholars, than they were. "If so," queried Rav Mann, "why did Rav Kanievsky turn Eisav into such a big lamdan?"

Not fazed, Rav Chaim replied that Eisav had a father who was a talmid chacham, who had certainly studied with him. Lavan's pedigree was not as distinguished. He had no one to teach him the halachos of aveilus.

Rav Mann countered, "Could Eisav have been so concerned with halachos when he was, in fact, returning from his first major sojourn into iniquity? He was guilty of murder, immorality and heresy. Could such a person have cared about which berachah to recite?"

Rav Chaim replied, "Yes. There are many people in today's society who act in a like manner." We might add that, while they might not kill with bullets, they kill with slander; they maim with their mouths. One does not have to deny Hashem to be viewed as a heretic.

Chazal have expressed various parameters of activity which fall under this category. Yet, these same individuals still stand for a long Shemoneh Esrai and pontificate with righteous indignation every instance that Torah observance does not own up to their perverted system of calibration.

Eisav was evil; only he did not necessarily dress or publicly act the part. This makes his nature even more insidious.

"The most transformative moments in your life happen when somebody else believes in you more than you believe in yourself." ~ The Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Be alert, and be brief, even when you pray. ~ The Kotzker Rebbe

וַיִּמְכֹּר אֶת־בְּכֹרָתוֹ לְיַעֲקֹב "***And he (Eisav) sold his birthright to Yaakov.***" (25:33)



One may wonder how Yaakov convinced Eisav to sell his birthright for a bowl of red lentils. Why would this not be considered a "mekach ta'us, erroneous sale?" Certainly, the birthright is worth much more than a bowl of lentils.

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, z.l., sums it up very simply. Eisav did not value the spiritual significance of the birthright. It meant nothing to him. Accordingly, Hashem ascribed the same value to the bechorah, birthright, as did Eisav. Thus, the sale was valid, because in Eisav's mind there was no distinction between the birthright and the lentils.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, feels that the same idea applies to each one of us. For example, consider an individual who is sitting in the bais ha'medrash studying Torah and takes a break during his study period to go to the bank to take care of a returned check. The loss that he would incur had he not gone now is about ten dollars. He has just indicated that his Torah study is not worth more than ten-dollars, because he is willing to leave in the middle of learning to address a ten- dollar problem.

On the other hand, one who overcomes various obstacles and challenges to study Torah will be rewarded by Hashem in kind.

וַיֹּאמֶר הַקֹּל קֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדַיִם יְדֵי עֵשָׂו ***"He said (Yitzchak), "The voice is Yaakov's voice, but the hands are Eisav's hands."*** (27:22)

One can only begin to imagine what must have gone through Yaakov's mind as he approached his father to accept his blessing. Yaakov, the man noted for his integrity, was acting in a seemingly deceptive manner.

His mother had instructed him to act this way as the last resort, the only way to obtain his rightful blessings. He had acquired the birthright "fair and square;" he was only collecting his due. Nonetheless, dressing up as Eisav, even if it was at the behest of his mother, was still not typical of Yaakov.

Yaakov dressed up with "hairy" clothes to give himself the appearance of Eisav. Yitzchak, however, still was not sure. He asked Yaakov to approach him, but that was not sufficient.

On the contrary, there seemed to be an inconsistency between Yaakov's "Eisav-like" hairy hands and his voice, which gave a "Yaakov-like" impression. Yitzchak discerned a difference in their voices although, according to Chazal, their voices sounded the same. It was the manner in which he expressed himself that differentiated Yaakov from Eisav.

Two characteristics distinguished Yaakov's voice from that of Eisav: He always invoked the Name of Heaven and he spoke gently. Eisav, the worldly man who believed in his own might, attributed his triumphs and successes to himself; his strength, his mind, his cunning, Yaakov recognized and acknowledged the true Source of all success – and failure. Consequently, he immediately attributed his swift "return" to Hashem.

Yaakov's expression caused him serious concern. In fact, the Midrash compares him to a raven who carries a burning hot coal – successfully moving from place to place but burning its wings in the process. Why did Yaakov endanger himself? He could as easily have

"talked" like Eisav, just as he dressed like him. Why did he commit this fatal error?

The Imrei Emes explains that while Yaakov was actually aware of his endangerment, he could not even for a single moment abrogate Hashem's "part" in everything that he had accomplished.

There are some areas of human endeavour that become so natural, so ingrained in one's psyche, that it is impossible to divorce oneself from them.

For Yaakov, the Hashem "component", recognizing that everything is from the Almighty, was a natural element in his personality. This is an area in which Yaakov and Eisav were different.

Horav Bunim z.l., m'Peshischa comments that one should not make the mistake of assuming that Eisav looked like a criminal, uncouth and villainous. No! Eisav dressed like a Rebbe; he even said divrei Torah during Seudah Shlishis! For all outward appearances, Eisav gave the impression of being a saint.

Indeed, he would ask profound questions concerning Halachah. He could put on a show in every respect, except one: he could not mention Hashem's Name. He could not attribute his success to the true Source. He just could not say, "Baruch Hashem." This was Yaakov's distinctiveness: he could put on Eisav's hunting clothes; he could attempt to outwardly act like him; but he could not speak like him.

The second area that impressed Yitzchak was the gentle manner in which his son spoke to him. This could not be Eisav. This had to be Yaakov.

The Maharal says that when Yaakov mentioned Hashem's Name, Yitzchak began to question the identity of the speaker who stood before him. When Yaakov spoke in his gentle, respectful tone, he knew for sure that Eisav was not standing before him.

Horav Moshe Reis, Shlita, derives from here that mentioning Hashem's Name, attributing success to the Almighty, is still not proof-positive of one's true affiliation. One can conceal his real personality and talk like a man of virtue and conviction. One cannot, however, fabricate gentility and refinement. That is part of a person's innate character.

When Yitzchak heard the respectful manner in which he was addressed, he knew that it could not be Eisav standing before him.



וַיִּקַּח אֶת־מָחֲלַת בַּת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אֲחוֹת נְבָיוֹת עַל־נָשָׁיו לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה "***And he (Eisav) took Machlas the daughter of Yishmael…as a wife for himself***." (28:9)

In the Midrash, Chazal infer from the word "machlas," which is a derivative of the word "mochal," to forgive, that when Eisav took a wife, Hashem forgave his prior sins. Furthermore, Chazal say that when one gets married, all of his sins are forgiven.

We must endeavour to understand this. Why should Eisav's sins be forgiven just because he entered into matrimony? Is marriage some kind of magic moment, such that the instant one places a ring on his kallah's finger, all of his prior transgressions are erased? For the sin of chillul Hashem, even teshuvah, repentance on Yom Kippur is not sufficient penance to wipe the slate clean, but marriage is? How are we to understand this?

Horav Sholom Schwadron, z.l., cites Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, z.l., who gives a novel explanation: When a person stands at the threshold of a change in status, and he is about to go enter a new position in life, he has within himself a *koach ha'hischadshus*, power of renewal, to be reinvigorated spiritually and begin anew. The sins of his past, which unfortunately are so much a part of his life, drag him down as it seals off his heart, the seat of his emotions, rendering him impervious to any positive change.

At this juncture, Hashem grants him temporary absolution from the weight of his sins. They are put aside for one day to see what he will do. If he avails himself of this opportunity, if he decides to turn his life around, to repent and accept upon himself a life of virtue and service to Hashem, he has entered this new stage, pure and free of sin.

But if he allows this window of opportunity to go to waste, then as soon as his nuptials are over, he is back where he started. - Apparently, Eisav chose the latter approach.



וַיְהִי֙ כִּֽי־זָקֵ֣ן יִצְחָ֔ק וַתִּכְהֶ֥יֶן עֵינָ֖יו מֵרְאֹ֑ת וַיִּקְרָ֞א אֶת־עֵשָׂ֤ו בְּנוֹ֙ הַגָּדֹ֔ל ***And it came to pass, when Yitzchak became old, and his eyes dimmed from seeing, that he summoned Eisav, his older son***. (27:1)

Yitzchak Avinu saw that his mortal years were slowly coming to a close. He called Eisav to grant him his fatherly blessing, as befits the first-born son.

Rivkah Imeinu understood what was about to transpire, and she manipulated the situation, so that in the end it was Yaakov Avinu who received the blessings.

One shudders at the thought of Eisav receiving the blessings. Yet, this was Yitzchak's intention. How are we to reconcile ourselves with this? What did Yitzchak see in Eisav that prompted him to view him as worthy of blessing?

True, Eisav was a fraud, a very talented fraud, one who could pull the wool over his father's eyes. Are we to believe that Yitzchak was deceived and unaware of the truth about the real Eisav?

Clearly, this question has been mulled over by many commentators. Various approaches address what appears to be Yitzchak's "naiveté."

The first principle that must be emphasized is that the only one who is naïve is he who believes that Yitzchak Avinu was in error. It is

absolutely ludicrous to think that the Patriarch, who is considered the *olah temimah*, perfect offering, could be fooled.

From the considerable literature written on the subject, I have chosen the words of the **Malbim**, whose explanation is both understandable and highly practical.

Yitzchak was well aware of his errant son Eisav's behavior. He knew that Eisav was not interested in making the bais ha'medrash his home base. As a practical father, Yitzchak was acutely aware that all boys are not cut from the same cloth; not all of them want to spend their lives poring over tomes of Talmud and commentaries. The ones who aspire, ascribe to and choose this way of life are few. The ones who succeed are even fewer.

Yitzchak understood that while the fruit of the tree is the essential product, without the tree, the branches, the roots, the leaves, and the fruit has no chance.

This is essentially the idea behind the partnership of Yissachar and Zevulun. Yissachar spent his life engrossed in Torah study, while Zevulun saw to his material needs – often at great sacrifice to himself.

This relationship has sustained Torah scholarship throughout the ages. So why not Eisav and Yaakov? The future Patriarch would continue devoting his life to Torah study, while Eisav would sustain him.

It sounded like a great idea. There is, of course, one drawback: Zevulun must be an individual of impeccable character who appreciates and holds dear the tenets of Torah, who values Torah study for what it is worth. Eisav's resume does not seem to have such flawless credentials.

Can one even begin to imagine if bnei Torah would have to be supported by the likes of Eisav? Torah would quickly become an ancient relic. This is why Hashem, the Cause of causes, saw to it that

Eisav would not receive the blessings. - Some people are just not worthy of sustaining Torah study.



וַיִּשְׂטֹם עֵשָׂו אֶת־יַעֲקֹב עַל־הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַכוֹ אָבִיו "***Eisav harboured hatred toward Yaakov because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him***." (27:41)

The Ozrover Rebbe, z.l., notes the deep-seated hatred that Eisav manifests for Yaakov.

The Torah writes that Eisav hated Yaakov because of the blessing that his father had given him. It had nothing to do with Yaakov's taking the blessing away from Eisav. The mere fact that Yaakov was blessed was enough to ignite this inexplicable hatred within Eisav.

We now understand Chazal's axiom, הֲלָכָה הִיא בְּיָדוּעַ שֶׁעֵשָׂו שׂוֹנֵא לְיַעֲקֹב "***Halachah, it is a halachic maxim that Eisav hates Yaakov***." This means that Eisav's hatred has no rationale. A halachah is a rule or statement, which at times defies rationale. It is an absolute which transcends human reason and intellect. Likewise, Eisav's hatred is inscrutable. Evil hates good – Eisav hates Yaakov.

There was no reason for Eisav to hate Yaakov. The bechorah, birthright, was sold. Whatever Yaakov received from his father was his by right. So, what was Eisav's problem?

It bothered him that Yaakov received a blessing. He could not *fargin*, begrudge Yaakov anything – period – let alone a blessing.

This is the type of hatred we have endured for thousands of years. We must remember, however, that this type of acrimony is endemic only to Eisav – not to Yishmael.

While the Arab world (Yishmael) may hate us, it is not the hatred of Eisav. The Arabs want land. They are a nation because that is their legacy from Yishmael. At least they have something which they wrongfully claim is "theirs."

The children of Eisav, the Christian world, who vilify us for no reason and for no practical gain, are the ones that should concern us. The world that stands idly by while Jewish blood is spilled; the children of Eisav and Amalek who have slaughtered us simply because we were Jewish – they are the ones about whom we should be concerned. We are the blessed people and that is why they curse us.



וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק ***And these are the offspring of Yitzchak, son of Avraham, Avraham begot Yitzchak***. (25:19)

This pasuk seems redundant. Obviously, if Yitzchak is Avraham's son, Avraham must have begotten Yitzchak.

The commentators respond with various explanations. **Ibn Ezra** interprets "Avraham begot Yitzchak" as a reference to the fact that Avraham raised and educated Yitzchak. Educating a child is equivalent to begetting that child, since one "creates" a human being through the process of education.

Horav Nissan Alpert, zl, suggests that by using this apparent redundancy the Torah addresses a question that plagues students of the historical narrative of the Patriarchs. How would two brothers, Yaakov and Eisav, who were raised by the same parents, who received an equivalent education, have developed natures so disparate from one another?

Horav Alpert explains that two factors contribute to determining a child's educational development: his nature and personality, as inherited from his parents; the education he receives from his parents and mentors.

These actually represent two forms of birth. A child may be born to wonderful, caring, loving parents who will do anything to provide him with the finest education. If the child reneges and refuses to learn, however, the entire process is futile.

This is the reason for the Torah's redundancy. "*These are the offspring of Yitzchak the son of Avraham*." Yitzchak inherits his unique nature from his revered father, Avraham. The virtues required for Yitzchok to become the next Patriarch were in place. "Avraham begot Yitzchak" - Avraham succeeded in nurturing Yitzchak's unique talents and attributes in response to Yitzchak's desire to emulate his father's lifestyle and spiritual perspective. Yitzchak had a burning desire to study with, and be educated by, his father.

We can now understand how it is possible for Yitzchak to beget twin boys, one who adheres to his way of life and the other who rejects it totally. They were born with similar abilities inherited from the same parents. Yaakov sought to emulate his parents. - Eisav, regrettably, was determined to reject the opportunity to learn from paradigmatic role models.



וַיֶּאֱהַ֥ב יִצְחָ֖ק אֶת־עֵשָׂ֑ו כִּי־צַ֥יִד בְּפִ֖יו ***Yitzchak loved Eisav for game was in his mouth***. (25:28)

Eisav used guile to fool Yitzchak. He was "**צַ֥יִד בְּפִ֖יו** ", ***a hunter with his mouth***. He ensnared his father with halachic questions. He portrayed himself as a devout scholar, concerned about the intricacies of giving Maaser, tithing crops. "How does one tithe salt? How does one tithe straw?" he asked Yitzchak, knowing fully well that Maaser does not apply to these two substances.

Chazal interpret the words "**צַ֥יִד בְּפִ֖יו** ", to be descriptions of Eisav's cunning. He used his mouth for subterfuge.

Should one assume that Yitzchak yearned for Eisav's "hunt"? Surely, he had sufficient sheep and cattle that he did not have to send Eisav to look for outside sources of food.

When it was time for the brachos, blessings, Yaakov was able to prepare a fine feast from the available sheep. Yet, the pasuk seems

to imply that Yitachak enjoyed the tzayid, hunt, which Eisav had brought to him. Moreover, Yitzchak requested Eisav to bring him a "tzayid" that was prepared according to his liking before he would bless him.

Something about this "tzayid" eludes us.

Horav Elchanan Sorotzkin, zl, renders the narrative of Yaakov and Eisav homiletically, in order to teach us a timely lesson.

The dispute between Yaakov and Eisav was of a spiritual nature, namely, how to reach out to those who were distant from Hashem. Yaakov's derech, approach, to serving Hashem was such that his influence was limited to those in his immediate environment.

Eisav considered Yaakov's ability to influence others to be focused only on the "sheep and cattle," an analogy for those who were in his immediate "domestic" surroundings. Eisav, on the other hand, sought to reach out to "wild beasts and fowl," those who were extremely distant from his father's teachings.

Eisav questioned the halachah regarding tithing straw; once again, this is an analogy for the external shell that flies away. Yaakov concerned himself with the kernel which remained in his immediate presence.

Eisav went out into the "world" to seek those who were outside of Yaakov's spiritual periphery. He employed various methods for outreach, methods that were as unconventional as the people he sought to inspire.

In contrast to Yaakov, Eisav was a firm believer in the idea that the end justifies the means. Regrettably, the "end" did not always turn out the way Eisav had planned. Eisav was left with his questionable "means," which all too often left their imprimatur on him.

Yitzchak was not aware of Eisav's "success" ratio. He was, indeed, impressed with his visionary approach to reaching out to the

alienated. This was Yitzchak's goal in life. Consequently, he encouraged Eisav, taking deep pride in his son's exploits.

Although he was truly proud of Yaakov's "sitting and learning" in his tent of Torah, his daring to reach out to others paled in comparison to Eisav's description of his own plan for success.

Yitzchak desired Eisav's tzayid, his hunt, the person that he would bring in from afar.

Rivkah knew that Eisav's tzayid was all in his mouth; he was a tzayid b'fiv. Instead of captivating others, he himself became ensnared. The methods he used for outreach turned him into a monster.

She loved Yaakov's tzayid, his hunt, which was solid, firmly rooted and spiritually balanced. On the other hand, she did not value the unstable, strange people who Eisav indiscriminately collected, who were unlikely to remain for the duration of the experience.

We now understand why Eisav sought the blessings and why Yitzchak desired to give them to him. He saw in Eisav's work a daring which contrasted with Yaakov's solid accomplishments. He saw Eisav reaching out to a world.

He overestimated Eisav, not realizing that Eisav had become an unfortunate sacrifice of his own work. He had rejected his father's faith and was living a life of sham and shame.

Why did Eisav denigrate the "bechorah", right of the first born, and then become furious when Yaakov received the berachos in his place?

Chazal tell us that Yaakov feared Eisav's merit for all the years that he had served his father, fulfilling the mitzvah of Kibbud Av V'eim, honoring one's parents, while Yaakov was away at the yeshivah of Shem and Eivar. Eisav also had the advantage of living in Eretz Yisrael the entire time that Yaakov was away.

Using the same approach, Horav Sorotzkin explains that Yaakov feared Eisav's social mitzvos and his devotion to Eretz Yisrael. Why did he need the bechorah? He was a warrior, fighting for the land, concerning himself with social action and love for his fellow man.

The bechorah was intended for one who would sit in his corner studying Torah. Eisav had more "important" things to do. Yet, if the bechorah could help him to succeed in his quest to reach out to others, then he also wanted the bechorah.

When Yitzchak commanded Yaakov not to take a Canaanite wife, Eisav also followed his father's orders and married Yishmael's daughter. He, however, did not divorce his previous pagan wives. He wanted to live in both worlds, perform a few social mitzvos, fight for the land and continue to maintain his pagan lifestyle.

This approach resulted in the birth of a grandson named Amalek, the archenemy of the Jewish People, as well as the development of Eisav's hatred for the land that he supposedly loved and a hatred for his father.

Eisav represents the paradigm of the confused Jew who wants to save the world, regardless of the means that he must employ. In the end, he is at odds with his own brethren, whose lifestyle he has denigrated in the name of Am Yisrael.

How sad it is that history repeats itself so often. If we would only open our eyes, we might see its message.



A Wise Man would say:

"Don't own too much. A man with one watch knows what time it is. A man with two watches is never quite sure!"

וַתִּהְיֶיןָ מֹרַת רוּחַ לְיִצְחָק וּלְרִבְקָה ***And Eisav was forty years old and he took a wife...and they were a source of bitterness for Yitzchak and Rivkah***. (26:35)



Rivkah Imeinu is compared to a rose among thorns. She remained righteous despite the thorn of evil which surrounded her: her father, her brother; indeed, her entire environment was replete with evil.

She rose above her environment, above the negative influences that permeated her background.

Chazal describe her exemplary virtue: When Yitzchak married Rivkah and brought her home to his mother's tent, the three blessings which had been present during Sarah's lifetime returned: a lamp burning from one Shabbos eve to the next; her dough was blessed; a cloud signifying the Divine Presence hung over her tent. All of these had ceased with Sarah's death.

When Rivkah married Yitzchak, she was three years old. Certainly, whatever evil she had been exposed to would have been irradicated by the time she stood with Yitzchak praying for guidance. They were married for twenty years before Rivkah gave birth to Yaakov and Eisav. She had experienced forty more years of living in an environment of total kedushah and taharah, holiness and purity, married to the *olah temimah*, perfect elevation offering, Yitzchak Avinu, when Yaakov and Eisav received the blessings from their father. Yet, when addressing Yitzchak and Rivkah's displeasure with Eisav's pagan wives, the Torah mentions Yitzchak's name first.

This leads Chazal to comment that, indeed, Yitzchak was provoked first and Rivkah only later. Having grown up in an element that was suffused with idolatry, Rivkah was not as acutely outraged as her

husband, who had grown up in Avraham Avinu's home. What are Chazal telling us with this statement?

Hegyonei Mussar infers a profound lesson from here: Rivkah Imeinu, despite her aversion to idol-worship, was not as disturbed by its presence in her son's home as was Yitzchak. The difference between the two was their relative level of exposure.

Rivkah was exposed to pagan worship, an evil for which she never lost complete repugnance, even sixty years later!

Once we are exposed to evil, we lose our contempt for it. It is not necessary to delineate the apparent lesson this has for us today. We and our children come in contact with the revulsion that has become the symbol of contemporary society through various medias. While we think they have no effect on us, the Torah seems to disagree.

Are we willing to take the chance and risk our children's spiritual development?



וַיְהִי יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּקַחְתּוֹ אֶת־רִבְקָה בַּת־בְּתוּאֵל הָאֲרַמִּי מִפַּדַּן אֲרָם אֲחוֹת לָבָן הָאֲרַמִּי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה ***And Yitzchak was forty years old when he took Rivkah, daughter of Besuel the Arami from Paddan Aram, sister of Lavan the Arami.*** (25:20)

Rashi remarks that although Rivkah's background was well-known, the Torah repeats it to reinforce its praise of her. She was the daughter of a wicked man and the sister of a wicked man; she was raised in an environment that was wicked. Yet, she was able to maintain herself on a high level of virtue, remaining uninfluenced by her environment.

We may question this statement. Is there nothing else about Rivkah that evokes praise for her?

In Parashas Chayei Sarah, the Torah lauds her remarkable sensitivity and her commitment to performing acts of loving-kindness. The Torah teaches us that the spiritual emptiness which

pervaded the house due to the death of his mother, Sarah Imeinu, dissipated when Yitzchak married Rivkah. - Are we still to assert that Rivkah's only unique trait was her ability to resist environmental influences?

Horav Zaidel Epstein, Shlita, suggests that Rashi is relating in which area Rivkah's remarkable virtues manifested themselves. In other words, her ability to resist the environmental influences is indicative of her unique personality, which catalyzed her acts of chesed.

Rivkah is distinguished by her ability to overcome the challenge of her surroundings. It is not her virtue--it is her unique personality. This is why Rivkah towers above others.

What is so unique about resisting the effect of one's environment?

Horav Epstein explains that human nature compels the individual to make every effort to be like his peers. This is a result of the middah of kinah, the character trait of jealousy. We dress like those in our surrounding environment; we act like them; we are influenced by their ideals and values. We respond in this manner because we have an innate tendency to be envious.

Hashem created us with the attribute of kinah, so that we should strive to emulate the positive achievements of our peers. **קִנְאַת סוֹפְרִים תַּרְבֶּה חָכְמָה** - ***jealousy among scribes increases wisdom***. (Bava Basra 21a)

One should seek to become a scholar or a G-d-fearing Jew likes his friend. Thus, we can utilize this middah to attain a positive effect. In contrast, the yetzer hora, evil inclination, incites us to employ the character trait of jealousy in a negative manner. Does man have a guarantee that if he succeeds in attaining a high level of yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven, he will not slip back to a lower level? No! The virtue and righteousness we achieve are not inherent. They do not belong to us.

Yitzchak Avinu was blind and relegated to a sequestered lifestyle at home. There was hope for him.

Chazal tell us that Yochanan Kohen Gadol reigned for eighty years as the epitome of holiness before reverting to become an apostate. Is there any guarantee? No! The outside influence can permeate our psyche to the point that we no longer are in control. A person about whom we can emphatically assert that he is not inspired by external influences, who is above the pressures and prompting of his environment, is truly a virtuous person.

Indeed, Rivkah had many remarkable qualities, among them her sensitivity towards others. What guaranteed the lasting power of these wonderful attributes? What ensured that these qualities would endure? What proof do we have that they were integral qualities?

Her ability to resist and transcend her environment was her most laudatory virtue. Without that, her wonderful qualities were precariously vulnerable to the harsh environment in which she lived.



וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בִּגְדֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנָהּ הַגָּדֹל֙ הַחֲמֻדֹ֔ת אֲשֶׁ֥ר אִתָּ֖הּ בַּבָּ֑יִת וַתַּלְבֵּ֗שׁ אֶת־יַעֲקֹ֛ב בְּנָ֥הּ הַקָּטֵֽן ***Rivkah took her older son Eisav's clean garments and clothed Yaakov her young son***. (27:15)

Rashi explains that these garments were actually Eisav's precious garments, which he had stolen from the great King Nimrod. Eisav, who was meticulous in the honor he bestowed on his father, always served Yitzchak while wearing these precious garments.

Obviously Eisav's attitude towards Kibbud Av, honoring his father; did not transform him into a moral human being. He continued in his evil ways, despite his meticulous performance of a single mitzvah. How are we to understand the paradox that was Eisav? How can someone who dons precious clothes to serve his father "moonlight" as a murderer?

The commentators respond in various ways to this anomaly.

The Yehudi m'Pechischa suggests an insightful explanation which teaches a timeless lesson: A young man of questionable character once came to visit the Rebbe. He was concerned that the tzaddik would accurately perceive him, so he "prepared" himself prior to his visit. He went to the mikveh, made specific religious preparations and dressed himself in "frum" clothes, garments that would present him as G-dfearing. He let his payos, earlocks, grow and made cosmetic changes that would give him the appearance of an observant Jew.

The Yehudi, sensing that something was not kosher, asked the Jew to explain how Eisav was able to remain Eisav given that he had served his father so meticulously. He must have been with Yitzchak often; how could he have continued along his sinful way?

The Yehudi looked at the Jew and offered a response. He explained that Yaakov attended his father wearing his usual weekday garments. This means that Yaakov did not alter his appearance; Yitzchak saw the real Yaakov--without embellishment. He came as he was---with his good and "bad" characteristics. Yitzchak was able to notice Yaakov's faults and reprove him. Yaakov accepted his father's guidance and corrected his deficiencies.

Eisav, however, made a point of wearing only his best clothes. He disguised all of his faults. His life was a sham, so why not continue his disguise when he presented himself before his father?

Yitzchak was privy to see only Eisav's good side. He could not suggest to Eisav that he correct any flaws, because they were hidden from him. Consequently, Eisav remained evil. The man who stood before the Yehudi understood the Rebbe's message and left a different person. - We must remember that when we present ourselves falsely, the only ones we hurt is ourselves.

וַיִּשָּׂא עֵשָׂו קֹלוֹ וַיֵּבְךְּ ***And Eisav raised up his voice and wept***. (27:38)

Eisav's tears have had a significant impact on the fate of Klal Yisrael. We have been considered unscrupulous for stealing Eisav's birthright. Eisav was rewarded for his tears. He experienced peace and tranquillity as a result of his weeping. Moreover, the **Zohar Hakadosh** says that Moshiach will not come until Eisav's tears will dry.

This is the analogy: We will remain under Eisav's power until we repent and shed tears that will overwhelm Eisav's tears. What do Chazal mean by this? Ostensibly, Klal Yisrael has long ago surpassed the level of Eisav's tears. What aspect of his tears condemned us so?

Eisav was sincere when he cried. He wept for the blessings that he had lost. He wept for something positive that now eluded him.

What do we cry about? Do we cry because we cannot perform mitzvos properly? Do we cry because we cannot understand the Gemara?

Eisav wept for blessings. We weep for the pain and suffering which have accompanied us throughout history. We may learn how and what to cry for--from Eisav.

When we demonstrate that same sense of loss over mitzvos and berachos as Eisav did, then our tears will overwhelm his. It is not the quantity of our tears, but their catalyst that is important.



וַיִּשְׁמַע יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אָבִיו וְאֶל־אִמּוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ פַּדֶּנָה אֲרָם ***And Yaakov listened to his father and to his mother***... (28:7)

Yaakov followed his parents' instructions not to take a wife from the girls of Canaan. The Midrash refers to Yaakov as a chacham, wise man, because he listened to his parents' advice. They cite a pasuk in Mishlei 12:14, "One who listens to advice is a chacham."

Let us analyze Yaakov's remarkable wisdom. Eisav is waiting to kill him. His parents told him that his "bashert," future wife, was waiting for him in Charan. He did not have many options. He had the choice to stay and be killed or to leave and meet his destined wife.

Horav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi, Zt'l, observes that specifically herein lies Yaakov's astuteness. While logic dictated that he should leave, he left only because he heeded to his parents. He ignored every other reason for going. He responded only to his parents' directive that he leave. - His chachmah was his ability to listen.

Perhaps he should have stayed and confronted Eisav. After all, he was very strong. We see that he was able to lift a giant boulder that rested upon a well, a feat that would have taken an entire group of shepherds to perform. Maybe he should have rid himself of Eisav, once and for all.

Yaakov realized, however, that a wise man realistically has only one approach to consider. He listens to advice from someone more astute and more experienced than he.

Many individuals experience difficulty listening to someone, taking advice from an elder or especially a peer. The alternative is to do things according to one's own line of thinking.

Shlomo Ha'melech tells us that he who listens is a wise man. By implication, he who does not listen is a fool. The litmus test of an individual's objectivity is his willingness to heed advice.

Horav Matisyahu Solomon, Shlita, takes a similar approach to explain an apparent inconsistency in the Torah's attitude towards punishment. We find that when Avraham sent Hagar, Sarah's maidservant, away with Yishmael, Hashem responded to the child's cry.

According to the Midrash, the angels pleaded with Hashem not to perform a miracle to save Yishmael. They argued that because his

descendants would persecute and murder Jews, he did not deserve to live.

Hashem said that he would respond to Yishmael "*ba'asher hu shom*," according to his present deeds and not according to what would happen in the future.

The question that plagues us is why is Yishmael different from the *ben sorer u'moreh*, the wayward and rebellious son, who is put to death in response to his inevitable future behavior. "Let him die while he is innocent and let him not die when he is guilty (of capital crime)."

What distinguishes the ben sorer u'moreh that we do not look at him "according to his present state"?

Horav Solomon suggests that the answer lies in the Torah's characterization of the rebellious son, "(He) does not listen to the voice of his father and the voice of his mother." - One who refuses to listen has demonstrated that his future will follow the course that he has charted for himself. He will not change. For one who refuses to listen there is no hope.

Yishmael, on the other hand, repented later on in life. If one listens, there is hope; if one shuts his ears, he closes off his possible options.

Horav Ezrachi cites Rabbeinu Yona in Shaarei Teshuvah 2:12, who cites a remarkable Midrash. Chazal say, "If a person falls from a roof and breaks his bones and hurts and bruises himself; he will need a dressing for every individual organ that was hurt. But if a person sins with all his organs, blemishing them spiritually, he only needs one dressing--for his ear."

If a person is willing to listen, then regardless of previous spiritual damage, he can be healed. If his ear is not functioning, then no dressing will attain much healing power.

וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ צַיִד אִישׁ שָׂדֶה וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים

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

Eisav is not depicted as a hunter, but as a man who "knew" hunting, a professional hunter who is an expert at his chosen vocation. Eisav is the consummate hunter, the one who sets the standard for excellence in the field of hunting, the one to whom everybody looks up. - Eisav is a "doer;" his entire essence bespeaks accomplishment and success.

Yaakov, on the other hand, is portrayed as a man who dwells in tents, the quiescent scholar who remains cloistered from society, his mind buried in his books. Undoubtedly, he is successful at what he is doing. In the future, he will probably produce wonderful novellae and serve as a wellspring of knowledge for his community. - In addressing the here and now, however, what is he really accomplishing for the community?

Indeed, in comparison to his successful brother, Yaakov gives the impression of being the mellow type of fellow who is not achieving at the moment.

This is what one might see at first glance from a cursory reading of the text. **Targum Onkelus**, however, translates "yode'a tzayid" as a "nachshirchan" or a "batlan," a ne'er do well, who does nothing! This suggests quite the opposite impression that one gleans from reading the text. What does this all mean to us?

Horav Avigdor Nebentzhal, presents a specific perspective. Some individuals mistakenly believe that the real movers and shakers are the "Eisavs" of our day. They accomplish; they act; they are the so-called experts in every field who seem to be doing so much.

The Targum, in his departure from what seemed the simple interpretation, teaches a fundamental principle. It is the "Yaakovs" who are studying Torah with enthusiasm and self-sacrifice, who are tucked away from the public forum, who are not constantly creating

a tumult; they are the ones who are accomplishing; they are the ones who are truly building and sustaining a world.

Veritably, Eisav might seem to be the one who is momentarily building, creating and executing an important function in the world. However, this is only a temporary state. It is Yaakov who is building nitzchiyus, eternity. He is building for generations to come. His accomplishment will bear fruit for the future, long after Eisav's exploits will have dissipated and disappeared.

Yaakov is the "ish ha'maasi,'" the man of action, while Eisav is the batlan, the ne'er-do-well who has a lot of form but no substance.

In the beginning of his career as a rabbi, Rabbi Naftoli of Ropshitz was once asked to speak when he was unprepared. He told his audience, "When delivering a lecture, it is proper to state the truth, to speak concisely and the topic should be in reference to the weekly portion. - I do not have anything to say on this week's portion. This is true; it is concise; and it is a comment on the weekly portion." ~ Ohel Naftoli as quoted by R' Zellig Pliskin.

וַיֹּ֣אמֶר בָּ֣א אָחִ֣יךָ בְּמִרְמָ֔ה וַיִּקַּ֖ח בִּרְכָתֶֽךָ ***And he said, "Your brother came with cunning and took your blessing.***"

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 Ha'Kadosh* 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 **חכמה** which is translated as 'wisdom', and the word **מרמה** 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),* **ה' הַצִּילָה נַפְשִׁי מִשְּׂפַת־שֶׁקֶר מִלָּשׁוֹן רְמִיָּה** " *Hashem, 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 **מִלָּשׁוֹן רְמִיָּה**, 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.

There's an easy way to tell if your mission in life has been completed. If you're breathing, it hasn't.

הַקֹּל֙ קוֹל֣ יַעֲקֹ֔ב וְהַיָּדַ֖יִם יְדֵ֣י עֵשָׂ֑ו "***The voice is the voice of Yaakov, but the hands are the hands of Eisav.***" (27:22)



Chazal imply that when the voice of Yaakov, the sound of Torah and tefillah, is strong and dominant the evil "hands" of Eisav are rendered powerless. Eisav's strength is reinforced when we are weak in our commitment to Torah.

This interpretation does not seem consistent with the text of the pasuk. The pasuk seems to suggest that it is possible for both the "voice of Yaakov" and the "hands of Eisav" to reign simultaneously. How are we to reconcile this apparent inconsistency?

Horav E.M. Shach, Zt'l, offers a novel interpretation. Hashem has established individual "borders" for Yaakov and Eisav. Yaakov's place of "business" is the Bais Ha'Midrash and Bais Ha'Knesses for Torah and tefillah. It is there that "kol Yaakov" should be heard.

In contrast, Eisav has been relegated to the open field to express himself in the physical/material arena.

As long as Yaakov's voice remains within the confines of his allotted space, not breaching its boundary, then Eisav will remain in his restricted area. In the event, however, that the "kol Yaakov" exits its designated perimeter and migrates to the area restricted to Eisav, we will unfortunately find the ya'daim shel Eisav, the hands of Eisav, in the places of Yaakov.

Indeed, Yitzchak's statement has two distinct aspects. There must be a kol Yaakov, but it must be sounded in its proper place. The "hands of Eisav," however, cannot affect the "voice of Yaakov" as

long as Yaakov's presence remains within the confines of the Bais Ha'Midrash.

וַיֶּחֱרַד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְּדֹלָה עַד־מְאֹד "***And Yitzchak trembled a very great trembling***." (27:33)



That Yitzchak "***trembled a very great trembling***" is a powerful statement. The phrase implies an exceptional incident taking place which serves as a foreshadowing of the future.

Pesikta D'Rav Kahana states that Yitzchak suddenly became aware of Eisav's deception. The presence of Gehinnom -- which Yitzchak felt when Eisav entered the room -- caused Yitzchak to realize that he had erred terribly all these years.

Had Rivkah not manipulated the course of events, maneuvering Yaakov to enter before Eisav, who knows what the disastrous outcome might have been? Indeed, the entire history of Klal Yisrael would have been severely altered. This near miss mandated a trembling of the greatest proportion.

Horav Avigdor Miller, Zt'l, offers the opinion that herein lies a lesson for the future. Yitzchak undoubtedly took great personal interest in the educational development of his sons. Indeed, they were to be the link in the future of Klal Yisrael. Finally, Yitzchak had arrived at the decision that Eisav was worthy of the blessings as heir apparent to the mantle of the Patriarchs.

Suddenly, everything in which he believed fell apart. He perceived that Eisav had been deceiving him for all of these years. Yitzchak

began to understand that his belief in his "evil" son was his ultimate error.

All of the "wonderful" virtues that Yitzchak believed Eisav embodied were a sham. He erred because of his partiality to Eisav which induced him to overlook Eisav's evil character traits and base personality.

Yitzchak's trembling has a parallel -- the regrettable situation in the world today, when the righteous and virtuous are ignored and cast aside while the wicked and powerful are honored and revered.

In the era of exile, Bnei Yisrael were to be despised and repudiated, while the world revered the evil and those of false ideals. This will continue until mankind will arise from their slumber with a very great trembling and realize their terrible error.

The story of Yaakov and Eisav is the story of the good against the evil, the weak against the mighty, the truthful against the deceivers.

One day the truth will become apparent, and the world will clearly comprehend their error. Until that glorious day, we must submit to the effects of that error.

Rav Ozer Alport - Parsha Points to Ponder

Which custom of the Pesach Seder commemorates an event that occurred in Parshas Toldos? (Pri Megadim Mishbetzos Zahav Orach Chaim 476:3)

The Rema writes (Orach Chaim 476:2) that some people have a custom to eat an egg at the Seder as a sign of mourning, for Tisha B'Av falls on the same night of the week as the first night of Pesach.

The **Pri Megadim** adds that the egg also expresses our mourning for the death of Avrohom, who passed away on Erev Pesach.

כִּשְׁמֹעַ עֵשָׂו אֶת־דִּבְרֵי אָבִיו וַיִּצְעַק צְעָקָה גְּדֹלָה וּמָרָה עַד־מְאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו בָּרְכֵנִי גַם־אָנִי אָבִי "***And he (Eisav) let out a most loud and bitter cry, 'Bless me too, Father,' he pleaded.***" (27:34)



In the Midrash, Chazal teach us that the bitter tears which Eisav shed merited him the blessings for which he yearned.

Horav Shmelke M'Nikolsburg, z.l., made an interesting observation based upon this Midrash: It is a wonder that the few tears shed by Eisav serve as his source for blessing. We have a halachic rule that if an impermissible food falls into a permissible food, the resultant mixture does not become forbidden if there is sixty times as much permitted food as forbidden food. This is referred to as the rule of "batel b'shishim."

Now, Bnei Yisrael have cried oceans of tears throughout their bitter years of exile. Should not their tears have been sufficient to render Eisav's tears negligible, thereby negating the blessings that Yitzchak gave him? Indeed, our tears comprise much more than the required sixty times.

Rav Shmelke's response strikes at our materialistic attitude and lifestyle.

Another halachah is relevant in this context. If the two components of the admixture are "min b'mino," both of the same type of food, then the forbidden food does not become negligible, regardless of the excess amount of permitted food.

The tears of Eisav and the tears of the Jews, regrettably, are of the same genre. As Eisav asked for and received material abundance, so do we similarly cry for material goods. Do we cry for Galus

Ha'Shechinah, the exile of the Almighty? Do we cry because we cannot serve Hashem properly, or because we have material burdens? Do we cry over Hashem's distress that His people are suffering, or do we cry like Eisav did -- for ourselves, to satisfy our own needs?

Only when our tears are of a different nature will they have the "ability" to overwhelm and negate Eisav's tears.

וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב ***And Yitzchak loved Eisav because of the venison (he put) in his mouth***." (25:28)



Essentially, the central theme of this parsha is the quest of Yaakov and Eisav for their father's blessing.

A superficial reading of the parsha suggests that Yitzchak and Rivkah each had personal reasons for favouring one twin over the other and that there was a communication problem in their home.

After studying the various commentaries, one learns that this was clearly not the case.

In response to the obvious question, why was Yitzchak so insistent on blessing Eisav, the **Radak** explains that Yitzchak was acutely aware of Eisav's character traits. His evil behavior and rebellious, antagonistic attitude had not escaped Yitzchak's attention. Indeed, he sincerely hoped that by blessing Eisav, he would inspire him to repent.

Horav Gedalya Schorr z.l. offers a novel approach to this question. He cites the **Arizal**, who interprets כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו as meaning more than

the literal translation implies. Yitzchak was not impressed by the piece of venison.

The Midrash explains that Eisav fooled Yitzchak with his "mouth" by asking profound questions pertaining to halachic matters. The Arizal asserts that Eisav did have within himself sparks of kedushah, holiness. These sparks emanated through his mouth, reflected by the questions he asked. He demonstrated to Yitzchak that he still possessed some hope for spiritual development. Yitzchak loved him for this attribute. Thus, he sought to help Eisav overcome his impediments to spiritual ascendency by offering him the blessings.

Horav Schorr develops his theme further by applying the words of the **Ramban** in Parashas Eikev.

The Ramban relates that every bracha, blessing, found in the Torah is an expression of support for the individual who was blessed. A bracha offers an individual the determination that conditions during his lifetime will enhance his ability to serve the Almighty to his highest potential.

Eisav was in dire need of such circumstances since his nature and personality were counterproductive to the ideals which his father expected him to develop. Yaakov, on the other hand, was an "ish tam," a complete perfect person whose life of virtue, determination, and erudition created the optimal circumstances for his spiritual growth.

One who is not compelled to challenge evil does not need blessing, only encouragement. One whose essence is evil must have blessing in order to overcome his challenge.

Rivkah was raised in a home replete with iniquity. She was exposed to the wicked Besuel and the unscrupulous Lavan. Therefore, she was more sensitive to the real nature of Eisav. True, he had sparks of kedushah which emanated from his mouth. They were only a

superficial facade, however, which had no relationship whatsoever to his essence.

Indeed, Eisav's most notable sign of impurity was his desire to demonstrate his virtue. When Rivkah saw that Eisav had no desire for spiritual development, when she noticed him ridiculing everything which Yitzchak represented, she determined that this child was not entitled to blessing. Only Yaakov, who she felt would take these blessings and apply them to a life of Torah and mitzvos, should be the recipient.

וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בִּגְדֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנָהּ הַגָּדֹל֙ הַחֲמֻדֹ֔ת אֲשֶׁ֥ר אִתָּ֖הּ בַּבָּ֑יִת וַתַּלְבֵּ֞שׁ אֶת־יַעֲקֹ֧ב בְּנָ֛הּ הַקָּטֵֽן "***And Rivkah took the garments of Eisav, her older son, the choicest which were with her in the house***." (27:15)



Chazal explain that these precious clothes had previously belonged to Nimrod before Eisav slew him. These clothes had the remarkable power to attract animals which Eisav immediately killed. It was specifically these extraordinary garments that Eisav would don before he served his father.

Indeed, Chazal emphasize Eisav's special devotion to the mitzvah of kibud av, honoring his father. He dressed up as if it was a holiday when he came to greet his father!

A perusal of the various Midrashim indicates that Eisav was either an enigma or the archetype of hypocrisy. On the one hand, he served his father clothed in royalty. Simultaneously, on the other hand, he addressed his father in a coarse, disrespectful manner. Moreover,

Eisav used clothes obtained through murder to serve his father. The same Eisav who distinguished himself in kibud av, later arrogantly proclaimed that if necessary, he would even kill his father!

How do we reconcile this extreme form of duplicity? Eisav seems to vacillate between the spiritual sublime and the nadir of degeneracy! In analyzing Eisav's personality, **Horav Chizkiyahu Cohen z.l.**, concludes that Eisav characterizes the individual whose nature and lifestyle reflect an inconsistency between the intellect of the mind and the passion/desire of the heart. Indeed, was not Eisav's head buried in the Me'oras Ha'Machpeilah together with the Patriarchs?

One could surmise that his head did not "follow" the rest of his body. In his "mind" he was acutely aware of his nefarious deeds. His "heart," the seat of his desires, however, drove him to senseless and diabolical hatred for his brother. He was consumed by an implacable lust that dominated every aspect of his being. He comprehended what was right, but he had no control over his behavior. Rather than subdue his passions by subjugating them to the sophisticated deliberation of the mind, he allowed his intellect to become a slave to his desires.

In truth, prior to Eisav's spiritual departure, he gave no indication of a tendency to be different than his saintly twin brother. It was only after **וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים**, the boys matured, that they went on divergent paths.

Horav Cohen asserts that Eisav and Yaakov were products of the same education system and environment. They both studied diligently in the same "school." Indeed, Eisav probably felt he was no different than Yaakov in any way.

Chazal alluded to Eisav's self-deception. Concerning the fact that Eisav married at the age of forty, Chazal assert that he emulated his father's actions. Just as his father married at the age of forty, so, too, he married at the age of forty. He saw no distinction between his father and himself. Indeed, Chazal compare Eisav to a

pig that flaunts his one pure sign, his split hooves, while ignoring the fact that he does not chew his cud.

This analogy defines Eisav. He noticed only his signs of purity, while he overlooked his impurities. The pig only sees his pure sign, but his impure sign remains hidden within his body.

Eisav was so obsessed with flaunting his virtue that he was not able to see his iniquities. He wanted to do the right thing, while simultaneously performing immoral deeds.

This "Eisavian" philosophy is the antithesis of Judaism. Our religion does not ascribe to the notion of selective Judaism, whereby one picks and chooses the mitzvos which he feels "more inclined" to observe, while ignoring those with which he is uncomfortable.

To delete from the Torah is to render oneself spiritually impaired and to devoid oneself of the true essence of Judaism.



שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבִטְנֵךְ וּשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֵּעַיִךְ יִפָּרֵדוּ ***Two nations are in your womb, and two people shall be separated from your bowels***. 25:23

Rashi states, "***Already from the very bowels of Rivkah, they are separated, one to his wickedness and the other to his righteousness***."

Rabbi Moshe Swift z.t.l. makes a poignant observation. The child is molded in the mother's womb. In the home, the child is reared. The Jewish ideology which a child receives from within his home makes a major impact upon his perspective of life. Even the influence of an extremely adverse external influence is limited if the individual has been properly molded "from the womb."

We often hear parents place the blame for their own incompetence and lack of supervision upon the school, the rebbe, and the outside influences. The home maintains the primary influence. The life

parents live, the places they go, the things they see and think, by and large, set the tone for the progress of their child's education.

On the other hand, what a glorious experience it is for a child to observe a Shabbos filled with kedusha, holiness, punctuated with words of Torah spoken at the table, zemiros sung with joy and excitement, and a feeling of camaraderie between parents and children.

The tznius, modesty, that a child sees at home imbues him with a sensitivity to act similarly. When the light from within shines brightly, it is able to overwhelm the darkness of outside influences.



שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבִטְנֵךְ וּשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֵּעַיִךְ יִפָּרֵדוּ ***Two nations are in your womb, and two people shall be separated from your bowels***. 25:23

Rashi explains that while Yaakov and Eisav were still in the womb, they were distinct from one another. One was established in his evil ways and the other in his integrity.

The Maharal asks, are we not taught that the evil inclination exerts its influence on the soul only from birth? Here we see that Eisav was already attempting to "run" to do evil while yet an embryo in his mother's womb!

He responds that Eisav did not simply accede to the effect of the evil inclination. Rather, Eisav was naturally attracted to evil elements. Whatever the case, the Torah definitely indicates to us that the relentlessly hostile relationship between the descendants of Yaakov and Eisav is neither a result of jealousy nor of political or economic rivalry. The hostility goes back to the womb, reflecting distinct congenital differences in character. The fierce hatred appears as a providential historical factor which escapes the control of will.

Hence, we can understand the Talmud's categorical statement הֲלָכָה הִיא בְּיָדוּעַ שֶׁעֵשָׂו שׂוֹנֵא לְיַעֲקֹב "***it is a halachic axiom that Eisav hates***

Yaakov). In Talmudic and Midrashic sources, the names Eisav and Edom are usually identified with Rome. When Rome became the center of Christianity the whole Christian world was referred to as "Edom" since then.

The Christians have been considered representative of Eisav's offspring and the Jews representative of Yaakov's offspring. The underlying reasons for the antagonism between Yaakov and Eisav are also attributable to the Jewish and Christian worlds.

One can, therefore, conclude that the hostility of Christian anti-Semites is not founded on religious, economic, or political grounds, nor does it stem from any other specific motive. Since it originates in the prenatal stage, it is irrational in nature. It is reflective of an unrelenting struggle carried on between two brothers, representing two worlds with a deep chasm separating them.

We may note that with all the various studies conducted on this subject, the true motives of anti-Semitism have not been conclusively identified through logical analysis.

The Vilna Gaon asks: Is hatred ever for nothing? Isn't there always a reason for hatred? Someone embarrassed him, harmed him, or did something else to anger him, so why is it called sinas chinam?

The answer is, whatever occurred, it was destined. Nothing happened without Hashem's decree. - So, there is never a valid excuse for hatred. ~ R' Elimelech Biderman Shlita

"The yetzer hara is a lion made from paper. Rip it up and you'll see." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l.

וַיִּבֶז עֵשָׂו אֶת־הַבְּכֹרָה "***And Eisav despised the birthright***." (25:34)

Whenever one studies this narrative, he will never cease to be amazed at Eisav's apparent lack of sensitivity to anything of spiritual value. How does one sink so low as to exchange his prized inheritance for a mere bowl of lentil soup? Did Eisav completely lose his concept of spirituality?

Horav Yechezkel Levinstein Z"l notes that this is truly a case in which people follow a misguided perspective of life. How often do we measure success by the yardstick of prosperity, position, or social standing, while simultaneously belittling success in the field of Torah endeavor? How often do we exchange our children's "birthright" for a glorified bowl of lentil soup?

It is unfortunate that we are so amazed at Eisav's actions, and at the same time as we are entirely complacent with our own!

Perhaps this is the meaning of the words of **Rabeinu Yonah** "***how did I exchange a passing world for one that stands forever***?"

וַיִּבֶז עֵשָׂו אֶת־הַבְּכֹרָה "***And Eisav despised the birthright***." (25:34)



Eisav saw no value whatsoever in the birthright. Thus, when he was hungry, he quickly sold the birthright for a bowl of red soup. Apparently, selling the birthright is held against Eisav. The fact that he committed five grave sins that day does not seem to carry as much weight as his selling the birthright. Why?

The Brisker Rav, zl, explains that concerning the other sins which Eisav committed, he always had the excuse that he was provoked by the yetzer hora, evil inclination. The other sins may have brought

him some sort of perverse satisfaction. Selling the birthright was purely malicious. Nothing was to be gained from selling the birthright. Thus, it was an inexcusable act of denigrating the avodah, service, in the Bais Hamikdash.

This is what Eisav was doing when he said, "*I gain nothing from the bechorah. You can have it.*" He knowingly, with malicious aforethought, spurned the opportunity to come close to Hashem.

Some sins are the product of the influence of the yetzer hora. People commit other sins as a result of a disdain for religion. This applies throughout our life's endeavor. It is not only about sin. When someone has something to gain, we understand his weakness. He was not pernicious – just weak.

Many weak people exist. A noxious person acts out of uncaring selfishness. He demonstrates that rules mean nothing to him. He laughs at convention and denigrates establishment. He is not compelled to act. He wants to act because it means nothing to him.

Someone might fall prey to opioids due to an addiction; weakness which he is unable to control. Another person might set a fire simply because he does not care about people's property. - One is upset with himself; one laughs at the world. Eisav laughs.

The Chofetz Chaim says that humans communicate with speech or by sending letters, but Hashem can send a thought or desire into a person's heart, and thereby communicate His will.

A person often doesn't know that Hashem planted the thought in his mind; he thinks it was his own idea. But really it was Hashem speaking to him. ~ R' Elimelech Biderman Shlita.

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I. Summary

A. Yaakov and Esav are Born. After 20 childless years of marriage, Rivka and Yitzchak were blessed by Hashem with twin sons, Yaakov (the younger, a Torah scholar and Rivka's favorite) and Esav (the elder, a hunter and Yitzchak's favorite).

B. Esav Sells His Birthright To Yaakov. Returning hungry and tired from a day of hunting, Esav noticed that Yaakov was cooking some red lentils. (Our Sages explain that Yaakov had prepared the lentils for Yitzchak, because it was the day of Abraham's funeral.)

Esav said to Yaakov "give me quickly some of that red stuff to eat for I am tired." Yaakov answered "sell me, in turn, your privileges as first born (i.e., until Hashem chose Aaron and his descendants to serve as the priestly family, first-borns served as priests to Hashem; Esav was clearly not worthy of this sanctified work). "Of what use are the rights of the first-born to me?" reasoned Esav, and he swore to Yaakov that he would give him first-born rights, in return for which Yaakov gave Esav some bread and lentils.

C. Yitzchak and Rivka Travel to Gerar. Fleeing a famine, Yitzchak and Rivka temporarily moved to Gerar. Hashem appeared to Yitzchak, promising to uphold His promise to Abraham. Hashem

promised that Yitzchak's descendants would be as numerous as the stars of heaven and would inherit Canaan.

Taking the same precautions as Abraham did, Yitzchak told the residents of Gerar that Rivka was his sister. King Avimelech, upon discovering the truth, ordered that anyone harming Yitzchak or Rivka would be killed. With Hashem's help, Yitzchak soon became very prosperous. This evoked the envy of local populace, and Avimelach asked Yitzchak to leave the area.

While staying in the valley of Gerar, Yaakov dug his father's old water wells. Yitzchak eventually moved to Be'er Sheva. Before long, he was visited by Avimelach who now recognized that he was a holy person, favored by Hashem, and they agreed to a peace treaty. Meanwhile, Esav brought grief to his parents by marrying tow Hititte women (who were idol worshipers).

D. Yitzchak's Blessing.



Yaakov was old and blind and felt that the time had come for him to bless his eldest son. He, therefore, requested Esav to hunt and prepare the game he captured. After partaking of the meal, Yitzchak would bless him. Rivka, overhearing their conversation, dressed Yaakov in Esav's clothing and covered his hands and neck with goat skin to make them feel as hairy as Esav's, and sent him to Yitzchak bearing a tasty dish of young goat's meat and bread which she made.

Yaakov's voice aroused Yitzchak's suspicions, but they were allayed when he felt Yaakov's hairy hands which Yitzchak was sure belonged to Esav.

Yitzchak, now ready to bestow the blessings upon his son, called him forward. Yaakov came forward and kissed his father. Yitzchak blessed Yaakov, saying "*May Hashem give you from the dew of the sky and the fat of the land, and plenty of grain and wine. Nations shall serve you and kingdoms shall bow down to you. Those who curse you shall be cursed and those who bless you will be blessed.*" No sooner had Yaakov left, when Esav returned and discovered what had happened. Yitzchak didn't revoke his blessing to Yaakov; rather, he blessed Esav as well, and foretold that his descendants would live by the sword and serve Yaakov's descendants if they behaved properly; however, if they strayed from the path of Torah, Esav's descendants would be free of this servitude.

E. Yaakov Leaves Home. Esav, angry at Yaakov's ruse, plotted to kill him as soon as Yitzchak died. To prevent this, Rivka instructed him to go stay with her brother Lovan in Charan. Yitzchak gave him the save advice, and expressed his wish that Yaakov choose a wife from among Lovan's family. Yitzchak then blessed Yaakov again that the blessings of Abraham be fulfilled through him and his descendants.

II. Divrei Torah

A. LilMode Ul'Lamed (Rabbi Mordechai Katz)

"Kibbud Av V'aim" (Honoring Your Father and Mother). Although Rivka recognized Yaakov's superiority to Esav, Yitzchak lacked this insight, for he was misled by Esav's practice of Kibbud Av, honoring Yitzchak. He assumed Esav was just as scrupulous in observing all mitzvos.

This shows the power of Kibbud Av V'aim; it was able to make Yitzchak believe that even one as degenerate as Esav was an honorable person. If Esav, for all his wickedness, still was careful to honor his parents, then how can we claim to be good Jews if we fail to do the same?

Many stories are related of how our Sages honored their parents. For example, one day Rabbi Avuhu asked his son, Rabbi Avimi, for some water to drink. Rabbi Avimi brought the water, but his father had fallen asleep. He stood next to his father with the water in his hand the entire time, until he awoke (Kiddushin 31b).

A story is told of Rabbi Leib of Kelm. When he was a young, he returned home very late one night from studying. His parents were already sleeping, and he didn't have a key with him. In order not to awaken them, he remained in the street all night despite the extreme cold.

B. Majesty of Man (Rabbi Hanoch Leibowitz)

Feeling Esav's Pain. "***And he [Esav] cried an exceedingly great and bitter cry ...*** " In truth, what error had Yaakov committed? He didn't steal the blessing; it was rightfully his for he had legitimately purchased the birthright (including the eventual blessings of the first-born) from Esav. In addition, one can't fault Yaakov's motive; he wasn't driven by greed or a desire for glory, but rather realized that Esav wasn't worthy of the birthright. Furthermore, Rivka had perceived through prophecy that the blessing belonged to Yaakov and she all but physically forced him to enter Yitzchak's tent to receive the blessing. Why, then, was Yaakov held responsible for Esav's suffering?

Reb Dovid Leibowitz explained: Yaakov wasn't punished for the pain he caused Esav but for an infinitesimal shortcoming in not feeling sufficiently anguished that Esav had to suffer. Yaakov should have empathized to a greater degree with Esav's plight. We see from here the lofty level of "ahavah" (love) for our fellow man that the Torah demands of us. Esav was a deceitful person and a murderer; yet Yaakov was still required to feel his pain over the loss of his birthright. All people deserve our love and empathy with their pain. In our own way, we must enhance our love for, and sensitivities toward, our fellow man.

C. Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

1. Don't rationalize your faults by blaming others for them. "*And Yitzchak was 40 years old when he took Rivka, the daughter of Besuail the Aromite, from Padan Arom, the sister of Lavan the Aromite, for himself for a wife.*"

Rashi notes that the information in this verse is superfluous, since the Torah had already told us of Rivka's family. According to Rashi, it is included to let us know the praise of Rivka. She was the daughter of an evil person and lived in a community of evil people; nevertheless, she didn't learn from their evil behavior.

Many people try to excuse their faults by blaming others as the cause of their behavior. "It's not my fault, I learned it from my parents" and other rationalizations are commonplace. However, we see from Rivka that regardless of the faulty, even evil, behavior of those in your surroundings, you have the ability to be more elevated.

2. Work on internalizing the elevated thoughts that you talk about. "*And Yitzchak loved Esav because he was a hunter in his mouth.*"

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler cited the **Ari** that it is a mistake to think that Esav was a complete hypocrite and just tried to deceive his father. If Yitzchak made an error, there must have been a good reason. The problem with Esav was that he kept all his spirituality "in his mouth," without swallowing it. He spoke spiritual words but didn't become a spiritual person. The Torah ideals that one talks must be a part of his very being.

D. Love Thy Neighbor (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

A person should consider it an honor to serve his parents. The Torah describes Esav's garments as "the coveted ones." The Midrash states that these garments were the one he seized from Nimrod. Esav wore these regal garments whenever he served his father.

Rabbi Shimon Ben Gamliel said "*I served my father my entire life, but I didn't reach even 1% of the honor with which Esav served his father.*"

Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Ilem was once told in a dream "be happy, for you and a butcher named Nanas will be neighbors in the World-to-come." Upon awakening, Rabbi Yehoshua was quite shaken; he traveled from town to town until he found Nanas. Overwhelmed that the famous Sage had come to visit him, Nanas humbly asked him why he had come. Rabbi Yehoshua said that he came to find out about the good deeds which Nanas had performed. Nanas replied that "I have elderly parents who are in need of help. I give them food and drink and wash and dress them daily." Upon hearing this, Rabbi Yehoshua kissed him on the head and said "I am truly fortunate to have you as my neighbor in the World-to-come."

E. Living Each Day (Rabbi Abraham Twerski)

Contingent vs. Non-contingent love. "*Yitzchak loved Esav for he fed him game, but Rivka loves Yaakov.*" The Parsha describes Yaakov as a sincere person, devoted to scholarship, and Esav as a man of the field interested only in earthly desires. The Torah tells us that Yitzchak favored Esav because he hunted food for him, whereas Rivka loved Yaakov. However, no reason is given for her preference.

The **Shelah** notes this omission as well as the fact that Yitzchak's love in the past tense, whereas Rivka's love is in the present tense. What's the difference?

The Shelah explains with a quote from Pirkei Avos that "*love which is dependent on anything disappears when the thing on which it was dependent is gone*". Yitzchak loved Esav because he provided him food; such love is transitory and can easily become a thing of the past; hence, the use of the past tense. Rivka's love wasn't contingent, but was love of Yaakov for what "he was"; this time of love endures, hence the present tense. True love for another and self-love when the other person is merely a means of self-gratification are poles

apart. As the Selah notes, the former is likely transitory, while the latter is of lasting duration.

In the next Parsha, we learn of Yaakov's love for Rachel; although he had to wait 7 years to marry her, "*it seemed to him as but a few days because of his love for her*." If one is in love, shouldn't each day of separation seem like an eternity? How does one thus make sense of this verse?

The Rabbi of Apt answered that to people who primarily love themselves and crave companionship for their own self-gratification, each day of separation is indeed an eternity. But, Yaakov loved Rachel, rather than herself. He loved and admired her for who she was, rather than what she would provide to him. This was a non-contingent love, a spiritual love. This, the Torah teaches us, is true "love".

F. Living Each Week (Rabbi Abraham Twerski).

1. Rationalization. After Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, we read that Esau "disparaged the birth". There is no indication that Esau initially belittled the birthright; only after he sold it does the Torah tell us that he disparged it. We, too, often tend to rationalize our improper acts.

2. Environment can desensitize. [When Esau was forty years old, he married two Hittite women.] "They were a source of much bitterness to Isaac and to Rebecca". The Midrash states that the Hittite women were idol worshipers and this deeply aggravated Isaac and Rebecca.

The Midrash notes that the order of "Isaac and Rebecca" infers that Isaac was provoked first and Rebecca was only provoked later (since she had grown up in a family of idol worshipers). Why does this Torah tell us this? To remind us of the risk of being desensitized by our environment.

3. Feelings Are Reciprocal. Rebecca instructed Jacob to flee Esau, noting "flee to Lovan – you shall stay with him for awhile, until your brother's fury dissipates until the anger of your brother dissipates from you . . " What does the seemingly redundant last verse teach us? As Solomon taught, "like one's reflection is seen in the water, so does one heart reflect another."

In other words, emotions are reciprocated. The way we feel about another is often a reliable indication of how that person feels about us. This, then, was Rebecca's instruction to Jacob: when you feel your own animosity towards your own brother has left you, then you will know that he no longer hates you either.

G. Torah Gems (Rabbi Ahron Yaakov Greenberg)

1. Educating Our Children. "*And the children struggled together within her.*" When Rebecca would pass the doors of the Torah academies of Shem and Ever, Jacob struggled to come out; when she passed the doors of idolatry, Esau struggled to come out. This teaches us the tremendous importance, both positive and negative, of our environment. It also teaches us that everything depends on the mother – if she is accustomed to come to the doors of Torah (that is, she shows a love for and appreciation for Torah and Judaism), "Jacob strives to come out" (i.e., her child will be like Jacob).

2. Correct Introspection. And Esau said, "*behold, I am at the point of dying; what use will this birthright be for me?*"

At that moment, Esau's focus was on the physical and on the uselessness of the birthright to him. When a righteous person, however, thinks of the day of his death, it evokes in him/her feelings of repentance and fear of G-d.

As the Talmud teaches, "an anecdote for the Evil Inclination is to remind ourselves of the day of our death." (**Chofetz Hayim**).

3. Unity. As long as we are told that "they" dug in the plural (indicating that there was no unity among Isaac's servants), the other herdsmen fought over the well. However, when they were finally united, as we see in "he dug," with all working in harmony, even their enemies were unable to quarrel with them and made peace with them. (R' A.P. Weinberger).

H. Soul of the Torah: Insights of the Chasidic Masters of the Weekly Torah Portions (Victor Cohen).

1. Torah — Elixir of Life. "**And Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found living waters.**"

The S'fas Emes commented that the Torah is called "water" and is therefore found everywhere. As is true with seeking water, it depends upon how deep one wishes to dig and how sincerely one wants to have Torah. Just as water is the elixir of life, so is Torah.

2. Everyone Can Receive A Blessing. On the verse "so that my soul may bless you before I die," the **Vorker** asked why Isaac wished specifically to bless the elder son and not both his children (as Jacob blessed all his children).

G-d did not want Jacob to be given the blessing because future generations would assume that, in order to receive a blessing, one must be on Jacob's level. Esau received a blessing to show future generations that no matter what one's status is, he/she can receive a blessing.

I. Something to Say (Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser).

1. Toil In Torah. "*And the children agitated within her.*" As Rashi taught us, when Rebecca passed in front of the Shiva of Shem and Eber, Jacob would kick inside her, and when she passed in front of temples of idol worship, Esau strugged to come out. We can understand why Esau wanted to go out to indulge in idolatry. But Jacob, who loved Torah study, had every reason to remain in his mother's womb (for, as Chazal teach us, while inside the womb, an

angel teaches a baby the entire Torah). If so, why would Jacob want to leave?

Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef answers that Jacob wanted to learn Torah through his own toil and effort. He knew that being spoon-fed Torah does not carry with it the same value or permanence as acquiring it with our own effort.

2. Gratitude to G-d. [Leah delcared] "*This time let me gratefully praise Hashem. Therefore she called his name Judah*".

"Rashi explains Leah's reaction to the birth of her fourth son as follows: "Because I have received more than my expected share, from now on I should praise G-d."

The Chiddushei HaRim comments that this is why she called her son Judah, for the root of the name Judah means thanksgiving. This is why a Jew is called Yehudi, derived from Judah (Yehudah). Thus, the name that identifies a Jew is based upon the concept of thanksgiving, because every Jew must realize that all that he or she has been given on this earth is a Divine gift. Even our name expresses the realization that everything we have is graciously bestowed upon us by G-d.

J. Love Thy Neighbor (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

Before Admonishing Someone, Let Them Know That You Sincerely Care About Them. "*And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and commanded him saying: you shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.*"

The Chofetz Chaim notes that we should learn from Isaac the most effective way of admonishing others. Before he warned Jacob what not to do, he blessed him. By showing someone first that you truly care about their welfare, such person will more readily listen your admonition.

K. Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

1. Use Your Potentially Negative Tendencies In Positive Ways. The Torah tells us about the birth of Esau: "*And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.*"

The Midrash relates that when Shmuel went to appoint David to be King of Israel, he saw that David was of ruddy complexion. He became frightened that David would be a murderer like Esau. G-d told Shmuel that there was no need to be afraid. Whereas Esau killed in cold blood, David would only take a life to carry out the just decisions of the Sanhedrin (court).

The Midrash teaches that, while we have basic personality tendencies, we have free will to choose how these tendencies will be manifested. Esau's tendency towards bloodshed led him down an evil path. David, on the other hand, was a mighty warrior who would utilize his natural tendencies for elevated purposes.

The **Vilna Gaon** says, "one should not go completely against his nature even if it is bad, for he will not succeed. He should merely train himself to follow the straight path in accordance with his nature."

2. If At First You Do Not Succeed, Keep Trying. The Chofetz Chaim explains that the Torah elaborates on the wells that Isaac found to teach us that we should not give up in discouragement when we run into dificulties.

When Isaac dug and did not find water, he kept digging in other places until he was finally successful. This is a practical lesson for all areas of our lives, both spiritual and material. We must be persistent when things do not work out at first. The reason many of us fail to accomplish something is because we give up too soon. If we have the determination to keep trying, eventually we will succeed.



The Reward is According to the Struggle

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l wrote a sefer to give chizuk to soldiers drafted into the army (Macheneh Yisrael). The Chofetz Chaim writes, "Whenever you perform a mitzvah, even the smallest mitzvah, Hashem will be far happier with it than the greatest mitzvah that others perform without challenge."

This is based on Avos d'Reb Noson, which states, "A single mitzvah, when hard to perform, is greater than one hundred mitzvos performed without difficulty."

The Baal HaTanya's grandson, Reb Nochum, wore an expensive jacket with fur around the collar. He bought it around the time he got married. The Baal HaTanya didn't like the style (apparently, it wasn't the way most Jews dressed at the time), and he told his grandson that he didn't want him to wear this jacket. His grandson answered that he couldn't stop wearing it.

The Baal HaTanya said, "I'll buy you another jacket." His grandson repeated that he couldn't change the jacket.

"I will give you money," the Baal HaTanya pleaded, but still he refused. He couldn't part from his coat.

"I'll learn with you." Once again, the grandson refused.

Finally, the Baal HaTanya told him, "If you take off this coat, you will be with me in Gan Eden." This time, the grandson accepted the offer. It was too good an offer to refuse.

People asked the Baal HaTanya how he could guarantee this great reward for his grandson. Perhaps he won't deserve it! The Baal HaTanya replied, "You saw how hard it was for him to remove the coat. It wasn't just the coat, and it wasn't just the style. A klipah,

a tumah, was preventing him from agreeing to my offers. I understood that it was a great test for him. And if he passed this test, he deserves to be brought to a high place in Gan Eden for that merit alone."

We earn the greatest rewards when we overcome difficult tests.

Hashem Chooses the Tests

Reb Nota Zenwirth zt'l once came to the beis medresh with a broom and announced that he was waving a lulav! They looked at him queerly. Why was he calling a broom a lulav?

He explained, "I took a lulav on Succos because it was Hashem's will. Now, it is Hashem's will that I take a broom and clean up the beis medresh." (Dirt in the beis medresh made it impermissible to daven there.) This is because we don't always choose our avodas Hashem. It is what Hashem wants it to be.

People have ideas of what their avodas Hashem should be, and if it isn't as planned, they feel that they can't serve Hashem. Actually, Hashem gives us the tests and circumstances, and we must pass the tests, no matter what is thrown our way.

Someone admired and loved the king of his country. One day, he told the king that he wanted to serve him and would do whatever the king asked.

The king replied, "I have all the mayors and officials I need for my kingdom. The only thing I need is someone to stand guard in the sewer outside the palace."

The man backed out. That wasn't the type of service he had in mind.

The nimshal is when we say the Shema in the morning, we pronounce Hashem king and proclaim that we are prepared to serve Him. But then Hashem sends us a test, a situation, and we might say, "This isn't the type of avodas Hashem that I planned on."

But it isn't up to us to decide. We do Hashem's will with loyalty and with devotion.

On the night of the Seder, a young grandson of **Rebbe Yochanan of Tolna zt'l** found a bottle of beer (it was stored away and sold for Pesach). The boy took the beer and brought it into the room where the Seder was being held. The family was horrified. "Chametz in our home, at the Seder?!"

Rebbe Yochanan saw things differently. He told his grandson, "Chazal say that when one finds chametz in his home on Pesach, he should cover it with a utensil. Thank you, my dear grandson, for giving me the opportunity to fulfill this statement of Chazal once in my life."

It wasn't the type of service that most people want on Pesach, but if this is Hashem's will, we perform it joyfully.

The Power of Prayers and Tears

וַיִּשָּׂא עֵשָׂו קֹלוֹ וַיֵּבְךְּ **"*Esav wept*"** (27:38).

The Segulos Yisrael teaches us (Tefilla 34) that it is a great segula for our prayers to be accepted if we pray and shed tears and cry. He cites the Zohar (VaYechi 223): any person who sheds tears before Hashem, even if a gezeira was decreed against him, it will be nullified and cancelled and no punishment has any power over him. Zohar ibid 288 has also stated: no gate can stand sealed before tears. Chazal also said that all gates have been sealed except for the gates of tears. Zohar Shemos 20a says that He who prays and cries out to the point where he can no longer produce a sound from his lips, his prayer is fulfilled and complete in his heart and can never go unanswered; great is such a cry, for it can cancel a decree and nullify an edict against a person for his entire life and all his days.

שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבִטְנֵךְ



Why were Yaakov and Eisav twins?

The Ritvah (Hagadah shel Pesach) explains that when you ask someone, "Why don't you serve Hashem as that person does? Don't you see he serves Hashem much better than you do?!"

The person will generally respond, "How can you compare us? Do you know who his parents are? If I were born to his parents, I would also be like him."

Here we have Eisav and Yaakov. They were born to the same set of parents and at the same time, so they had the same mazal, and yet Yaakov became Yaakov Avinu and Eisav became Eisav *harasha.*

It isn't the situations that make you great, but rather your choices. When you pass the tests that Hashem gives you, you will reach the highest levels.

To Stand in Battle

The Baal HaTurim writes that **עשו** is the same gematriya as **שלום** , peace.

Eisav is peace?! He is the exact opposite of peace! What is the Baal HaTurim telling us?

We can explain that Eisav made peace with the yetzer hara. He decided that instead of living a life full of inner conflict, he would make peace with the yetzer hara and let the yetzer hara have his way.

If you don't fight the yetzer hara, you will always remain the same. There is no growth for you. And this is the reason Eisav was born looking like an adult, to indicate that he will never change. He is who he is and doesn't want to change and grow. He doesn't even want to eat with a bowl and spoon; it is too much work. He told Yaakov **הלעיטני נא** , pour the soup into my mouth.





Some people once insulted **Reb Gedalyah Moshe of Zvhil zt'l**, and Reb Gedalyah's gabaim wanted to rebuke them, to stick up for their Rebbe's honor. Reb Gedalyah told them to let it pass and not to make an issue of it.

He explained, "My father, **Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil zt'l**, was a rebbe because he was great tzaddik, but my only strength is that I am silent and don't respond when there is a machlokes. If you take that away from me, I have nothing."

Once, Rebbe Gedalyah Moshe davened Mussaf quickly. The reason was that when he was about to go to the amud to daven for mussaf, he heard two children say, "Oh no! The rebbe is going to daven mussaf. Davening will be very long." - He didn't want to cause distress to those children.

When his first great-grandchild was born, he didn't tell anyone. Shabbos morning, people heard that the rebbe had a great-granddaughter and asked him, "Why didn't you tell us? We would have prepared a kiddush."

For shalashudes, the gabbai arranged extra food in honor of the simchah.

Reb Gedalya Moshe explained that one of his gabaim didn't have children. He didn't want to celebrate the simchah so as not to cause tzaar to this gabbai.

Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l never put a grandchild on his lap because some of his children never had children. He didn't want them to suffer watching him enjoy his grandchildren from his other children!

Hishtadlus

Someone needed a thousand dollars, so he wrote a letter to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and he put the letter in the post office box. The mailman saw the unusual letter addressed to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and he didn't know where to deliver it, so he opened the letter and read what it said.

"Dear Ribono Shel Olam," it began, "Please send me one thousand dollars so I can pay my expenses…"

The mailman had rachmanus on the man who sent the letter, so he put five hundred dollars into the envelope and returned it to the sender.

The man needed another thousand dollars sometime later, so he wrote another letter to Hakadosh Baruch. The mailman opened the letter to see what it said this time.

He read, "Thank you, Ribono Shel Olam, for your kindness and sending me the money I asked for. Now I need another thousand dollars. But please don't send the money with the post office because it seems that someone at the post office opens the letters and takes out half of the money!"

This man believed that whatever he got came from Hashem, and on that point, he was correct. However, we also must believe that when we lack money, that is also from Hashem. When someone takes away our money or part of our money, ultimately, that was also part of Hashem's plan.

Motel Kapolowitz was a Slonimer chasid who lived in Baranovitz. He worked as a plumber, but he was poor. There was a time when he didn't have work for a couple of weeks and didn't have food for Shabbos.

Thursday night, he sat in beis medresh for some hours, hoping that someone would invite his family over for Shabbos, but no one invited him. Midnight came, and he moaned and said, "Ribono shel Olam! If it is Your will that my wife, six children, and myself should be hungry this Shabbos, I accept your decree and am happy with it." Then he fell asleep. In the morning, someone woke him up and said, "The main pipe of the mikvah broke. Please fix it." - He was paid well for this job and had parnassah for Shabbos and the next two weeks.

The Nesivos Shalom zt'l repeated this story and added that Reb Motel Kapolovitz's krechtz could break the pipes in Baranovitz!

The Divrei Shmuel zt'l writes that when the **Or HaChaim zt'l** lived in Morocco, he advised his community that it was sufficient to work on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday and spend the rest of the week studying Torah. He assured them that they wouldn't lose parnassah due to this arrangement.

They followed the Or HaChaim's counsel and saw they weren't losing money. Their parnassah was the same as before. The Or HaChaim moved to Yerushalayim, and the people in Morocco gradually went back to working the entire week. Even so, they testified that they weren't earning any more money than before, when they had worked half a week.



Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

Emunah (faith in Hashem) and Bitachon (reliance upon Hashem) are similar concepts, but there is a way to differentiate them:

A person who possesses Emunah also has bitachon – but a person without bitachon – has no Emunah."

~ Rabbi Aharon of Stroshlah.

Eisav's Precious Hunting Clothes

"And Rivkah took the precious (desired) garments of Eisav her big son" (27:15).

Eisav desired these clothes from Nimrod, and they were precious since they had life-like pictures of all the wild animals and birds in the world painted on them. And when he wore them in the field, all the wild animals and birds were attracted to him, enabling him to catch them with ease.

The question arises, asks the **Da'as Zekeinim**, as to why Rivkah dressed Ya'akov in them?

He explains in reply, that Rivkah wanted Ya'akov to resemble Eisav as much as possible (to impersonate his brother flawlessly).

Before I pray, I pray that I should pray during my prayers. ~ The Divrei Chaim of Sanz.

The Voice of Ya'akov

הַקֹּל֙ קוֹל יַעֲקֹ֔ב וְהַיָּדַ֖יִם יְדֵ֣י עֵשָׂ֑ו ***"The voice is the voice of Ya'akov, and the hands are the hands of Eisav***" (27:22).

Notice that the first 'voice' ("ha'Kol") is spelt without a 'Vav'. The Pasuk can then be translated to mean that when the voice of Ya'akov is weak (they are not Davenning and/or are not learning), that is when the hands are the hands of Eisav (**Rosh**).

Conversely, when we Daven and learn Torah the way we should, then Eisav has no power over us.

The hands, the **Da'as Zekeinim** explains, can only operate as far as they can reach, in which case the damage they are able to wreak is limited. The mouth on the other hand, reaches much further afield than the hands. And so it is, Yisrael's Tefilos penetrate the Heaven; they have the power to keep the evil at bay, even when it is far away.

Ten B'rachos

וְיִתֶּן־לְךָ֙ הָאֱלֹקִ֔ים מִטַּ֖ל הַשָּׁמַ֑יִם וּמִשְׁמַנֵּ֣י הָאָ֔רֶץ וְרֹ֖ב דָּגָ֥ן וְתִירֹֽשׁ ***"And may G-d give you from the dew of the Heaven and from the fat of the earth*** … " (27:28).

This Pasuk contains ten blessings, says the **Da'as Zekeinim**, corresponding to the ten commands with which Hashem created the world and to the Aseres ha'Dibros.

All in all, Ya'akov is blessed seven times in the Torah, and so is Avraham, corresponding to seven Yamim-Tovim (Shabbos, Pesach, Shavu'os, Rosh-Hashanah, Yom Kipur, Succos & Shemini Atzeres) and the seven stars that serve the sun and the moon, and the seven that don't (called 'K'sil'), and the seven stars of Kimah, which signal the time to sow when they set, and to reap when they rise.

Hiding in the Shadows

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כִּלָּה יִצְחָק לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיְהִי אַךְ יָצֹא יָצָא יַעֲקֹב מֵאֵת פְּנֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו וְעֵשָׂו אָחִיו בָּא מִצֵּידוֹ ***"And it was … Ya'akov had just left his father's presence when Eisav arrived from his hunt***" (27:30).

As the one entered, says the **Da'as Zekeinim**, the other left.

What happened, they explain, was that although Ya'akov saw Eisav as he (Eisav) opened the flap of the tent and entered from the bright exterior, Eisav could not see Ya'akov, who was in the dark tent, when Eisav entered. So Ya'akov was able to slip out undetected.

Eisav's Mitzvah

וַיִּשְׂטֹם עֵשָׂו אֶת־יַעֲקֹב עַל־הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרֲכוֹ אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו בְּלִבּוֹ יִקְרְבוּ יְמֵי אֵבֶל אָבִי וְאַהַרְגָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב אָחִי ***"Let the days of mourning for my father arrive, and I will kill my brother"*** (27:41).

That is how both Targum Unklus and Targum Yonasan translate the Pasuk.

According to the **Da'as Zekeinim**, what Eisav was saying was "***If I kill my brother, I will hasten the days of mourning for my father***" (i.e. his death). That's why he held back from murdering Ya'akov, in keeping with the Mitzvah of Kibud Av which was Eisav's strong point.

Eisav = Shalom

The Gematriyah of 'Eisav' is equivalent to that of 'Shalom', comments the **Rosh**. Were it not for that, there is not a person who would be able to stand up to him (he would destroy the entire world).

Perhaps, one may add, Eisav is the tool that G-d uses to bring us back to Him, and that in turn, leads to peace.



וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ... וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' *Yitzchak entreated Hashem opposite his wife… Hashem allowed Himself to be entreated by him*. (25:21)

The implication of the masculine singular form is that Hashem responded to Yitzchak's prayer – rather than to Rivkah's. Chazal (Yevamos 64a) teach that one cannot compare the prayer offered by a tzaddik ben tzaddik, righteous person, the son of a righteous person, (Yitzchak Avinu) to the prayer entreated by a tzaddik ben rasha (Rivkah Imeinu).

Thus, Hashem listened to Yitzchak. This concept is most efficacious when each individual supplicant is praying for himself personally. Yitzchak and Rivkah were both praying for the same thing: offspring. Why would Yitzchak's prayer find greater acceptance than Rivkah's?

Horav Meir Shapiro, zl, explains that Yitzchak, having been raised in the home of Avraham Avinu and Sarah Imeinu, lived in a spiritual environment in which he was not exposed to evil of any sort. His parents were paragons of virtue, his home a sanctuary.

Thus, when he prayed for children, he did not add "good" children, because he did not know the meaning of bad. Rivkah, on the other hand, was acutely aware of bad and evil, having grown up with a father like Besuel and a brother like Lavan. When she prayed, she stipulated "good" children. This is why Hashem listened to Yitzchak's entreaty over hers.

Since Yitzchak did not specify the kind of child he wanted, Hashem gave him two sons – Yaakov and Eisav. This is what is meant by the idea that Hashem responded to Yitzchak. Had He listened to Rivkah's prayer, Eisav would not have existed. Since unfortunately

we require Eisav and his descendants to keep us in line, Hashem listened to the tzaddik ben tzaddik.

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ

וַיֶּעְתַּר: הִרְבָּה וְהִפְצִיר בִּתְפִלָּה (רש"י)

After 20 childless years of marriage, Yitzchok and Rivkah petitioned and beseeched Hashem to give them children. Rashi explains that they didn't pray as one would typically pray, but rather they entreated Hashem repeatedly and with tremendous fervor before they were finally answered. What was Hashem's rationale for making them endure such intense and prolonged suffering? Why didn't He answer their prayers immediately?

Rav Meir Shapiro and Rav Elyashiv note that Rashi writes (25:30) that Avrohom died five years prematurely so that he wouldn't have to endure the pain of seeing his grandson Eisav commit terrible sins. Recognizing that this would occur made it incredibly difficult for Hashem to answer the prayers of Yitzchok and Rivkah.

Hashem understood that the sooner He would give them the children for which they were pleading, the sooner Eisav would embark upon his path of wickedness, and the sooner His beloved Avrohom would have to die to be spared the anguish of witnessing Eisav's actions.

Therefore, Hashem put off answering the heartfelt pleas of Yitzchok and Rivkah until they prayed repeatedly with so much intent that He was "forced" to grant their request.

Rav Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld suggests that this explanation is alluded to by the fact that **וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה'** – ***and Hashem was entreated by Yitzchok*** – has the same numerical value (748) as **חמש שנים** – five years!

Many times in life we are convinced that we need something for the sake of our happiness and well-being. We pray and cry and pray again, eventually becoming frustrated at Hashem's apparent cruelty in ignoring or rejecting what we feel are heartfelt and reasonable requests.

At such times, we should remind ourselves of this lesson and take comfort in the knowledge that sometimes Hashem, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, recognizes that what we are firmly convinced we need and deserve may in reality not be in our own long-term best interest.

וַיֵּצֵא הָרִאשׁוֹן אַדְמוֹנִי כֻּלּוֹ כְּאַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו. וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וְיָדוֹ אֹחֶזֶת בַּעֲקֵב עֵשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב

The Medrash relates (Yalkut Shimoni 111) that when they were still yet unborn, Yaakov told his twin brother Eisav that Hashem created two worlds, the physical world in which we live and the spiritual World to Come. The physical world is full of eating, drinking, doing business, getting married, and having children, none of which may be enjoyed in the World to Come.

Yaakov offered to divide the two worlds, with Eisav taking the physical world and Yaakov receiving the spiritual world, an offer to which Eisav was only too happy to agree.

In **מה ידידות**, one of the songs traditionally sung on Friday night, we eloquently describe the wonderful delicacies and pleasures of this world, such as fattened chickens and sweet wines, which we enjoy at the Shabbos meal. Curiously, after relating the mouth-watering treats associated with Shabbos, we confidently declare **נחלת יעקב יירש** – one who properly honors Shabbos in this fashion will inherit the portion of Yaakov.

Isn't Yaakov's share that of the spiritual World to Come? Although Shabbos indeed offers delectable enjoyments, isn't it dishonest to associate these physical pleasures with Yaakov?

Rav Moshe Wolfson suggests that the author of this song answers this question himself just a few stanzas later, when we proclaim **מעין עולם הבא יום שבת מנוחה** – the restful day of Shabbos is itself so spiritual that it represents a microcosm of the World to Come.

As we enjoy the Shabbos delicacies at our meals, we should appreciate and give thanks for this weekly opportunity to enjoy a small taste of the tremendous reward waiting for us – Yaakov's descendants – in the World to Come!

Parsha Points to Ponder

Rashi writes **אָבִיו קָרָא לוֹ יַעֲקֹב עַל שֵׁם אֲחִיזַת הָעָקֵב** (25:26) that Yaakov came out of his mother's womb holding Eisav's heel. In what way did this demonstrate his righteousness even at such a young age?

The Paneiach Raza explains that Yaakov knew how difficult giving birth is for a woman, and the birth of twins all the more so. As a result, he came out holding Eisav's heel, as he reasoned that once Rivkah's was giving birth, he would come out as well at the same time to make it as easy as possible for her.

People were praising a certain person before the Chazon Ish zt'l. They said, "He doesn't have a yetzer hara!"

The Chazon Ish replied, "Then you have made him a baal mum (an imperfect person)." There should be a yetzer hara, which makes our avodas Hashem precious to Hashem.

"One shouldn't be stingy with kind words. Words don't cost money, and they do so much to encourage a fellow man." ~ R' Elimelech Biderman, Shlita.

When Eliezer originally met Rivkah by the well, the Torah refers to her (24:16) as **טובת מראה מאוד** – ***very pretty***. When she moved with Yitzchok to Gerar, she is described (26:7) merely as **טובת מראה** – ***pretty***.

What happened that caused her to lose some of her good looks?

The Chizkuni writes that although Rivkah was initially described as very pretty, at this point she had given birth and was no longer considered as attractive as she had been prior to her pregnancy.



What legal right did Rivkah have to give Eisav's precious garments, which he entrusted to her for safekeeping, to Yaakov (Rashi 27:15) so that Yaakov could trick Yitzchok into thinking that he was really Eisav?

The Chasam Sofer cites the ruling of the Gemora (Bava Metzia 12b) that as long as a child depends on his father for his material needs, he is considered a minor for the purpose of acquiring possessions. As such, all of Eisav's possessions, including his clothing, belonged to Yitzchok, and Rivkah was permitted to lend them to Yaakov.

Rav Eliyahu ibn Chaim suggests that because Rivkah was prophetically told that she would give birth to twins and the older son would serve the younger (25:23), Eisav was legally considered Yaakov's servant and all of his possessions belonged to Yaakov, who was therefore entitled to wear his clothing.

The Chavatzeles HaSharon notes that the Yerushalmi (Megillah 1:11) explains that Eisav's precious garments were the ones that were worn when bringing offerings, so when Yaakov bought the birthright from Eisav, the clothes became part of the package and now legally belonged to him.

Rav Shalom Schwadron answers that the **Daas Z'keinim** (25:30) writes that Eisav took these clothes from Nimrod, whom he was able to kill based on advice that he received from Yaakov. Since the

clothes were obtained with Yaakov's assistance, he was entitled to wear them.

The Ma'adanei Asher cites the ruling of the **Taz** (Yoreh Deah 120:11) that a guardian may use objects deposited with him for safekeeping by non-Jews if he doesn't damage the item and the owner won't find out, as this is not considered stealing.

Why did Yaakov bring his father wine to drink (27:25) when his mother only commanded him (27:17) to give him bread and meat, and from where did he get the wine?

The Chizkuni explains that Yaakov's goal was for the alcohol to slightly confuse his father so that he wouldn't pay so much attention to determining his true identity.

The Tosefes Bracha suggests that the wine was for reasons of health, as the Gemora in Shabbos (41a) teaches that it is unhealthy to eat without drinking.

The Torah L'Daas suggests that if the meat was from the Korban Pesach (Rashi 27:9), then Yitzchok needed wine for the four cups that are consumed during the Seder.

Alternatively, just as many mitzvos are done with a glass of wine, Yaakov reasoned that so too the blessings he would receive from his father should be given with a glass of wine.

As for where Yaakov got the wine from, the **Daas Z'keinim** writes that the angel Michoel brought it to him from Gan Eden (perhaps that was the aroma of Gan Eden that Yitzchok smelled when Yaakov entered the room – Rashi 27:27).

How can a person be sad when he knows he has a Heavenly Father? ~ R' Yoself Leib Bloch zt"l

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Queens

But It Was Only A Cat!

A cat entered the home of **Rabbi Moshe Pizitcher** and snatched some food from the table. One of his granddaughters chased the cat out of the house and added some curses for good measure.



Rav Moshe scolded her strongly. She couldn't understand the rebuke since it was only said to a cat.

Rav Moshe explained, "True, but you have defiled your mouth." (Love Your Neighbor by Rabi Zelig Pliskin)

Our forefather Yitzchok had aged and was blind. Before he died, he wanted to bless his firstborn son, Esav. Yitzchok asked Esav to hunt an animal and prepare a meal for him and afterwards, Yitzchok would give Esav a significant blessing for posterity.

Our Matriarch Rivkah knew prophetically that the blessings were supposed to go to Yaakov and not to Esav. We also know that Yaakov had purchased, from Esav, the rights to the firstborn. Accordingly, Rivkah told Yaakov that she would prepare a meal for him to bring to Yitzchok, after which he would go to receive the blessings.

Yaakov voiced a concern to his mother that his skin was smooth while Esav's skin was hairy. Yaakov feared that Yitzchok would realize that he was not Esav and would curse him instead of blessing him. Rivkah said that he should not be concerned.

Targum Onkelos (Bereishis 27:13) explains that Rivkah told Yaakov that she had a prophecy that he would not be cursed. She put goatskins on Yaakov's arms and neck so that he would feel hairy to the touch and then escorted Yaakov to the door of Yitzchok's tent.

Yaakov went inside and told his father to "PLEASE get up." (27:19) **The Radak** (27:20) says that there was something in Yaakov's voice that aroused Yitzchok's suspicion that he was not Esav. Perhaps it was the polite and gentle way that Yaakov spoke to his father. Therefore, Yitzchok asked Yaakov how he was able to return so speedily after "hunting" an animal and preparing a meal (27:20). To which Yaakov replied, "Because Hashem, your G-d, arranged it for me". - Yaakov said that it was BECAUSE OF HASHEM.

The Alshich (27:21) says that at this point, Yitzchok became very suspicious that the person standing in front of him was Yaakov and not Esav. Rashi (27:24) says that Yitzchok said to himself, "***It is not Esav's way to mention the name of Hashem so readily***."

Yitzchok asked the person in front of him to come closer so that he could feel his arms to see if they were hairy, like Esav or smooth like Yaakov.

When Yaakov came closer, Yitzchok smelled the aroma of Gan Eden (Rashi 27:24). Whereupon he gave Yaakov the blessings.

Yaakov's actions are puzzling. He tried so hard to make it appear that he was Esav. He was concerned lest Yitzchok curse him had he realized that he was not Esav. Why would Yaakov jeopardize everything by speaking in a way that was unlike the way Esav would speak? Why would Yaakov say, "Please" and why would he invoke Hashem's name for the reason for his success, if that is NOT how Esav would speak?!

Yaakov left after receiving the blessings. As soon as he left, in walked Esav. Esav had hunted an animal and prepared a meal for

Yitzchok. As he approached his father, he said, "***Let my father arise***". (27:31)

Rabbeinu Bachya points out that Yaakov had said to his father, "***Rise up please and sit***." Yaakov had addressed his father with sensitivity and respect. Esav, by contrast, ordered his father to rise by saying: "***Let my father arise***". He did not even ask him to be seated.

Esav was known for the respect that he gave his father. He was the paradigm of showing respect. The Midrash says (Bereishis Rabba 65:16) that Esav honored his father 100 times more than the great sage, Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel. Esav even wore his best clothes when he served his father.

Rabbi Alter Henach Leibowitz zt"l (quoted in Chidushei Lev by Rabbi Binyomin Luban) asks that if Esav was on such a high level of respecting his father, why didn't he speak softly and respectfully to him? Why did he say in a harsh tone, "***Let my father get up***"? Especially at this time, Esav should have spoken more respectfully since he wanted the blessings from his father!

Rabbi Leibowitz zt"l answers that this is the way Esav was accustomed to speak to others in the marketplace. He was so used to speaking this way that he couldn't change it, even when speaking to his father. It was so much a part of him. Even had he wanted, with all his heart, to speak to his father respectfully, he would have been unable to do so! It was too much a part of his essence. Esav was able to change his clothes, but he was not able to change his speech.

Similarly, if one has bad character traits, it is so difficult to separate from them, even for one's own benefit. One must work very hard, using Mussar sefarim as guides, to try to uproot any bad character traits that he has.

With this in mind, we can answer our first question. Yaakov had such good middos ingrained within him that he was unable to change them even when attempting to appear as Esav. Yaakov was unable to talk

harshly to his father and when asked, he automatically attributed his quickness to Hashem.

The way we talk to others becomes a part of us. That is the way we will talk to everyone. We should always be careful to create the habit of always speaking nicely and respectfully to everyone.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ואלה תולדת יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק ... (כה-יט)

One mitzvah leads to another - a story of השגחה פרטית.

Chazal tell us that the "*Toldos*" of a *tzaddik* are his good deeds. What one does in this world will truly be his descendants, for a person's good deeds truly shape his eternity.

The following story began seven months ago, but the "*Toldos*" are forever:

A *chareidi* man from *Bnei Brak* pulled up to a gas station in central Israel to fill up his car. He saw a secular man looking very troubled. He went over to him and asked, "*Achi*, my brother, you look like something is wrong, is there any way I can help you?"

The irreligious man looked curiously at the man with beard and *peyos* offering his help. He was quite desperate and so he said, "My car has no gas and I barely managed to make it here, but I left my credit card at home and I have no money on me."

The *frum Yid* from *Bnei Brak* smiled and said, "Is that it? No problem, I will fill up your car."

The man was relieved, and he said, "Please give me your information so I can pay you back." To which the *chareidi* man answered, "Oh no! This is my *mitzvah*, don't take it away from me!" He refused to even consider accepting remuneration.

The irreligious man looked at him incredulously and said, "My friend, I come from a *Moshav* down south called *Kibbutz Be'eri*. People there say all kinds of things about *chareidim* and people like you, but I see that it is not true!"

They exchanged phone numbers and the man from *Bnei Brak* promised to keep in touch. The *Kibbutznik* was moved, but did not believe he would ever hear from that "*dos*" again.

On *Erev Shabbos*, the man from *Bnei Brak* called the non-religious fellow and said, "I just wanted to say hello and wish you a good *Shabbos*!" - Each *Erev Shabbos*, for six months straight, he would pick up the phone and reconnect with his *chiloni* friend from Be'eri, always ending off with, "Have a good *Shabbos*!"

Finally, after a few months, the *chiloni* said to his friend, "You keep wishing me a good *Shabbos*, but honestly I have no idea what *Shabbos* is all about. I know nothing at all about *Shabbos*. Can you teach me what it is?"

"Of course!" answered the delighted *chareidi* man. "But I don't think that I can explain to you over the phone what *Shabbos* is. The only way to understand *Shabbos*, to really appreciate a *Shabbos*, is by experiencing one! Maybe you and your family would come to me for *Shabbos* and then you will see what it is all about!"

The man laughed and he said, "I will think about it!" But every week when he asked him again, he would say, "Maybe ... but not this week!" Week after week, there was always a reason or excuse why they couldn't come from Be'eri to *Bnei Brak* for *Shabbos*.

Finally, a few weeks into *Chodesh Elul*, the *chiloni* from Be'eri decided that it was time to see what *Shabbos* was all about and he finally agreed to come!

The *Bnei Brak* family felt that although *Rosh Hashana* was coming up shortly, that would probably not be appropriate for his guests from a non-religious *kibbutz*, nor would *Yom Kippur* or *Sukkos*. He said to

himself, "*Simchas Torah* would be the perfect time to host this completely secular family. The singing and dancing with the *Torah* would truly be inspiring." He invited them for *Simchas Torah* and they agreed to come. (In Israel, *Yom Tov* is one day.)

A few days before *Yom Tov*, the *chareidi* man's father, who lived in the city of Sderot, also in the south, called his son and said, "I want you and the whole family to come for *Simchas Torah*. It is hard for me to be here alone, and I need you to come."

The man said to his father, "*Abba*, I would love to come but I cannot. You see, I invited a *chiloni* family from *Kibbutz Be'eri* for *Simchas Torah* and I cannot cancel now and tell them not to come. Why don't you come to me?"

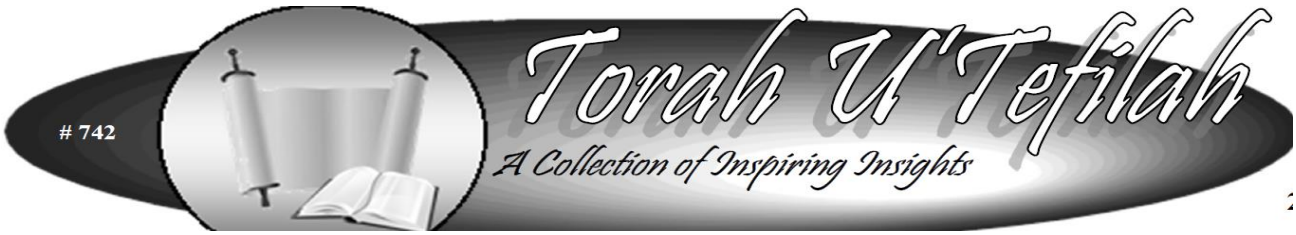
His father refused and insisted that honoring parents precedes inviting guests and therefore he must come to Sderot for *Simchas Torah*.

The man hung up the phone and was in a real quandary. What should he do? He decided to call up his *Rav, Rabbi* **Haim Zaid Shlita** and ask a *shaila*.

His *Rav* told him, "Your father must come to you! There is no question about it! Give me his number and I will call him!"

The *Rav* called the man's father and convinced him to leave his home in Sderot and come to *Bnei Brak* for *Simchas Torah.*

That day, the Hamas terrorist attack in southern Israel that shook the entire world, decimated *Kibbutz Be'eri*, leaving very few survivors! And so, three families were saved because of the good deed that one man from *Bnei Brak* did when he met a fellow Jew at a gas station. Indeed, the "*Toldos*" of this incredible story will surely carry on for many generations to come.



Besamei HaTorah by: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִמּוֹ עָלַי קִלְלָתְךָ בְּנִי His mother said to him: "***Your curse shall be on me, my son***" (27:13)

The simple reading of the Pasuk is that Rivka told Yaakov that Yitzchak would not curse him. Then the Torah should have written '**לא יקללך** – '***he will not curse you***'. Why does it state 'your curse will be **עלי** – ***on me?***'

The Vilna Gaon explains that Rivka wanted to assure Yaakov that certainly nothing bad will happen from his father since she knew that Yaakov would only be troubled in his life with three things: **עשו, לבן ויוסף**, and she hinted this to him with the word **עלי** – that only these bad things will happen to you. Therefore, even if Yitzchak finds out that you are Yaakov, nothing bad will happen. (**Mesukim Midvash**)

Parshah Thoughts - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

When Rivka came near places of holiness Yaakov would attempt to escape the womb (Bereishis Rabbah 63:6). Why was Yaakov trying to do this? Didn't he realize that this was impossible?!

The Divrei Yisroel of Modzhitz answers that Yaakov understood that it is his responsibility to just try, and whether his goal would be accomplished or not, was beyond his control. Everything is in Hashem's control, and He must allow results to come about, if that is His will. Yaakov understood that he just had to try! In life, it is also our job to just try, and the rest is up to Hashem!

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages



In the city of Mir, the Mir Yeshivah once did not have any money to buy food for the Bachurim. The Rosh Yeshivah, **Rav Leizer Yehuda Finkel, zt"l**, took his fur coat that he had received for his wedding, and gave it to the financial director of the Yeshivah. He told him to sell it and use the money to buy food for the Bachurim.

The administrator refused and said that the Rosh Yeshivah could get sick in the cold winter and he needed his coat, but the Rosh Yeshivah insisted that he sell it. He said, "When the Bachurim are hungry, I am cold even with the coat. But when the Bachurim have enough food, then I am warm, even without a coat!"

The Siddur Speaks

Rav Shai Graucher related a story. When **Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky, z"l**, was about 14 years old, she noticed that her father, **Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l**, would continue Davening for an exceedingly long time after taking three steps back at the end of his Shemoneh Esrei.

She asked him for an explanation to this, and he told her that before saying the standard 'Yehi Ratzon' at the end of Shemoneh Esrei, he said Perek 121 from Tehilim, " **שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֶשָּׂא עֵינַי אֶל־הֶהָרִים מֵאַיִן יָבֹא עֶזְרִי**. He explained that this was a Segulah from his grandfather, the **Leshem**, a noted Mekubal.

The Rebbetzin began to follow this practice as well, although she did not know what exactly it was a Segulah for.

"Many years passed," she said, "and my son-in-law told me an interesting story:

In Yeshivas Chevron, there was a group of 20 Bachurim who had not yet been successful in Shidduchim for a number of years. One day, it was brought to their attention that there is a little-known Sefer called Asarah Ma'amaros from the Rama MiFano (Ma'amar Chikur Din, Part IV, Ch. 17) that says that reciting this Perek of Tehilim at the conclusion of Shemoneh Esrei is a Segulah for finding one's Shidduch. - They started doing this practice, and incredibly, within two months, each of them was engaged!"

The Rebbetzin concluded, "When I heard this story, I realized that this Segulah that I had also adopted, was likely a reason in the Brachos we enjoyed in being able to marry off each off our children at a young age!"

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

Rav Yisroel Salanter, zt"l, the father of the Mussar Movement, would often explain to his Talmidim, "One can have perfect Middos without Mussar, but one cannot change Middos without Mussar!"

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, zt"l, would take this idea one step further and say, "Learning Mussar shouts, 'Change!' But without learning Mussar, one may never even realize the need to change!"

"Just as one is punished for speaking bad words, so is one punished for the good words he could have said but refrained from saying them." ~ Zohar.

L'Maaseh

Rav Ephraim Wachsman related a story: I was a little boy when this incident happened, and it left a life-long impression on me.

My father was the Rav in a town in Europe. I remember one Shabbos, when someone was knocking loudly and persistently on our door. My father, thinking it was a life and death emergency, ran to open it.

We saw one of the people in the community standing at the door, looking very agitated. He came in and told my father, "I need to tell the Rav about a terrible Chilul Hashem that is happening in town. You know that store on the main street, located right in the center of town? Well, the owner has opened his store on Shabbos! I came to ask the Rav to please do something, to please put a stop to this tremendous Chilul Hashem!"

My father took me by the hand and ran to the center of town. I could barely keep up with him. We saw the store open, and my father's face fell. My father told me to go into the store, and tell the owner that the Rav wanted to speak to him privately, upstairs in his home, as the owner lived on top of the store. I understood that my father did not want to shame the store owner publicly.

I was very hesitant, but I knew it was important, and I walked right into the store. I managed to say, "Excuse me, I would like to give you a message from my father, the Rav,"

My confidence grew as I continued, "The Rav asked if he could speak to you for a few moments, upstairs in your home." I could see the person fidgeting, obviously uncomfortable at being "caught in the act."

The man went upstairs, and I ran outside to tell my father to knock on the entrance to the man's home. I went in with my father, and we sat together at the store owner's table. Before anyone said a word, my father burst into tears.

I was confused. Why was my father crying? The store owner should have been crying!

When my father composed himself, he said, "What kind of a Rav am I, if someone in the community is suffering and struggling with earning a livelihood so severely, that he has no other option but to open his store on Shabbos?! What kind of Rav am I if I didn't know what he was going through? How will I answer for that after 120 years on my Day of Judgment?"

I would have never thought of it the way my father did! My father was able to put himself into the store owner's place and offer a gentle rebuke by validating his circumstances and feelings. He judged him favorably in a most sensitive way.

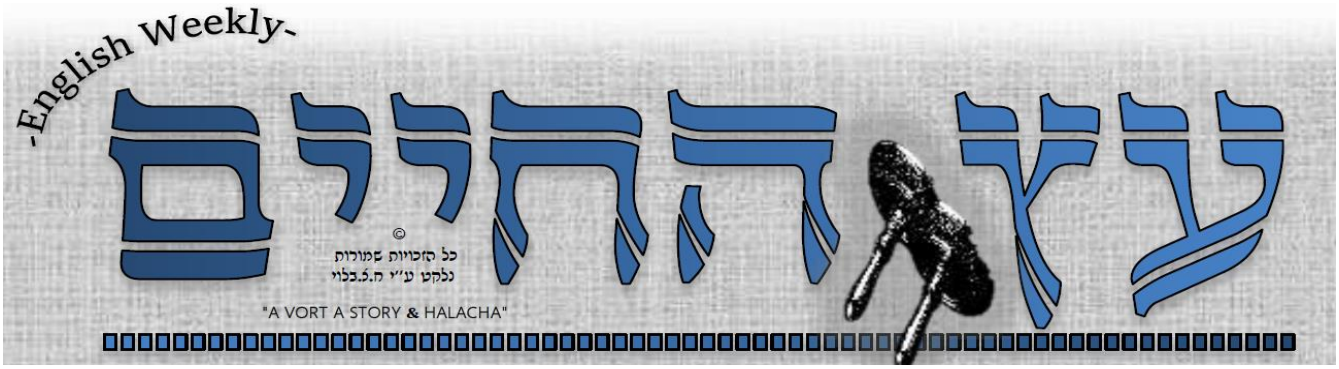
After that, the store owner burst into tears, sharing that what the Rav stated was exactly the case!

My father then gently explained that money earned through Chilul Shabbos would not bring him any Brachah, and the man was convinced to close his store.

He never again opened his store on Shabbos!

A Rosh Yeshiva said he saw a sefer on hilchos Shabbos for children. It taught the 39 malachos, everything that is prohibited on Shabbos.

This Rosh Yeshiva commented that he would have preferred that the first few pages of the sefer describe the mitzvah of oneg Shabbos and our pleasure on Shabbos. Children shouldn't view Shabbos as a day of restrictions but instead as a day of pleasure and joy. And then they should study the restrictions. ~ R' Elimelech Biderman, Shlita.



Rav Shimon Epstien זצ"ל never took money to do a bris besides for one exception. One **מוצאי שבת** after **מעריב** in the Lakewood Yeshiva, Rav Mottel Mozes came over to Rav Shimon Epstien **זצ"ל** and said, "**ר' שמעון**, I need a favor. I have a **ברית** in Deal which is going to take up my entire morning tomorrow, and I won't be able to accommodate a family that I promised to do a bris for in Highland Park, NJ. Can you please cover for me tomorrow morning?"

His first response as always was, "Sure! No problem!" But as he was walking away, he realized that 'tomorrow' was visiting day, and he already promised his wife to take her to the Catskill Mountains to visit the children in Camp Bais Yaakov.

He told R' Mottel, "I have to discuss it with my wife and if she's **מסכים** to wait, I'll do it on my way up to the country." - Of course, his wife happily agreed!

As Rav Shimon got into the van after the **ברית**, his wife saw an envelope! She was surprised to learn that there was a substantial sum of money inside!

"But I thought you never take money for **מצוות**?" She asked! She knew he had a **חשבון**, but couldn't wait to hear it.

He explained, "I had no choice but to take it! If I didn't take it, these people would think that the **דרך העולם** is not to take money for a **ברית** and the 'other **מוהל**' is a crook! So in order that no '**חילול ה**' should come out of this **מצוה**, I had no choice but to accept!"

Rav Elya Lopian

Once a chicken knocked over a cup in his home and his mother said nothing. Later on, he too, knocked over a cup and his mother yelled at him for not being responsible.

"First I thought to myself that it is **כדאי** to be a chicken, however when I saw the chicken being slaughtered and served for dinner, I decided that even though it comes with more achrayus, it is still worthwhile to be a human being!"

As frum Jews, it is our responsibility to show the world what it **really** means to be a Jew, and when you act that way, others will do the same! - We as the elite of the world have the achrayos to sanctify the name of Hashem in the gantzeh velt!

זכרו תורת משה

The Bank Manager's Dilemma

A non-religious bank manager in Eretz Yisroel one day decided to become observant of Torah and mitzvos. Already on the first day of his commitment, he faced challenges in fully integrating his decision.

Every morning, the bank provided cake and coffee for all the employees, and as he was starting to eat, he remembered that he couldn't just eat without making a *brachah*. But to do that, he knew he must put on a *yarmulka* (which, at that time, he wasn't wearing), and if someone caught him doing so, they'd fire him!

Just as he was thinking over all this, he noticed on the security cameras a prestigious philanthropist had just come into the bank to put something into his safe deposit box. As he was walking, the bag he was holding ripped open, and out fell his whole collection of priceless gems onto the floor, scattering this way and that.

All the bystanders started bending down to take the "once in a lifetime" opportunity to get their hands on a free, priceless jewel.

Seeing the potential liability on his hands, the bank manager quickly pressed the "control button," which in case of a bank robbery locks all the doors of the bank, effectively sealing everybody in.

When he then looked closer at the scene, he saw the famed philanthropist on the floor gathering all his gems. He had totally lost his regular, dignified demeanour and was on his hands and knees, collecting his gems like everyone else.

The bank manager thought to himself, "Is this really what I'm seeing? That this philanthropist is conducting himself in such a way? It's beneath his dignity to do so!"

But he knew the answer: When there are "diamonds" at risk, you don't play games. You do what you have to do. This man's wealth was at stake, and thus he got to the floor to save his savings.

The manager then understood clearly the message that Hashem was personally sending him, at this challenging time. When you have "diamonds" on the line, no matter what embarrassment you'll undergo, whatever you have to do is worthwhile to get them.

With that, he mustered up the courage to put on a *yarmulka* to make the *brachah*, and was proud to be a Yid!

Yungerleit told the Chidushei HaRim zt'l that they suffer from the yetzer hara, and they wished they didn't have this struggle.

The Chidushei HaRim replied, "If there is no fight or struggle, what purpose is there to your avodas Hashem?"

Every person will find things to worry about. Fortunate is the person who worries about other people, for he will be free of personal worries. ~ R' Eliyahu Meir Bloch zt"l

Unique Mitzvah!



When we think of "expensive articles," we probably think of diamonds or gems, or other things we associate with rich people. The wealthy possess such things, we think, but not simple people. But, in truth, the true "gem" is given to us, the Yidden. We are the ones who have the real gems, while whatever value we attribute to the other type is only artificial and fake.

R' Shlomo Farahi relays an incredible story that brings out this point:

"I have many congregants who, when the need arises, are ready to invest in unique and rare mitzvos that come up. For example, there are times in which a Jew might not be able to afford a proper burial, and I ask my congregants if they would want to partake in the opportunity, and they gladly respond.

"One time, I got a call from a Holocaust survivor who was interested in starting to putting on *tefillin* each day. However, he did not have the money to buy himself a pair, so I informed the people in my community about this special tzedakah opportunity.

"An unusual number of people responded to this particular request. Many people wanted to partake in this rare mitzvah, and the money I received was far greater than what was needed to cover the cost of the *tefillin*. We bought the *tefillin*, made a respectable spread for the occasion, and he started wearing them.

"One week later, I received a call from an individual requesting to participate in buying the *tefillin* for the man who didn't have. To his disappointment, I told him that the *tefillin* had already been purchased, and that everything had been paid for.

"The man on the phone asked if he could be put in contact with one of the donors who might agree to sell their share in the mitzvah, saying that it would mean so much to him to just be able to take part.

"I gave him two of the donors' numbers, hoping that they would agree to sell part of their mitzvah. With that, he contacted them, asking if they'd sell him a share in this mitzvah. But neither of them agreed!

"'I'll pay any amount, even for just a small piece of the mitzvah!' the requester told them, but they were unwilling to relinquish any part, not even for any amount.

"Later, when I asked one of the donors who were contacted why he refused, he told me something amazing. 'I wasn't initially going to say no,' he said. 'But when I saw how he was willing to pay all the money in the world for the *zchus*, I started to feel how *chashuv* it was. Then I started think of the eternity that's awaiting me for this act, and I just couldn't just give that up.'"

When hearing this story, we start feeling the true value of a mitzvah. It's the most valuable thing in the world! The *yetzer hara* makes us forget the immense value that it has, but stories like this reawaken our appreciation of its value. This man wasn't willing to relinquish any part of his mitzvah, not for any money in the world! We too, had we been in this situation, wouldn't give it up either.

After such an experience, we start to rekindle this awareness. Every mitzvah that we do has immeasurable value, overloading us with joy and excitement.

"The Almighty works on every human being in order to make him as perfect as possible. Whatever He may send us, joy and sorrow alike, is merely a means to this end." ~ R' Samson Raphael Hirsch zt"l.





הוא היה אומר

R' Shimon Schwab *zt"l* (Maya'an Beis Hashoeva) would say: **וַתִּקַּח** רִבְקָה אֶת־בִּגְדֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנָהּ הַגָּדֹל (27:15)- Esav was a few moments older and he gets the title *HaGadol*? Why?

Because of his stellar achievement and performance of the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av*, how he ran to fulfil the desire of Yitzchok and how he rushed to dress to properly serve him. For that he was a *'Gadol'* until he identified as a *Rasha*."

משל למה הדבר דומה

קום נא שבה ואכלה מצידי בעבור תברכני נפשך ... (כז-יט)

The *Medrash (Koheles 3:1)* tells of a fascinating incident. One of the prominent men of *Tzipori* made a festive event in honor of the *bris milah* of his son and *Rav Shimon ben Chalafta* came to the event.

At the *bris*, as the father of the boy was giving out aged wine, he pronounced: "*Drink this fine wine, and I trust in (pray to) the Master of Heaven that I will also give you to drink from it at his wedding.*" To which the guests customarily responded, "*Just as you brought him to circumcision, so may you bring him to Torah and to the wedding canopy.*"

Suddenly, Rav Shimon was accosted by an angel. After a quick exchange, the angel revealed himself as the *malach hamaves*, the angel of death. "Why do you look forlorn?" asked Rav Shimon.

The angel answered, "It is from the sound of the harsh words that I hear from people every day."

"What do you refer to?" asked Rav Shimon.

"That baby that you circumcised today," he explained, "I have a document of his fate, which states that I am to take him from this world in thirty days. However, his father gave you to drink and prayed: '*Drink this fine wine as I trust in the Master of Heaven that I will give you to drink of it at his wedding.*'

The prayer pierced the heavens and abrogated the decree. That is what makes me sad!"

This week's *parsha* expounds on the *berachos* that *Yitzchok Avinu* gave to his sons. Although it may seem that the blessings given by Yitzchok are of divine nature and we cannot relate to such a lofty position - the above *Medrash* seems to imply otherwise.

Every blessing, even the simplest one, like a customary blessing naturally given when greeting a *baal simcha*, contains great power.



The Blessing of Good Food

הָבִיאָה לִי צַיִד וַעֲשֵׂה־לִי מַטְעַמִּים

וְאֹכְלָה וַאֲבָרֶכְךָ לִפְנֵי ה' לִפְנֵי מוֹתִי ***Bring me a hunted animal and make for me tasty food and I will eat, and I will bless you before Hashem, before my death.*** (27:7)

Yitzchak Avinu wished to bless his son, so he wanted to first eat good food. Why? What does one thing have to do with the other?

Because when his soul enjoys a tasty meal, and feels good, it will connect to the soul of his son, and the blessing will take effect.

Once I was walking down the street in the town of Dimona, and someone came up to me and said, "The rabbi should please pray for my son," and pushed a twenty-shekel note into my hand.

I took the money, so as not to insult him, and went straight to a corner shop and bought for myself a piece of cake and a soft drink.

After I felt good, thanks to the food and drink, I took out the note with the son's name, and I blessed him and *davened* for him with excitement and energy, from the bottom of my heart.

This is the power of the *mazel tovs* that people offer when they come to the *simchah* of a friend. Since they feel closeness, their blessings have a tremendous power. Everyone who participates in a *kiddush* at *shul,* everyone who eats something at a *chasunah,* and, feeling good, offers his blessing of *mazel tov,* his words have the power to change even the *mazal.* - The *mazal,* the stars in heaven, will change their influence for the good.

True Content

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אָבִיו אָנֹכִי עֵשָׂו בְּכֹרֶךָ ***'Yaakov said to his father, "I am Eisav your firstborn."*** (27:19)

אָנֹכִי הַמֵּבִיא לְךָ וְעֵשָׂו הוּא בְּכוֹרֶךָ ***"I am" the one bringing it to you, and "Eisav is your firstborn***." (*Rashi*)

Yaakov ostensibly made a false claim that he is Eisav the firstborn son. Rashi parses and interprets his words to explain how they can bear a meaning that is true. Yaakov meant, "I am" the one bringing it to you, and "Eisav is your firstborn."

But how does this answer the question? Yaakov still seems to have deceived his father Yitzchak into giving him the blessings under false pretenses. - Yaakov's words were carefully chosen and could be *teitched* to be true, but still, he deliberately led Yitzchak to a false conclusion.

There is no question of false content regarding what *Yaakov Avinu* said, because the blessings really, truly belonged to him, and it was

only right for him to receive them. Yaakov bought the *bechorah,* and that includes the *berachos* of the *bechorah.*

Rashi is not trying to explain how Yaakov was justified in making a false claim to the blessings. There was nothing false at all about Yaakov's claim. However, since Yaakov was such a great *tzaddik,* it can't be that he said something that was even technically incorrect, that could be a *sheker*. Whoever thinks he did is making a mistake.

To this end, Rashi explains that Yaakov's statement was indeed correct even from a technical standpoint. It was perfectly capable of bearing a true meaning.

Sons of Fatima by Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Although the Patriarchs and Matriarchs are entombed in Ma'arat HaMachpela (the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron), for 700 hundred years [1267- 1967], the Muslims did not permit entry to the Jews, claiming that Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov belonged exclusively to them. They gave permission for Jews to ascend only until the seventh step of the outside Eastern stairway leading up to the tomb markers, and no further.

When Israeli forces liberated Hebron, Jerusalem, and other important Jewish sites in the Six-Day War, Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim sent **Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu**, then aged 38, to visit and inspect the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Rachel's Tomb in Beit Lechem (Bethlehem), and the Kotel HaMa'aravi (Western Wall) in Jerusalem.

When they were at the cave, a large group of soldiers entered. This was the first time anyone had been inside after the battles. There were many high-ranking army commanders and numerous soldiers there, among them Yitzhak Rabin, Haim Bar-Lev, and Uzi Narkiss. A number of prominent rabbis were also present.

Some of the soldiers were injured, some were hungry, and most of them were exhausted after days of fighting. They saw the rugs in the cave and lay down, soon falling asleep.

Suddenly, the sheik in charge of the cave, a man named Jibri, came out and started shouting at the commanders and soldiers. "Get out of this cave!" he yelled. "You have no respect for it! We Muslims wash our hands five times when we come here. We take off our shoes and honor this place. But you show no respect whatsoever! Your soldiers are eating here, sleeping here, walking on the rugs with their dirty boots. You have no respect for this place - leave!"

Apparently, he was right. What he said made sense. Everyone was silent… except one. Rabbi Eliyahu, who understood Arabic, as did most of the senior commanders, responded, "Listen to me, Sheik. You know that if a servant comes before the king in soiled clothes or serves him food on a filthy tray in front of all the king's ministers and servants, he will surely be put to death.

"But if the king's son were absent from his mother and father's home for many years, and his father spent many nights worrying about him and his mother crying for him, if that son was to return home after many years, how do you think the king would receive him? What if he simply wandered in without making an appointment? What if he showed up with torn, dusty clothes, and interrupted the king's conference with his ministers, crying, 'Father, I came home?' "What if he approached his mother, the queen, calling, 'Mother, I'm here'?

His mother and father would surely hug him, loving him, and thanking Hashem with all their heart for his homecoming, even with his ripped, dirty clothes - because he is their son."

Rabbi Eliyahu looked the sheik in the eyes and said, "Avraham is our father, Sarah is our mother. We behave here as though in our own home. You, however, are the 'sons of Fatima,' the children of the maidservant Hagar. You behave as is appropriate for a servant to behave, and we behave as is appropriate for children to behave!"

The sheik turned red with shame. Not only did he have no rejoinder for the rabbi, but he had also been called a "son of Fatima," son of the maidservant.

He was insulted. He turned on the spot and stormed back into his room in a great rage.

The senior commanders there immediately turned to Rabbi Eliyahu, asking in horrified dismay, "Why did you do that? We want to live in peaceful coexistence with the Arabs. Why did you have to upset him? You may have ruined everything!"

Rabbi Eliyahu replied firmly, "You have to tell them the truth. That's the only thing they understand."

The argument continued for a few minutes, until the door of the sheik's room suddenly opened. The sheik exited his room with his head down, approaching Rabbi Eliyahu in deference. "Oh Wise One, oh Master; please forgive me!" he cried out.

Rabbi Eliyahu didn't turn to him or even respond. He simply looked at the commanders and said, "You see what language they understand? I grew up among the Arabs from when I was a young child in the Old City of Jerusalem. Tell the truth and they will understand!"

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Ostraha Zy'a said, "When a Yiddisher man separates the threads of the tzitzis in preparation of putting on his tallis, Angels and Seraphim gather, and they say, "Behold, this Yid is about to make the bracha of להתעטף בציצית.

Just as when a musician is preparing the strings of his fiddle before playing, the boys excitedly gather around him, saying that he is about to play.

L' Maaseh...

One night, just before maariv, someone approached **Rav Dovid Feinstein zt"l** with a lengthy and complex question. The person let him know in no uncertain terms that it was going to take several minutes to ask, and in all likelihood, would have to start over again if interrupted. Yet, R' Dovid told him that there is one more minute before maariv, so he should start asking.

As expected, about 60 seconds later, the chazan began maariv, and the man had to save his question for later.

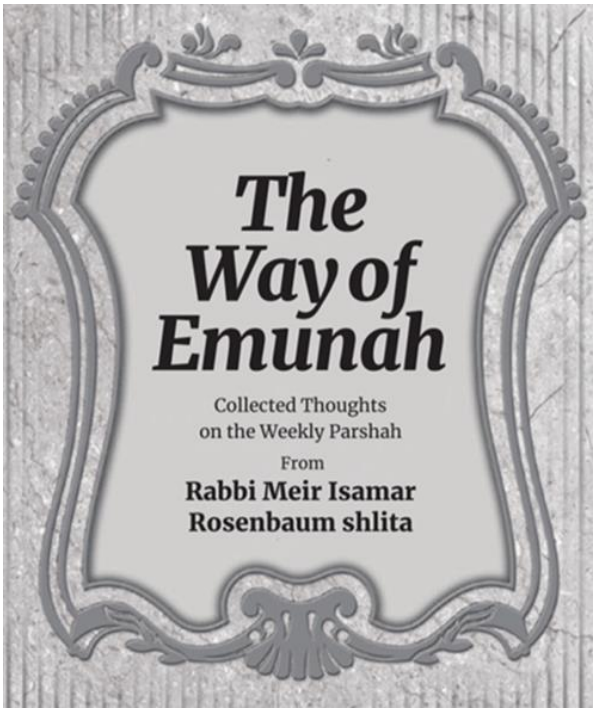
After maariv, he approached the Rosh Yeshiva once again and started over from the beginning. R' Dovid heard the question and answered his question, directing him in how to deal with the situation, but the man was still curious why R' Dovid had told him to start his question before maariv if he knew full well that he would have to start over again.

He asked him and was completely surprised by the answer:

Rav Dovid explained that since he was about to daven maariv, he wanted to have extra kavana when saying ***'atah chonein l'adam daas'***; - knowing a bit of the question, he explained would help him daven to have proper clarity when answering the question after maariv!

R' Yitzchok Meltzin never got angry at another person. If someone insulted him, he always ignored it. He said, "It is wrong to insult someone and if this person did so, it is because he lacks the necessary understanding. Why should I be angry at someone for his ignorance?" ~ Tnuas Hamussar.

There are no problems in life, only challenges. R' Moshe Menora zt"l



Torah With Derech Eretz

וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב Yitzchok loved Esav because he trapped with his mouth and Rivkah loved Yaakov. (25:28)

Rashi explains that Esav tricked his father with his words. He fooled Yitzchok into thinking he was a tzadik by asking him questions like how to take ma'aser on wheat and salt.

The Chiddushei Harim zy"a notes that this is hard to understand. Even it was true that Esav took ma'aser on wheat, would that make Yitzchok love him more than Yaakov, who spent all his days learning Torah?

He answers that Yitzchok considered Yaakov to be "temimiusdig". He thought that he was a simple person who learned Torah all day but was unconnected to worldly affairs. Esav, on the other hand, portrayed himself a clever, worldly merchant, who interacted with the world but was still an upright, pious person.

Yitzchok valued Esav's mitzvos more because he was out in the world, where he faced many challenges, and still acted as if he remained a tzadik. He considered his mitzvos more valuable than Yaakov's because Yaakov was not out in the world and had never been faced with these challenges.

After Yitzchok gave the brachos to Yaakov, however, and he heard from Esav how Yaakov had tricked him, he saw that even though Yaakov sat and learned in his tent all day, he still was cleverer than Esav. He saw that he did understand the world. Therefore, he concluded that Yaakov deserved the brachos.

Hashem Blessed Him for Doing His Part

וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק בָּאָרֶץ הַהִוא וַיִּמְצָא בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִוא מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ ה׳ ***And Yitzchok sowed in that land, and he found in that year a hundred fold, and Hashem blessed him***. (26:12)

Sefer Bais Yitzchok writes that we see from this pasuk that even though Yitzchok was already very wealthy – to the extent that it was said that the fertilizer from the donkeys of Yitzchok was worth more than the silver and gold of Avimelech! – and even though he was only residing in this land temporarily, he still continued to work. He planted the land and did his hishtadlus, and he was granted success by finding "100 gates" of crops.

The pasuk says that וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ ה׳ -"***Hashem blessed him***." He explains this to mean that Hashem blessed him because he did his part. - This teaches us that a person must do his hishtadlus and Hashem will then bless whatever he does and grant him success.

Hashem wanted Yitzchok to plant so that He could grant him success in a "natural" way, without needing to perform miracles for him. Therefore, Hashem blessed him as a show of gratitude for not forcing Him to change the natural way of the world.

Taivoh is a Sign That it is Forbidden

הָבִיאָה לִי צַיִד וַעֲשֵׂה־לִי מַטְעַמִּים וְאֹכֵלָה - ***Bring me game and make me tasty foods, and I will eat. (27:7)***

The Mahariyatz of Lubavitch zy"a related: A large gathering once took place during the early days of the leadership of the **Baal Hatanya**. The elder chasidim were there, including **R' Shmuel Minkes zt"l**, who was known as "the mischievous chasid". He never spoke in learning in public and did not daven at length. Instead, he was always making jokes and making others happy. At every gathering of chasidim, he was in charge of bringing out the "mashkeh" and serving the food.

At this gathering, a fried lung was brought out from a cow that had been donated by R' Nosson the shochet and given to R' Shmuel to serve to the chasidim. He was very happy about this, and he began to dance and do flips while holding the tray.

Men began asking for a portion of the meat but he kept dancing, without giving any to anyone. After this went on for a long time, the chasidim tried to grab the tray away from him. Before they could get hold of it, R' Shmuel held it up and threw it into a bucket of dirty water. He then danced away and went to look for some other food to serve instead.

Although it was very late, he found one local resident who was willing to give him a large amount of stuffed cabbage. He then danced back to the bais medrash and served that to the chasidim.

Many of the men were still upset with him, as would have preferred to eat the fried lung. - Suddenly, the butcher ran in and yelled, "Don't eat the lung. It is treif!"

He explained that he had put aside a lung that had been found to be treif and had gone away for a while. His wife had been unaware of this and she gave that lung to R' Nosson to serve to the chasidim. As soon as he got back and realized what happened, he ran to inform the chasidim not to eat it.

They asked R' Shmuel how he knew that he shouldn't serve the meat. - He told them, "All I can tell you is that the first time I had a 'yechidus' with the Rebbe, he instructed me never to eat any food if it made me feel a strong sense of taivoh, as this is a sign that the animalistic nature wants the food and not the holy neshama.

When the lung was brought it, I felt a strong desire to eat it. I also saw that everyone else desired it very much. Therefore, I understood that it must be forbidden, as a permitted food does not create such a taivoh."

Rivkah Understood Trickery

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen asks why Esav's display of piousness made Yitzchok love him but did not work for Rivkah?

He answers that Yitzchok grew up in Avrohom Avinu's home, which was permeated with temimus and emes. He was not familiar with trickery and thought Esav was genuine.

Rivkah, however, grew up in the home of Besuel and Lavan, who were liars and tricksters. - She knew how to spot a phony and she was able to see that Esav was not genuinely righteous.



וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בִּגְדֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנָהּ הַגָּדֹל חֲמֻדֹת אֲשֶׁר אִתָּהּ בַּבָּיִת וַתַּלְבֵּשׁ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב בְּנָהּ הַקָּטֹן And Rivkah took the precious clothes of Esav her older son…And she dressed Yaakov her younger son. (27:15)

The Chidushei Harim says that Yaakov did not really need Yitzchok's blessings. He was worthy enough to be blessed without them. If so, why did Rivkah want him to get the brachos?

Because she foresaw that Klal Yisroel would go into exile and they would wear non-Jewish clothes. Therefore, she knew that they would need a bracha from Yitzchok that would protect them even while wearing the clothing of Esav.



וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו בְּלִבּוֹ יִקְרְבוּ יְמֵי אֵבֶל אָבִי וְאַהַרְגָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב אָחִי …May the days of mourning for my father arrive… (27:41)

Esav waited until his Yitzchak passed away because he knew that Yaakov learned Torah day and night. He knew that the merit of learning Torah protects Yaakov. Yaakov would be vulnerable in the mourning period for his father when one is forbidden to study Torah. *(Shaar Bet Rabim)*



יַעַבְדוּךָ עַמִּים וְיִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְךָ לְאֻמִּים הֱוֵה גְבִיר לְאַחֶיךָ ***Nations shall serve you and kingdoms shall bow down to you; you shall be a rich man for your brothers…*** (27:29)

Being Wealthy for One's Friend's Sake

Sefer Kisvei Ramam relates that the chasid, R' Leibel Shereshevsky from Kobrin, who was a very wealthy man, once came to the **Yesod Ha'avodah of Slonim zy"a** and the Rebbe said to him, "It says: 'You will be a rich man for your brothers.' Wealth should always be used for your brothers." - He was telling him to utilize his money for the benefit of his fellow Yidden.



וַיֶּחֱרַד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְּדֹלָה עַד־מְאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵפוֹא הוּא ***And Yitzchok trembled a great trembling and he said…*** (27:33)

The Light of the Neshama

Rashi says that Yitzchok saw Gehenim opened up under Esav. **Rav Meshulim Zusia of Chernobyl zy"a** (Sefer Tzur Tzadik) asks why he specifically saw Gehenim under Esav today? He answers this question by asking how it could be that Yitzchok loved Esav. Didn't he sense his impurity?

Rav Meshulim Zusia explains that Sefarim Hakedoshim say that when a person does a mitzvah, he is bedecked in the holiness of that mitzvah and his neshama shines.

In this vein, it is related that it was once told to the **Chozeh of Lublin zy"a** that there was a Jewish '*moser*' in town who was causing the community a lot of problems. This occurred on Chanukah and when the informant's name was told to the Chozeh, he said, "He is illuminated in all of the worlds!"

The next day, the man's name was again told to the Chozeh, and he was able to see everything the person had done. He said, "Yesterday, when you told me the man's name, he was in the middle of lighting

the menorah and as a result of this mitzvah, his neshama was shining!"

Accordingly, when Esav was with his father and was doing the mitzvah of kibud av, his neshama was bright, which is why Yitzchok loved him. This time, however, he was not doing the mitzvah of kibud av, as he only was thinking about himself, so his neshama was not illuminated. Thus, Yitzchok was able to see who he really was.



וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו בְּלִבּוֹ יִקְרְבוּ יְמֵי אֵבֶל אָבִי וְאַהַרְגָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב אָחִי ***And Esav said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father will draw near. I will then kill my brother Yaakov."*** (27:41)

The Power of Simcha

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen quotes **Rav Mordechai Chaim of Slonim zy"a** as asking why Esav had to wait for his father to die. Esav was a rasha and a murderer. Why didn't he just kill Yaakov now?

He answers that Esav could not harm Yaakov as long as he was happy.

The Baal Shem Tov zy"a said that when someone is happy, nothing can hurt him and no one can do him any harm.

As long as Yitzchok was alive, Yaakov was in a constant state of happiness, therefore, Esav was waiting for his father to die. He thought that Yaakov would be sad during the days of mourning, and he would then finally be able to kill him.



Upon being asked for a brachah to enjoy Shabbos, R' Chaim Chernovitzer zt"l was surprised that he needed such a brachah. He said "Shabbos shines brightly, like the sun. Whoever doesn't experience it, must have his eyes shut."



Bitachon

When **R' Paysach Krohn** was 21, his father became very ill. The hospital was in Washington Heights and he spent Shabbos with **R' Shimon Schwab z"l**, who was friendly with the senior Rabbi Krohn.

R' Schwab asked young Paysach how his father was doing.

"It doesn't look so good," replied the young man, "but I have bitachon, (faith) that he will be OK."

R' Schwab said, "That's not what bitachon means," - Bitachon is not trusting that everything will be OK. Bitachon is believing that **everything** happens because Hashem wants it to happen."

A few weeks later, young Paysach's father passed away, but before he did, his son learned to see the Divine nature of occurrences and gained a new appreciation for Hashem's hashgacha.

From Our Sages

עַד אֲשֶׁר־תָּשׁוּב חֲמַת אָחִיךָ. עַד־שׁוּב אַף־אָחִיךָ מִמְּךָ..until your brother's fury turns away. Until your brother's anger turns away. (27:44, 45)

Rebecca advised her son Jacob what to do: "*Run away to my brother Laban and wait until your brother gets over his anger. How will you know when that time has arrived, and he is no longer angry at you? When you yourself stop holding a grudge against him.*"

Rebecca understood the reciprocity of human emotions: Love is reciprocated with love, and hatred elicits a like response in others. (**Baal Hahaflaah**)

"Some, when they do a good deed, think they are doing Hashem a favour - What fools…" ~ The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l

Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick

The **פְּסוּק** says that Yitzchok did not change the names of the wells from the names that Avrohom, his father, gave to them. **The Rabbeinu Bechayei** says he did this because of the mitzvah of **כיבוד אַב**.

As a reward, Hashem did not change Yitzchok's name to something else, but it remained Yitzchok his entire life. [**ספר פרשה פשעטיל**]



Horav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik זצ"ל
The Brisker Rav



Horav Elazar Menachem Mann Shach זצ"ל

Horav Elazar Menachem Mann Shach זצ"ל went to visit the **Brisker Rov, Horav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchek זצ"ל** . The Brisker Rov asked his daughter to make two cups of tea for them.

After she made the tea, the Brisker Rov asked her to put the sugar in the tea and then to mix the tea.

Rav Shach asked the Brisker Rov that if his daughter knew how to make the tea, why did he have to ask her to do every step it takes to make tea?

The Brisker Rov answered that every step in making the tea was another mitzvah of **כִּיבּוּד אַב** and he wanted her to get as many mitzvos as possible.

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk

Everyone knows that Esav was a rasha, a wicked person. The question is, why? There is no one on Earth who is completely righteous and doesn't sin. Why is it that Esav is considered so bad and wicked?

The answer is that when Esav spurned his birthright, he didn't care. After he sold it, he was able to sit and eat and drink. Only one whose conscience is clear can do such a thing. He stood and departed on his way, mocking Yaakov for the purchase of something worthless. He had no pangs of guilt or remorse.

This is why he is considered so wicked. As a famous Chasidic Rebbe said, "When a Jew sins, he may give in to his desires, but he feels bad about it. He knows he has harmed the relationship between himself and G-d and this guilt is a chance for a positive move towards repentance.

Not so Esav. He sinned and was glad about it. That's the point of no return so we criticize this behavior and use Esav as the paradigm for wickedness – when one doesn't serve Hashem, and he is happy about it. – [Based on a speech by **R' Dovid Goldwasser** on TorahAnytime.com]

"Acting impulsively causes errors and brings about many negative consequences. Before making an important decision, think the matter over carefully and do all you can to clarify which decision seems the wisest." ~ Ralbag.



The astrological sign for Kislev is *Keshes*, the Bow (Sagittarius). Indeed, the first rainbow which was seen in the sky after the Flood appeared in the month of Kislev.

Noach emerged from the ark on the 28 28th of Cheshvan. He then built a mizbe'ach (altar) and offered korbanos upon it. This took place during the last days of Cheshvan. When Kislev began, HaShem blessed Noach, permitted the eating of meat, forbade the shedding of human blood, then struck a covenant with Noach and showed him the rainbow.



Rabbi Avi Slansky - Sitting and Doing

In drawing the contrast between Yaakov and Eisav, Rashi makes an observation that is quite striking. The Torah tells us that Eisav is an "ish sadeh," a man of the field. Rashi translates this to mean an "ish batel," a man who sits idly. In contrast, the Torah refers to Yaakov as one who is a "yoshev ohalim," one who sits in the Tents of Torah.

But it's odd. Would we capture the character of Eisav, the horrible rasha that he is made

out to be, as simply one who sits around and does nothing? The Torah instead could have said that he was a murderer, adulterer or applied any other number of descriptions. On the other hand, what appellation does the Torah give to Yaakov? He sat in a tent and learned Torah. But is that really all?

Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l explains that the description of Eisav, as illuminated by Rashi, is in fact revealing a critical truth. The difference between an Eisav and Yaakov is exactly that: is he sitting idly or doing something? Eisav did nothing productive, and when one leads their life that way, they are not far from finding themselves in the worst places committing the worst crimes. In contrast, Yaakov Avinu filled all his time with purposeful and productive work.

The trajectory of Eisav and Yaakov is as widely disparate as could be imagined. Even though on the outside, there might appear to be similarity—after all, they're both "sitting"—the truth couldn't be further. Eisav sits and makes no good use of his time; Yaakov sits and makes all good use of his time.

The Mesillas Yesharim notes that the natural tendency of a human is to be lazy. If you let nature run its course, one could chas v'shalom move down the path of becoming an Eisav. On the other hand, if someone sits and is industrious, that paves the path of Yaakov Avinu.

In this Parsha, we are charged to listen to the voice of Yaakov. Follow the path of our forefather Yaakov Avinu, and you will be setting yourself up for a lifetime of success.

"As long as we are alive, we should think to ourselves, "How happy I would be if I obtained a large amount of money. No amount of money, however, can compare to the greater value of life itself." ~ Pele Yoatz, Simcha.

A Miraculous Commitment



A woman told the following story in a video recently posted online:

"I took knives, went to the bomb shelter, gave every kid a knife, and said to them, 'Listen up, this is not a normal situation. It has never happened before.' Suddenly, I looked through the peephole, and I saw six terrorists, guns drawn, loudly chanting in Arabic. And I'm standing there with two knives in my hands, with my children behind me, and I'm still looking through the peephole, just unable to believe this is happening.

"And in that moment, I raised my eyes to G-d, and I said, 'Hashem, I am promising you right now that I will keep all my Shabbats until the day I die. Protect me and my children because we are in danger. I refuse to acknowledge this as my end. I haven't finished my tikkun. Borei Olam, I am begging you for mercy.'" - Tears filled her eyes and those of the women to whom she was speaking.

She continued emotionally, "And the minute I committed to keeping Shabbat, they just skipped over my house. They simply vanished!"

Every mitzvah counts. Every. Single. One. We must commit to taking upon a new mitzvah or perhaps pledge to intentionally do one to which maybe we don't pay such great attention. Hashem is listening. He is eagerly waiting for us to bring Mashiach speedily in our days. What can you commit to today?

A "Childish" Mistake

Tamir was very firm and secure in his decision to become a ba'al teshubah, but his brother Amos was still vacillating. He believed and he didn't believe, wanted but didn't dare, was afraid to try yet afraid to fail. Tamir would reassure him over and over, but Amos was too scared to take the plunge. They decided to go to **Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky** and ask him about Amos's doubts and concerns.

The taxi made its way through the crowded streets of Bnei Brak to the corner of Hazon Ish and Admor MiGur Streets and stopped for the brothers to ask directions. "Excuse me, little boy. Where is Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky's house?"

"Get out here," the boy said, "and go straight down this street till you get to Meltzer Street. Harav Kanievsky lives across the street from the Wagshall wedding hall, I think."

They paid the driver, got out and started walking. They were approaching Meltzer Street when suddenly two boys came running up the street after them, huffing and puffing for all they were worth. "Excuse me," one of them said, out of breath. "Are you the ones from the taxi who asked directions?" - The brothers confirmed that, yes, they were indeed.

"I'm so sorry, I made a mistake. After you left, just to be sure, I asked my friend, and he told me I had sent you the wrong way. You're completely in the wrong place."

Amos couldn't help smiling. Imagine one of the kibbutz children going out of his way like this, he thought. Not likely. There was something about the tenor of the whole incident that he had never encountered.

The boy begged them to let him take them where they needed to go, all the way to the door. "I'll just call my parents and tell them I'll be a little late," he said. "I know exactly where the Rav lives now."

The second boy tugged at his friend's sleeve and whispered loudly, "I think you have to pay for their taxi."

The first boy began to apologize even harder. "Of course, I'll happily pay for a taxi for you to get there. After all, I made the mistake. I haven't got any money, but if you come home with me – it's not far – my parents will pay for you to take another taxi. I should never have sounded so sure of myself when I didn't really know where the Rav lives."

Amos's eyes filled with tears. He took hold of Tamir's arm and said, "We don't have to go to a Rav, Tamir. Let's go home. I want to do teshubah. If this little boy is an example of what it's all about, I am going to go all the way."

A little touch of hashgachah peratit and a whole lot of kiddush Hashem, and a good measure of hesed propelled Amos into the warm embrace of his heritage. (There is no such thing as coincidence)



There was a religious family from Kfar Aza, on that day before Simhat Torah, that went to visit their parents in Jerusalem. The grandparents said, "Why don't you stay with us for the holiday of Simhat Torah?"

But the parents said, "We are part of the Kfar Aza community, and we want to celebrate with our community Simhat Torah".

The grandparents did not give up. They said, "We are making food for you; just stay with us for the holiday!"

They went back and forth, and unfortunately, this family decided not to listen to their grandparents, and went back to Kfar Aza for Simhat Torah…

They got home. And this was the last time they went home. The mother asked the father if he could open the door with the key, because she had to cook for the holiday. The father put his hand in

his pocket, and the key wasn't in his pocket! He forgot his key at Saba and Savta's!

They started arguing about how this could have happened, until they decided that they should go back and spend Simhat Torah in Jerusalem… after all, they had a meal already prepared for them!

Tell me that Hashem is not watching!!!

Survivor Celebrates 90th Birthday in Auschwitz With 100 Descendants



Rabbi Nissen Mangel celebrates his 90ths birthday in Auschwitz with his wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, 80 years after he arrived there on a cattle car as a child. *Photo: Yisroel Teitelbaum*

Rabbi Nissen Mangel's entire life has been a miracle. He was a 10-year-old child when he came to Auschwitz in a clattering cattle car stuffed with humanity.

Not many 10-year-olds were sent to the right, towards life, by the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele. But Mangel was. And not many 10-year-olds survived five other slave labor and concentration camps and a forced death march in the dead of winter.

But Mangel not only survived, but he also thrived.



Rabbi Nissen Mangel

"My father's motto in life is: *Hodu LaHashem*—'Give thanks to G-d,' " Rabbi Nochum Mangel, who directs Chabad-Lubavitch of Greater Dayton in Ohio, told Chabad.org. "And his message was the same for the future. Hitler tried the final solution and he failed, and the Nazis of today—Hamas—will fail as well."

The trip was the product of a complaint.

Mangel's children, who serve in leadership positions around the world, many as Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries, would get together from time to time, and had, on occasion, traveled to Europe to retrace their father's early life.

"My father always wanted his children to go see where he grew up—Košice, Slovakia—and also Auschwitz, where he was taken," Nochum Mangel related.

But the grandchildren felt left out. They, too, wished to participate in the family pilgrimages, to understand the horror their grandfather had endured and his gratefulness to G-d for surviving.

So, they started planning. The rabbi's 90th birthday was approaching, and what better way to celebrate it than at Auschwitz with his entire family—his wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. - And so, they started organizing.

They'd stop off in Krakow, Poland, to visit the resting place of **R. Elimelech of Lizensk**, to whom Rabbi Mangel traces his ancestry, and would continue on to Auschwitz.

And on Thursday, 11 Cheshvan, surrounded by nearly 100 family members, Mangel pointed to the spot where he came off the train, where he was sent to the right, to life, and said: "Blessed be He who performed a miracle for me at this place."

In 1944, together with his father, mother and elder sister, young Nissen Mangel had been caught by the Nazis, arrested and deported from Bratislava. He was first sent to the Sered' labor camp near Bratislava, then on to Auschwitz, where he was selected as one of the subjects of Dr. Josef Mengele's horrific human experiments. He was sent on to Birkenau, Mauthausen, Melk and Gunskirchen, from which he was liberated in 1945 after surviving a forced death march as the Nazis fled the oncoming allied armies.

Mangel has told his story of triumph to hundreds of communities and thousands of people.

But Mangel did not just survive. He embraced the very faith that his tormentors had tried to stamp out. He became a prolific author and translator; his translated works include the Tehilat Hashem prayerbook, the High Holidays Machzor and Shaar Hayichud VeHaemuna, the second volume of Tanya.

Rabbi Mangel is the rabbi of Congregation Ksav Sofer in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. He has lectured throughout the world. He teaches each morning and evening as he has done all his life, infusing his perspective of gratitude and faith in G-d into everything he does.

At the family Shabbat dinner, the following evening in Warsaw, grandson Mendel Mangel spoke, describing the incongruity of their visit and how crucial it was, taking place during the ongoing war in Israel.

"As we toured Auschwitz, there were many other groups visiting as well. They were asked—as everyone is—to respect the solemnity of the place, ground made sacred by the blood of millions murdered for being Jewish," he recalled.

"And there we were, singing songs of thanks to G-d. They were there to learn about the atrocities that took place there—and it's so important that the world know about them—but we were there not only to remember the destruction, but to thank G-d and to celebrate that G-d will never abandon us, that the Jewish people will always survive, come what may."

One of the songs the Mangel family sang as they stood in front of Auschwitz was "Vehi She'amda," which means, "And this is what kept our fathers and what keeps us surviving. For, not only one arose and tried to destroy us, rather in every generation they try to destroy us, and G-d saves us from their hands."

Yes, there were moments of solemnity and tears as the family walked through the gas chambers and the barracks; when Mangel found the names of his murdered family in the thick book of victims of the camp; and when they prayed *Minchah* and the elder Mangel recited *Kaddish* for his father, who was murdered during the Holocaust. But echoing his own life, the focus was not on what was lost but on what had been built out of the ashes.

"Every Jew who survived that inferno is a miracle," Rabbi Nochum Mangel said, quoting his father. "And that is what my father wanted to teach the next generation: He wanted to tell his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren his story so they should know that despite the hatred and persecution, Jewish life continues."



וַיְהִי יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּקַחְתּוֹ אֶת־רִבְקָה בַּת־בְּתוּאֵל הָאֲרַמִּי
when he took Rivkah … the sister of Lavan ha'Arami .. (25:20).

The letters of "ho'Arami" spell "ha'Ramai" (the swindler), says the Ba'al ha'Turim. One needs only to glance at Parshas Vayeitzei to understand why.





Nachal Novea Mekor Chochma Breslev Tsfat Founded in 1968 by Reb Gedalyahu Aharon Kenig, zt"l

Shabbat Inspiration in These Days - Safeguard the Queen



Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein's sure-fire method of bringing salvation to the Jews of Eretz Yisrael

In an effort to seek out practical ways to merit the Divine protection we so desperately need, we consulted with Rav Zilberstein. In response, he spoke of air raid sirens and salvation, queens and commanders, parenting and partnerships. Most of all, he sounded a clarion call: Safeguard the Shabbos and Hashem will keep you safe in return.

I'll tell you what I told the residents of Eretz Yisrael, something that's also relevant to the residents outside of Israel. If they improve this one thing, it will bring blessing and protection to all the Jewish people in the entire world.

Mere weeks ago, on Yom Kippur, the holiest day for the Jewish people, we read (Yeshayahu 58:13-14):

אִם־תָּשִׁיב מִשַּׁבָּת רַגְלֶךָ עֲשׂוֹת חֲפָצֶיךָ בְּיוֹם קָדְשִׁי וְקָרָאתָ לַשַּׁבָּת עֹנֶג לִקְדוֹשׁ ה' מְכֻבָּד וְכִבַּדְתּוֹ מֵעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכֶיךָ מִמְּצוֹא חֶפְצְךָ וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר *'If you restrain your foot because of the Sabbath, from performing your affairs on*

My holy day, and you call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the L-rd honored, and you honor it by not doing your wonted ways, by not pursuing your affairs and speaking words.'

אָז תִּתְעַנַּג עַל־ה' וְהִרְכַּבְתִּיךָ עַל־בָּמֳתֵי אָרֶץ וְהַאֲכַלְתִּיךָ נַחֲלַת יַעֲקֹב אָבִיךָ כִּי פִי ה' דִּבֵּר 'Then, you shall delight with Hashem, and I will cause you to ride on the high places of the land, and I will give you to eat the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of Hashem has spoken.'

Do you hear, Rabbosai, what the message is? Shabbos! You want HaKadosh Baruch Hu to help you? You want to live? Do you want to have a happy life? Do you know what the segulah is? One thing: Shabbos! [*Source: Mishpacha Magazine, Oct. 18, 2023]*

I grew up on a secular kibbutz. Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed me compassion, and I discovered the truth. I did teshuvah and left my wayward brothers behind. I daven for them that they too will recognize and fulfil the Torah.

A few months ago, a friend from the kibbutz called and asked me to get him tefillin, but not to tell anyone that he was donning tefillin and saying Shema. I am sure that these steps toward Yiddishkeit stood by him to save him.

On the Shabbos of Simchas Torah, he got up at 6:30 in the morning to the sound of the air-raid siren. A moment later a rocket fell near his home and the house was instantly dark; the electricity was cut off. All the electronic devices, including the refrigerator, stopped working, and he realized that his life was in danger.

He is a diabetic and must have insulin injections with him. Insulin needs refrigeration, and since he didn't know when the problem would be fixed, he needed to find someone who had a refrigerator who could host him.

He hurried to the home of a friend, where everything was still in working order. A few seconds later a rocket fell in his friend's courtyard as well. The friend, who had only recently completed renovations on his magnificent home, watched as the front wall blew up.

This was a special wall made completely of glass, and it cracked with a huge crash, its shards spreading everywhere. While the interior of the house remained stable, the outside was a picture of total destruction.

The sounds of war, shooting, and screams rent the air. They went to the sealed room and locked themselves inside. Afterward it became clear that two things that had seemed to be terrible tragedies were in actuality what saved them:

First – my friend's diabetes. Because it was urgent for him to find a working refrigerator for his insulin, he hurried to his friend's home. The rocket that landed near his home caused him to leave it, and thus he was saved from the terrorists who later burst into his home and found it empty.

Second, the exterior wall of his friend's home blew up dramatically, and the glass shards spread over a large expanse, giving the impression that the entire home was destroyed.

Seeing the exploded wall, the terrorists assumed that the house had already been "taken care of" on the inside as well, and they skipped over it. Their lives were saved.

Not knowing what was going on outside, they stayed in the sealed room, and not until 18 hours later did soldiers come to save them.

My friend is still pinching himself, overtaken with emotion at the fact that he is actually alive. They were literally in the inferno and were saved, with Hashem's mercy.

Without a Helmet

We were a small group of friends who became religious. We had a friend who respected tradition and would listen to our ideas, but he remained the way he was. Now he told me what happened to him during the massacre:

My home has two floors. I woke up early in the morning and heard the sirens. Immediately, I went upstairs and brought all the children down. The minute everyone got downstairs, a rocket fell on the upper floor, and I don't want to think what would have happened had we remained there for a few more seconds.

I understood that a war had begun, and as a member of *kitat konenut* – the citizen military guard, I was on the alert, and I took my gun. Before going out, I stood near the mezuzah and said Shema Yisrael. That's what I knew, and I asked Hakadosh Baruch Hu to help me – I knew that only He could help. I was certain He would be with me.

I couldn't find my helmet to protect my head, so I went out without it. I let the other members of the citizen guard know that I could not leave the area of my home, and I would help to secure the area from my yard. My house is the last one on the kibbutz, right near the gate.

I went out and saw a van belonging to Hamas. Twelve terrorists came out of it and started cutting through the gate. I immediately called my friend to help me stop them. It was terrible.

Bombings overhead, fire in the air, and I have to stop twelve human animals whose sole purpose is to kill. I lay spread out on the floor, for fear of the bombings, and immediately got up to fight the terrorists.

I knew only one thing: I cannot do anything; only the Creator of the world is all-powerful. "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, You are with me." That's what I said all the time as I pulled the trigger again and again. Baruch Hashem, we killed them all.

This friend told me, "I'm no hero. It is not me. It's Hakadosh Baruch Hu." Throughout our conversation he kept saying, "Baruch Hashem, Baruch Hashem." This is his new language.

I've never heard him speak this way until now. Emunah. That is what saved him. *[Source: Hashgacha Pratis Newsletter, Chayei Sara]*



A **ישיבה בחור** recently went to visit his sick friend in Barzilai hospital in **ארץ ישראל**. In the adjacent bed was an injured Israeli soldier who too had a friend at his bedside. The soldier's friend asked the **בחור** why he wasn't serving in the army?!



The **בחור** responded that despite not being in the army, he was learning and *davening* to protect **ארץ ישראל** and its soldiers, and had even adopted a soldier whom he was *davening* and learning for.

The other fellow scoffed and said, "Well if you've adopted a soldier, what is his name?"

The **בחור** replied, "*Itai Yehuda ben Keren*".

The injured soldier went white and cried out, "That's my name! You were *davening* and learning for me!"

They carried on conversing about the war and the soldier was asked at what time he had been injured. He responded that he had sustained his injuries at 4:40pm on Tuesday afternoon.

This time it was the **ישיבה בחור** 's turn to pale. In a trembling voice, he said, "I generally do my utmost to get to **סדר** on time. Specifically, on Tuesday, I only managed to arrive to the **בית המדרש** at five o'clock!"

We may not be on the physical front lines in Gaza, but as **חז"ל** say, it is **תורה** learning which protects **כלל ישראל**. Let us utilise every possible moment we can to *daven* and learn **תורה** to keep **עם ישראל** safe.



וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ

'And יצחק entreated ה' for the sake of his wife and ה' was entreated by him…'

This expression of **ויעתר** , entreated, is unusual but it is used here to convey a very powerful message. Sometimes you might feel like you've been *davening* for something for a long time but you haven't been answered. You may even start to wonder what happened to all your **תפילות** . In fact, that question could in theory be asked by all of **כלל ישראל** – we've been *davening* for the **גאולה** for almost 2,000 years! Have all those **תפילות** gone to waste **? ח"ו**

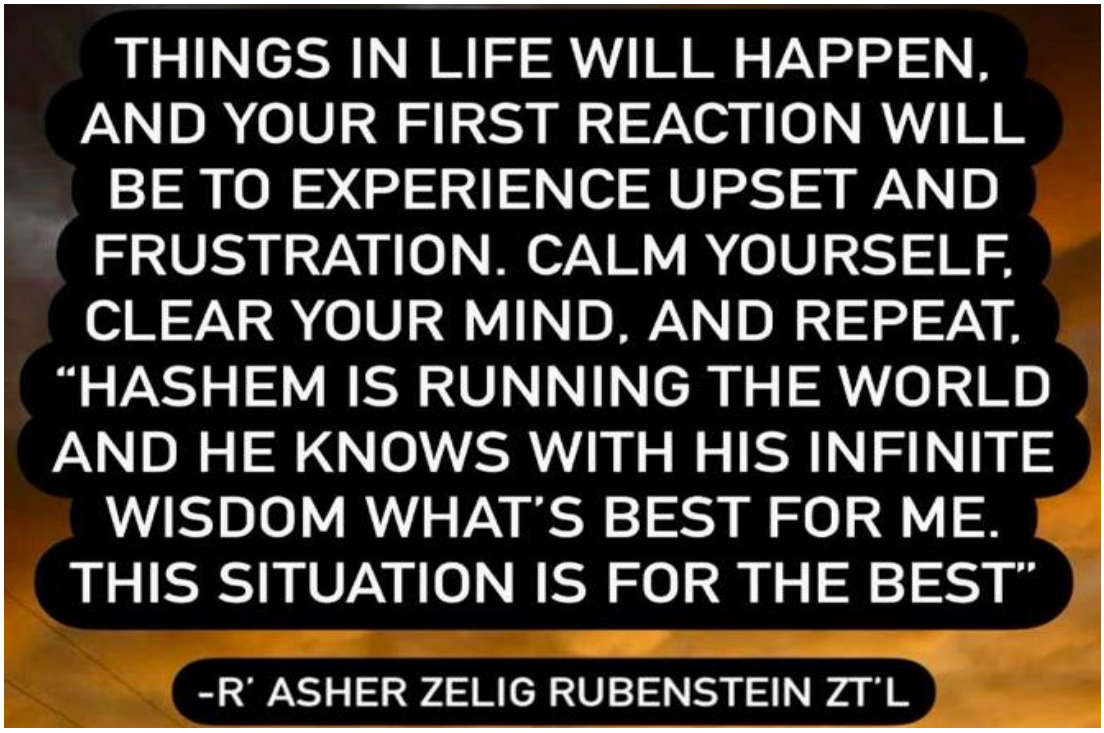
The **נועם אליעזר זיע"א** answers with the following **משל**: Somebody travelling through the desert comes across a spot where he knows there was once a wellspring of water. He is thirsty and desperate for a drink, so he starts digging. An hour goes by, two hours… nothing. Now he's even more exhausted and starting to regret he even began.

Suddenly, another person turns up and continues the digging, and just a few moments later, fresh water starts gushing forth. The first digger is understandably upset. But the second digger comforts him by saying: Do you think I could have found the water had you not spent the past two hours digging?!

Similarly, each and every one of our **תפילות** digs up the earth a little more, inching us ever closer to the **מים חיים** of the **גאולה**. Eventually, someone will offer up one last **תפילה** and that will complete all the **תפילות** of **כלל ישראל** over the past two thousand years.

The **תורה** therefore uses a **לשון** of **ויעתר** which implies continuous and repeated **תפילות** , each one reaching further than the previous **תפילה** until **ויעתר לו** , *Hashem was entreated*, meaning that it wasn't just the last **תפילה** that somehow caught **ה'**s attention but rather it was the culmination of all the **תפילות** that eventually broke through.

At a time like this, when everyone is *davening* harder and more, we look forward **בע"ה** to the ultimate and sudden breakthrough that we've all been yearning for…



No Room

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כִּלָּה יִצְחָק לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיְהִי אַךְ יָצֹא יָצָא יַעֲקֹב מֵאֵת פְּנֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו וְעֵשָׂו אָחִיו בָּא מִצֵּידוֹ *'And it came to pass, when Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and it came to pass Jacob had just left his father Isaac's presence, that his brother Esau came from his hunt.'* (27:30).

The Torah states "As soon as Yaakov left…Esau his brother came."

As soon as the righteous Yaakov leaves the evil Esau enters his place. There is no room for compromise in Torah. ~ **The Alter of Novhardok.**

וַיֶּחֱרַד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְּדֹלָה עַד־מְאֹד – *'And Yitzchak trembled in very great perplexity.'* (27:33)

Chazal teach us that the words, **גְּדֹלָה עַד־מְאֹד**, "*very great perplexity*," mean that the fear that Yitzchak Avinu experienced when Eisav walked in was even greater than when he lay at the Akeidah about to be slaughtered.

Imagine, up until this moment, Yitzchak was under the impression that Eisav was upstanding and observant. He would ask him halachic questions which, by their very nature, indicated that he was stringent in his observance. Suddenly, the floor fell out from beneath him, and he saw Eisav in his true colours, for all that he was.

The shock of discovery that all we have believed in has been in error – whether it was in a person, a way of life, an organization –is a devastating shock. To find out that the son in whom you placed so much hope and love is a fraud was a shock even greater than the Akeidah for Yitzchak.

Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, relates that the **Alter, zl, m'Novarodok, Horav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, zl**, would travel to a small village in an area which was known for its clean air. He hoped that the pristine

climate would have a recuperative effect on his lungs. The Alter was meticulous in bringing along a mezuzah written specifically for him by a sofer, scribe, in whom he had the greatest faith. He demanded that every stringency be included in the writing of the mezuzah. The Alter was not willing to settle just because he was on "vacation."

When he returned to the yeshivah, he would remove the mezuzah and take it with him. One time, as he was removing the mezuzah from the doorpost, he noticed to his shock and chagrin that when he had attached the mezuzah to the doorpost, he had driven the nail through a letter, essentially invalidating the mezuzah.

He was so palpably shocked, that his students, who were watching nearby, took notice. He said nothing, refusing to respond to their query at the time. Instead, he said that he would explain during Elul what had just taken place and the lesson that he derived therein.

During the month of Elul, the Alter spoke to the students of the Yeshivah one Motzei Shabbos. He began to weep uncontrollably, saying that man thinks everything in his life is in order, that he is observant, committed, dedicated towards helping his fellowman, but he is wrong! True, it seems that everything is fine, that he goes through life meticulously adhering to everything that is demanded of him, but something is amiss.

Sadly, many of us find out what we are missing, but alas, we are too late. Just like the mezuzah. Everything had been planned to perfection. Yet, one small error invalidated his entire vacation! He had been in an apartment without a mezuzah!

We now know why Yitzchak Avinu trembled. An entire life was just invalidated when he saw Eisav as his true self. - We pray that Hashem will not have any surprises for us. To prevent this, we should go the extra mile to be certain that our actions and intentions are consistent with that which Hashem asks of us.





Akiva Litov struggled a lot with shemiras Shabbos. He loved the parties, the music, the freedom, the liberation. But every time he didn't keep Shabbos, it burned up inside of him. Akiva shared his story on Motzoei Shabbos at the Agudah Convention, relating how on Rosh Hashanah, he'd give it another shot. He'd try again, despite how hard it was for him. When it came to the Supernova Festival, he prevailed upon his friends to skip it.....

Shalom U'vracha – My name is Akiva Litov. I am happy to have been given the opportunity to speak at this convention about my experiences and miracle that happened to me. It took me a long time to process everything myself.

At first, I was glued to the news all day. I was hoping to hear about a friend who maybe somehow survived. But unfortunately, only horrific news arrived. Each piece of bad news crushed me.

Many things were running through my head, and I couldn't get the images out of my mind. I desperately wanted to cry. I wanted to believe that it didn't happen, and imagined that it was all just a dream, and I would soon wake up.

I had a close friend called Eliyahu. He was like a brother to me. We grew up in the same neighbourhood and knew each other from as far back as I remember. Whenever I used to visit my parents on

Shabbos, he and his family would be sitting there. He loved music very much and wanted to create his own music album. He had big dreams of conquering the world. When we were kids, everyone did a lot of silly things, but Eliyahu distanced himself from it all. He had a good soul who wouldn't harm a fly.

After many years of not going to parties, he decided to go to the Nova festival. He left a few hours prior to us hearing all the horrible news. I was at his parent's house and told them that I would give them some money to organise prayers to be said on his behalf for his safe return.

Shortly after, at his funeral, suddenly, everything broke within me. I closed my eyes and imagined him lying on the floor completely lifeless surrounded by blood. And then I cried like a baby throughout the funeral. I stayed there for a few more hours. And only then, did I realise just how much Hashem had been watching over me.

I have been going to parties for many years. Unfortunately, I used to go to these parties even on Shabbos. Not because I don't believe in Hashem – quite the opposite – I strongly believe in Hashem, and see Him with me in every step of my life. I pray and put on Tefillin every day. I even have the occasional moments of solitude to speak to Him and ask Him for help.

But… despite all my faith in Hashem, I still struggled a lot with keeping Shabbos. I worked in a factory, and the only free time was on Shabbos. I went through tough times with many challenges. When I needed to let off steam, I found these parties very relaxing. This was the only time that I managed to disconnect from regular life, from disturbances and struggles.

The reason why I loved these parties so much was because you hear music there that is just melodies without words. This reminded me of life beyond the dance floor. And when you are there, free from the rat-race of life, the sounds penetrate your soul, and envelopes you from all directions. It's a place where no one judges you – where

the craziest person there, is the most normal. It's part of the beautiful nature, that everyone has their own space. You could take a close friend and go on a trip with them, laughing, rejoicing, and thanking Hashem for this beautiful experience and magical world. It was very liberating for me, and it gave me enough strength and energy to make it through the rest of the week.

Most people at these music festivals are religious or used to be. Possibly because of their unique soul, which isn't satisfied with ordinary thrills, they seek something more spectacular.

But every time that I did not keep Shabbos, it burned me up! I'm a person who has experienced many miracles, and The One Above is always with me.

I've spoken with a Rabbi about everything that's happened to me, and all the Shabbosos that I have not managed to keep. He told me that if I can't succeed in keeping Shabbos totally, at least I should attempt to work on, and observe the most challenging thing for me – which was smoking on Shabbos. So, I decided not to smoke on Shabbos.

No matter what I do, every time that I have a drink, I crave a cigarette. Smokers like me understand how difficult this is, especially as I am a heavy smoker. If I don't have a cigarette when I need one, I lose control.

I used to travel with friends in a car on Shabbos, and everyone in the car was smoking except for me. This was extremely hard for me. My friends would say to me, "You are anyway not keeping Shabbos, so just take a little smoke." And I would tell them that, "right now the prosecutors in heaven are sitting and saying, 'look at him, how he is violating Shabbos!' And Hakadosh Baruch Hu stands and says to them, "look at him, how he's going crazy, and losing himself, yet he just doesn't light up."

My dear Father in heaven who loves me so much, knows that I also love Him, and that I don't forget Him when I am suddenly in trouble.

And then, before this Rosh Hashana, I decided that I would overcome my biggest challenge and trigger in life and start keeping Shabbos properly in its entirety. I even went to my father and requested that he ask his Rabbi to bless my endeavour, so that I should enjoy the Shabbos so much that I would feel the delight of Shabbos and that it would fill me with satisfaction and enjoyment, so that I wouldn't want the Shabbos to end.

I used to find that the parties gave me strength for the rest of the week, so the rabbi gave me a bracha, and told me, " Make sure that you are in the proper and suitable environment which will enable you to observe the Shabbos properly."

In the trance party world, there are many types of people, and the party that I used to love the most was exclusively the Nova Festival. They only invited clever and witty people, energetic people who came to rejoice and make each other happy.

On the Thursday before the great disaster, I was with my friends at the Sea of Galilee, and towards Shabbos, they were keen on going to the Nova Festival. However, I insisted instead that they come with me to the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and skip the parties, as I kept the Shabbos now, and wanted the correct atmosphere.

Eventually, after much persuasion, they agreed to skip the local parties, even though there were various parties going on in the local area. They insisted however that they were saving their energy for- The Super Nova Festival, and nothing would stop them going.

I thank Hashem for watching over me and protecting me. I thought that I was keeping Shabbos, but really Shabbos was keeping me!

Chabad.ORG

From our Sages

אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק – *'. . . Isaac the son of Abraham; Abraham fathered Isaac.' (25:19)*

There are children who are embarrassed of their parents, and there are parents who are embarrassed by their children. With Abraham and Isaac it wasn't like that: Isaac prided himself in that he was "Isaac the son of Abraham," and Abraham prided himself in that "Abraham fathered Isaac." ~ (**Midrash Tanchuma**)

הִנֵּה־נָא זָקַנְתִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי יוֹם מוֹתִי – *'Behold now, I am old; I know not the day of my death.' (27:2)*

Said Rabbi Joshua ben Korchah: When a man comes to the age of his parents at the time of their death, for five years before and five years after he must fear death.

For thus did Isaac reason: If I am to attain my father's years, I am yet far short of them. But if I am to attain my mother's years, "Behold now, I am old; I know not the day of my death." (Isaac was 123 years old at the time; Sarah lived 127 years; Abraham, 175.) ~ (**Midrash Rabbah**)

וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בִּגְדֵי עֵשָׂו ... וַתַּלְבֵּשׁ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב – *'Rebecca took the coveted clothes of Esau . . . and put them on Jacob.' (27:15)*

These are the clothes which Esau coveted from Nimrod, killing him in order to take them from him. ~ (**Midrash Rabbah**)



Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin) - Work on internalizing the elevated thoughts that you talk about.

"And Yitzchak loved Esav because he was a hunter in his mouth."

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler cited the **Ari** that it is a mistake to think that Esav was a complete hypocrite and just tried to deceive his father. If Yitzchak made an error, there must have been a good reason. The problem with Esav was that he kept all his spirituality "in his mouth," without swallowing it. He spoke spiritual words but didn't become a spiritual person. - The Torah ideals that one talks must be a part of his very being.

Something to Say (Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser) - Toil In Torah

"And the children agitated within her." As Rashi taught us, when Rebecca passed in front of the Shiva of Shem and Eber, Jacob would kick inside her, and when she passed in front of temples of idol worship, Esau strugged to come out.

We can understand why Esau wanted to go out to indulge in idolatry. But Jacob, who loved Torah study, had every reason to remain in his mother's womb (Chazal teach us, while in the womb, an angel teaches a baby the entire Torah). If so, why would Jacob want to leave?

Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef answers that Jacob wanted to learn Torah through his own toil and effort. He knew that being spoon-fed Torah does not carry with it the same value or permanence as acquiring it with our own effort.

Torah — Elixir of Life.

"And Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found living waters."

The S'fas Emes commented that the Torah is called "water" and is therefore found everywhere. As is true with seeking water, it depends upon how deep one wishes to dig and how sincerely one wants to have Torah. Just as water is the elixir of life, so is Torah.

Love Thy Neighbor (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin) - Before Admonishing Someone, Let Them Know That You Sincerely Care About Them.

"And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and commanded him saying: you shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. "

The Chofetz Chaim notes that we should learn from Isaac the most effective way of admonishing others. Before he warned Jacob what not to do, he blessed him.

By showing someone first that you truly care about their welfare, such person will more readily listen your admonition.

Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin) - If At First You Do Not Succeed, Keep Trying.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that the Torah elaborates on the wells that Isaac found to teach us that we should not give up in discouragement when we run into dificulties. When Isaac dug and did not find water, he kept digging in other places until he was finally successful. This is a practical lesson for all areas of our lives, both spiritual and material. We must be persistent when things do not work out at first. The reason many of us fail to accomplish something is because we give up too soon. If we have the determination to keep trying, eventually we will succeed.



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● Why did Yitzchok wait until forty to get married?

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק. וַיְהִי יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּקַחְתּוֹ אֶת־רִבְקָה...לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה (25:19,20) "***And these are the generations of Yitzchok the son of Avrohom; Avrohom begot Yitzchok. And Yitzchok was forty years old when he took Rivkah…to himself for a wife.***"

These posukim are coming to tell us that although a zealous person should try to fulfil a mitzvah at the earliest opportunity, Yitzchok waited until forty to get married for two reasons. Firstly, he saw with prophetic vision that he was destined to give birth to a wicked son, and therefore he wanted to delay the matter in accordance with the principle that "one does not bring forward punishments (bad events)". Secondly, he saw that the older Avrohom had been when he had offspring, the better they were spiritually - first he had Yishmael and afterwards Yitzchok.

Therefore, Yitzchok waited to marry in order that he would have offspring at a time when he was already advanced in years, so that the child would be more righteous.

Thus the posukim are saying that "these are the generations of Yitzchok" - Ya'akov and Eisav who are mentioned later in the parsha, as Rashi explains, and therefore Yitzchok wished to delay the birth of Eisav. Also, "Avrohom begot Yitzchok" - only after Hashem gave him the name Avrohom when he was already old, and many years after the birth of Yishmael. For these two reasons "Yitzchok was forty years old when he took Rivkah" to be his wife, and not earlier.

● **What does the phrase "opposite his wife" mean?**

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ (25,21) "And Yitzchok prayed to Hashem opposite his wife because she was barren, and Hashem accepted his prayer and Rivkah his wife conceived."

The posuk writes that Yitzchok prayed "opposite his wife". What does this phrase mean? (The Hebrew phrase **לנכח אשתו** lends itself to various interpretations).

Somebody who fully believes that everything that Hashem does is for the good would never pray if something bad happens to him, since he knows that even this is really good for him, so what is there to pray about? Like the gemora in Mesechta Berachos 60a writes, that Hillel the Elder, on hearing an outcry in the city, said "I'm sure that this is not happening in my home". About him the posuk says in Tehillim 112:7 "He will not fear bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in Hashem." The Maharsha explains that since Hillel had accustomed his household not to cry out when something bad happens, but should rather say that it's for the good, he knew for certain that the outcry could not have come from his home. This is the meaning of the posuk "he will not fear bad news" because "his heart is steadfast, trusting in Hashem" that He never does bad, only good.

Therefore, although Yitzchok himself knew that if he did not have children then it was for the best, and therefore he did not want to pray at all, he was forced to do so because his wife was distressed that she did not have children, and she was not able to accept with love that this was how things should be.

Here again we understand why she was referred to earlier as being the daughter of Besuel the Aramean. The household of Avrohom were certainly accustomed to behave like Avrohom, who had this good trait of Hillel to accept bad happenings with love. But Rivkah did not grow up in such an environment, but rather she was the

daughter of Besuel the Aramean, the sister of Lavan the Aramean, and was therefore accustomed otherwise.

Therefore when our posuk says that he prayed "opposite" his wife, the meaning is that Yitzchok prayed for the sake of his wife, because she was barren and was distressed by this, and therefore he had to pray. But if not for this he would not have prayed, because he knew that what seems bad is really good.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ לָהּ שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבִטְנֵךְ וּשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֵּעַיִךְ יִפָּרֵדוּ וּלְאֹם מִלְאֹם יֶאֱמָץ וְרַב יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר (25,23) "***And Hashem said to her: Two nations are in your womb…and the elder will serve the younger***."

The word **יעבד** (will serve) is written without a 'vav', and so can be read to mean "will be served by". On this the Midrash comments, that if the younger merits it, he will be served by the elder, but if he does not merit it, then he will serve the elder.

It seems to me that the reason why this allusion is needed, is in order to answer a problem. And that is, the Alshich spoke at length on the posuk in Eichah 3:37 "Who is this who has said and it came to pass, if Hashem did not command it", explaining that when Hashem speaks, then it must certainly be. Because of this, when the angel brings the unborn seed to Hashem, and asks Hashem what will be its various traits, he does not ask whether he will be righteous or wicked, because if Hashem would state one or the other, then the person is forced to be so, and he would have no freewill.

According to this, I asked in my youth that here in our posuk it seems that Hashem told Rivkah that Ya'akov was righteous and Eisav was wicked, and if so, they were already forced to be so and had no freewill. However, we can answer that since it simply says that one will be wicked and one will be righteous, without specifying who will be which, each has the possibility to be the righteous one and the other one will be wicked.

But there is still a problem, because it says that the elder will serve the younger, and why will this be so? It must be because the elder will be wicked and the younger will be righteous. If so, they have no freewill! For this reason, the Torah made here a word which is written one way but that can be read another way, so that the matter of who serves whom is undecided, and each one still has freewill to be the righteous one and the other will be the wicked one.

However, Rashi explained here that the words "and Hashem said to her" means that he informed her through a messenger. According to this we can answer our question differently, that granted if it had been said by Hashem Himself then they would have been forced in the matter. But it was said through an emissary, that is, Hashem did not say anything but instead He put into the heart of the prophet to know His thoughts, as it writes by Bilaam in Bamidbar 24:16 "and he knows the thoughts of the Most High". And Hashem's knowledge does not force the matter, as the Alshich explained, only speech. And so, since the speaking was not from the mouth of Hashem Himself but through an emissary, they remain with their freewill.



וַיֻּגַּד לְרִבְקָה אֶת־דִּבְרֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנָהּ הַגָּדֹל וַתִּשְׁלַח וַתִּקְרָא לְיַעֲקֹב בְּנָהּ הַקָּטָן וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הִנֵּה עֵשָׂו אָחִיךָ מִתְנַחֵם לְךָ לְהָרְגֶךָ (27,42) "***And Rivkah was told the words of Eisav her elder son, and she sent and she called for Ya'akov, her younger son, and said to him: Behold, Eisav your brother is consoling himself with you by killing you***!"

We can explain that Eisav could have killed Ya'akov even while Yitzchok was still alive, but the reason why he delayed, saying to himself that when "the days of mourning for my father shall draw near I will kill Ya'akov, my brother" is because he knew that when he kills Ya'akov he will be very happy, and on the other hand he knew that when his father dies he will be greatly distressed. Therefore he wanted to delay Ya'akov's death until his father dies, in order to

alleviate the distress that he will experience on his father's death by killing Ya'akov.

This is what Rivkah was saying to Ya'akov: "Behold, Eisav your brother is consoling himself with you by killing you" - he is planning to console himself at the time when he will be in need of consolation - when his father dies - by killing you.



◣ Reb Mordechai of Nadburna

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לָהּ שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבִטְנֵךְ וּשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֵּעַיִךְ יִפָּרֵדוּ וּלְאֹם מִלְאֹם יֵאָמֵץ וְרַב יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר - "*G-d told her, 'Two nations are in your womb... and the elder will serve the younger.*'" (25:23)

The verse states "**וְרַב יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר** - And the elder shall serve the younger." The word rav can be translated as "much." - This is to indicate that there is rav (much) work in the service of Hashem. One who wishes to gain in Torah knowledge and good deeds must begin to study and work in the service of Hashem while he is still young.

"You have no better friend than the one above." ~ The Ribnitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz (1912-1997)

The life of a person with emunah will be a life of joy even in situations when others feel sad. ~ R' Eliezer Zev Luft zt"l

◣ The Choice Is Yours - Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

וַיִּמְלְאוּ יָמֶיהָ לָלֶדֶת וְהִנֵּה תוֹמִם בְּבִטְנָהּ - "***And her days to give birth were completed, and behold, there were twins***..." (25:24)

Some people think that that they can't study Torah or serve Hashem properly because they didn't have an upbringing as good as the next person, or because their mazal (zodiac) influences them to behave a in certain way.

It is for this reason, explains the **Ritva**, that Hashem arranged that Yaakov and Eisav were born as twins. They had the same parents and were born under the same mazal, but led two very different paths; - because no matter how challenging your nature or environment is, it's your desire to serve Hashem and the choices you make that will have the biggest impact on whether you are a "Yaakov" or an "Eisav."

◣ Admirable Honesty - Shelah Hakadosh

וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים - "***Yaakov was a wholesome man***..." (25:27)

תִּתֵּן אֱמֶת לְיַעֲקֹב חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם – '***You shall give truth to Yaakov and kindness to Avraham***.' (Micha 7:20)

Of all the superior character traits possessed by our ancestor Yaakov, the Torah chooses "an honest man" as the highest praise, to teach us that nothing is more worthy of our respect and admiration than a life lived with honesty and righteousness.

"When a situation arises that causes us to worry, we should realize that Hashem wants to grant us something special, so He gives us the opportunity to earn it by overcoming our fears and placing our trust in Him." ~ Beis HaLevi, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1820-1892)

◣ Mercy For All - Rav Meir Premishlaner

וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו -"*Yitzchak loved Eisav*..." (25:28)

Yitzchak recognized Eisav for who he was but loved him nonetheless in order to have what to say later on. For should Hashem ever seek to punish Klal Yisrael, chas v'shalom, for neglecting the Torah, Yitzchak could say, "Merciful G-d, I also had a rebellious son to whom I, of flesh and blood, showed love and compassion. Surely, You can do the same!"

◣ Patience Is A Virtue - Reb Noson Of Nemirov

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הַלְעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדֹם הָאָדֹם הַזֶּה כִּי עָיֵף אָנֹכִי עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמוֹ אֱדוֹם - "*Eisav said to Yaakov, 'Feed me some of that red, red stuff, for I am exhausted.' Therefore, he was called Edom*." (25:30)



Eisav's eating is gluttonous: "Feed me." In contrast, a Jew must practice patience in his eating habits. First he arises in the morning and recites his prayers. Then he washes his hands and recites the blessing over food. Only then can he begin to eat. - Likewise, before partaking of meat, he must slaughter the ox, remove its blood and fats, and so on.

All of these preliminaries teach patience, helping us ascend beyond the level of Eisav, the level of "Feed me." (Likutey Halakhot III, p. 15a)

◣ Humble Wealth - Reb Yitzchak of Torchiv

וַיִּגְדַּל הָאִישׁ וַיֵּלֶךְ הָלוֹךְ וְגָדֵל עַד כִּי־גָדַל מְאֹד - "***And the man (Yitzchak) became rich, and gained more and more, until he became very wealthy***." (26:13)

It often happens that the wealthier a person gets, the smaller his essential "humanity" and regard for his fellow man becomes. Yitzchak, however, not only retained his quality of being a "man" the wealthier he grew but continued his rise to perfection as an empathetic human being.

◣ Counteracting Tears - Rebbe Nachman

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־אָבִיו הַבְרָכָה אַחַת הִוא־לְךָ אָבִי בָּרְכֵנִי גַם־אָנִי אָבִי וַיִּשָּׂא עֵשָׂו קֹלוֹ וַיֵּבְךְּ – "***Eisav said to his father, 'Do you have only one blessing, Father? Bless me, too, Father!' Eisav lifted his voice and cried***." (27:38)

Eisav's ability to harm the Jewish people comes from the tears he shed when he lost the blessing. We, in turn, must cry to negate the power of those tears. (See Likutey Moharan II, 30)

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner - The Smile on The Rebbe's Face

The smile on the Rebbe's face could hardly be contained.

Not that it was unusual for the **Bobover Rebbe, Rav Shlomo Halberstam, zt"l**, to smile. His demeanour was one of infectious joy, but his elation on this third day of Chanukah was unusual.

The Rebbe was present at the bris of a son of a Bobover chossid and had been honoured as *Sandak*. When asked about his incredible happiness, the Rebbe shared an extraordinary tale of kindness and hope.

Meir Zoberman and his wife, Rivka, were despondent. Nothing seemed to work. Not the doctors' advice, and, as of yet, not their prayers, either. Their desire to have a child, their dream of becoming parents, was fading away. Meir had been the beneficiary of berachos from the Rebbe on many occasions, and the Rebbe's blessings had always been fulfilled – until now. The young couple despaired and did not know where to turn.

With a lot of extra time on her hands, Rivka decided to visit local hospitals. She initiated many friendships through these visits and felt fulfilled helping those in need. One day, as she was about to leave the Maimonides Hospital, she heard groaning coming from one of the rooms. Peeking in, she noticed an elderly woman, all alone. Rivka walked in and sat down on a chair next to the bed.

The woman, who seemed to be in her seventies, was not at all interested in making conversation and was even a bit rude, but Rivka detected desperation and loneliness in the woman's tone. The room, Rivka noticed, was bare – not one card, not a single flower. Just bare walls. Rivka asked, "How long have you been here?" The woman ignored her and stared at the vacant wall next to her bed.

But Rivka would not back down. She prodded until the elderly woman finally began talking, although with some resentment in her voice. Rivka was satisfied that she had won a round in this struggle. An hour passed and Rivka even elicited a smile from the woman. As it turned out, this woman had no family and no one to visit her. Rivka promised to come back.

The next day, she returned and was greeted with a smile. The two of them spoke for another hour. The woman had so much to say, and, finally, she had someone with whom to share. Day in and day out, Rivka visited this lonely woman, and slowly the barriers were disappearing. Their relationship continued to develop. Clearly, the highlight of this woman's day was Rivka's visit.

Yet, as the woman's happiness improved, her health deteriorated. Within a few months, a serious illness ravaged her body, but Rivka sat by her side and cared for her as if she were a longtime friend.

Finally, the day came. The woman's breathing slowed and it was becoming more and more evident that she was going to die. An uneasy silence filled the room when, at last, the woman spoke.

"Rivka, I don't know how I can ever repay you for what you have done. I have no money with which to compensate you for your time. But one thing I can promise you. When I go up to Heaven, I will approach the Heavenly Throne. I will not leave there until the Al'mighty grants you the child you want."

And then she closed her eyes one final time. - And that is why the Rebbe was so happy.

Thought of the Week

'Giving gives you more than getting can ever get.'

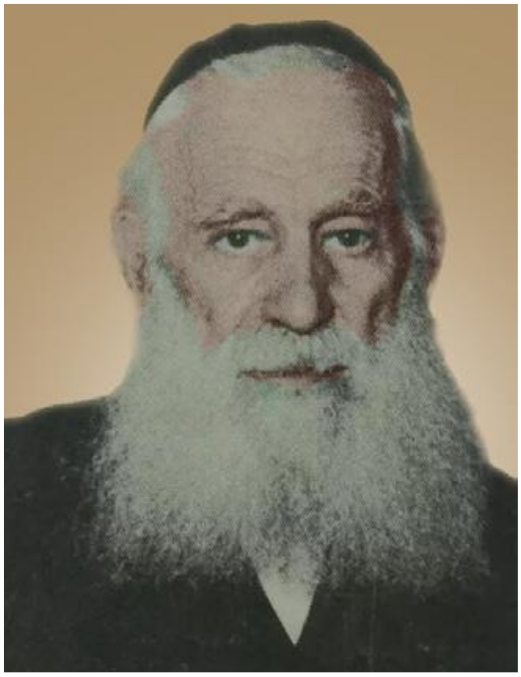
The Dreamer At Rest

A man once went to the **Slonimer Rebbe**, the *Nesivos Shalom*, and said "I want so badly to do good, to finish *Shas*, to daven with *kavanah*, to give *tzedakah*, to go out of my way for *chessed*. I want to live that life so badly. But I try and I try, and the *yetzer hara* interferes every time. - Rebbe, "I want to make Hashem proud, but I just can't win, I just can't. I'm a good-for-nothing. On my *kever*, they will write, 'Here lies the *baal sheifos*. [Aspirations] '"

The Rebbe looked at this sad man and responded, "If I were to walk into a cemetery and see a gravestone engraved, 'Here lies the *baal sheifos*,' *I would daven there more than any other grave*!"

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE
A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

Finally Here - Flashes of Greatness by Rabbi Shlomo Landau



One day a gentleman in his fifties walked into a baal teshuvah yeshivah in Eretz Yisrael, approached one of the rabbis, and said, "I am finally here, and I am ready. Please teach me Torah."

The rabbi welcomed him and said that he was thrilled to have the man join the yeshivah, but what did he mean when he said that he was "finally here"? In addition, it wasn't every day that a gentleman in his fifties would suddenly decide to join a yeshivah. "Please, tell me your story," the rabbi requested.

The gentleman asked the rabbi if they could sit down, and he shared his remarkable story: My mother was a Holocaust survivor who lost everything and everyone in her family. Forlorn and alone, she eventually made her way to Eretz Yisrael, where she met my father and finally experienced her first feelings of happiness and belonging. After they married, they moved to Tel Aviv. Shortly thereafter, they had me, and it seemed like my mother's life was finally beginning to get back on track. But one day, out of the blue, my father passed away.

Once again, my broken mother was left alone in the world, but this time with a young child to care for. Sadly, she did not have the emotional ability to care for me properly, and she also lacked the

financial resources to provide for me, so she made the difficult decision to send me to an orphanage. The nearest one was in Bnei Brak, and although she did not know it at the time, she had sent me to the Ponevezh Batei Avos under the auspices of the tireless **Ponevezher Rav**.

I was immediately put under the charge of a loving and caring staff, and I thrived both emotionally and spiritually. For the first few months, my mother did not come to visit me; she must have been dealing with her own grief. But several months into my stay, she traveled to Bnei Brak to visit me and was horrified when she realized that she had sent me to a religious institution. On the spot, she informed the staff that she was taking me out, as she would never want to have her child exposed to any form of Yiddishkeit. The orphanage staff begged and pleaded and shared how wonderfully I had been doing, but she was adamant, and that very day she brought me back to her apartment in Tel Aviv.

When the Ponevezher Rav heard what had transpired, he was devastated. He had been following my progress and knew how well I had been advancing, and he also realized how counterproductive a move back home would be for me.

The very next day, the esteemed Ponevezher Rav traveled to Tel Aviv and knocked at our door. My mother was quite taken aback to see this saintly-looking rav on her threshold, and to her credit, she welcomed him into our small apartment and offered him a seat in our tiny kitchen.

The Rav tried his hardest to convince my mother that my return to the orphanage was the best path for me and that while it was indeed a religious institution, the religion was what drove the warmth and care and high quality of the facility. My mother was unmoved and adamantly insisted that there was no way in the world that I was going back.

The Ponevezher Rav was crestfallen. And then he did something that I will never ever forget for as long as I live. He put his head down on the kitchen table and began to sob uncontrollably. For ten long minutes the Rav wept unabashedly, his entire being shaking from his deep sadness. After ten minutes, he wiped his eyes, straightened his hat and frock, and calmly and politely walked out the front door.

"For close to fifty years, those tears and those sobs have never left me, and they have accompanied me at every step of my life. I always knew in my heart of hearts that those tears would one day lead me back to everything that the Ponevezher Rav and the Batei Avos stood for."

The man concluded, "My journey has been long and complicated, but I am finally ready to come back home!"

The Voice of Ya'akov

***הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדַיִם יְדֵי עֵשָׂו* -"The voice is the voice of Ya'akov, and the hands are the hands of Eisav"** (27:22).

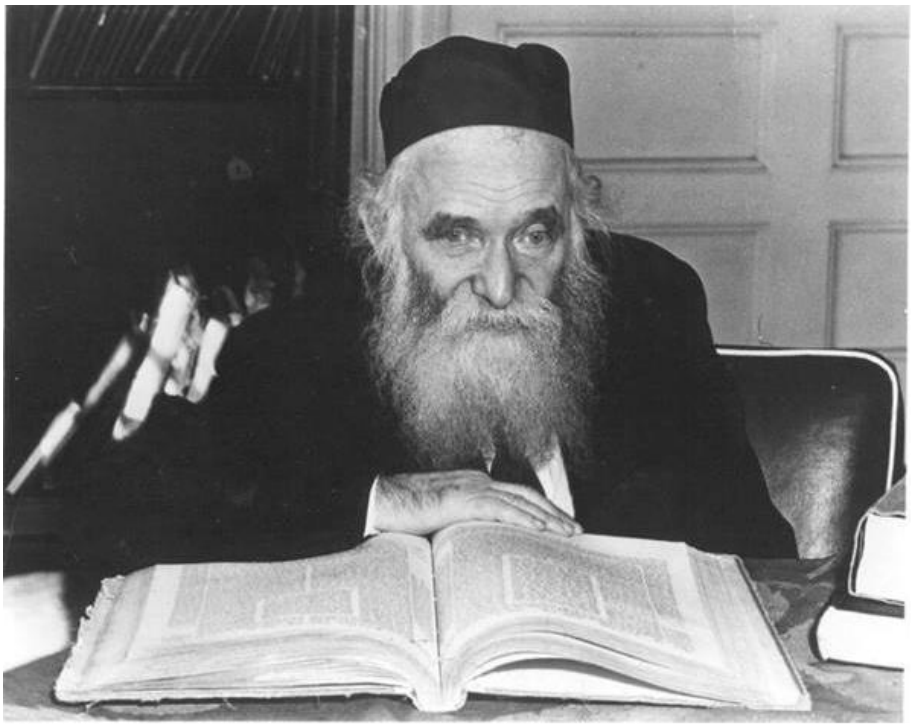
Notice that the first 'voice'-**הַקֹּל** is spelt without a 'Vav'. The Pasuk can then be translated to mean that when the voice of Ya'akov is weak (they are not Davenning and/or are not learning), that is when the hands are the hands of Eisav (Rosh).

Conversely, when we Daven and learn Torah the way we should, then Eisav has no power over us.

The hands, the **Da'as Zekeinim** explains, can only operate as far as they can reach, in which case the damage they are able to wreak is limited. The mouth on the other hand, reaches much further afield than the hands. And so it is, Yisrael's Tefilos penetrate the Heaven; they have the power to keep the evil at bay, even when it is far away.

Rav Aharon Kotler was born in Sislovitz, White Russia, in 5652 (1891) and passed away in New York City, on 2 Kislev, 5723 (1962).

Building Torah in America: Rav Aharon Kotler's Vision and the Founding of Bais Medrash Govoha



The destruction of European Jewry during World War II left the Torah world in devastation. The great centers of Torah learning that had flourished for centuries were obliterated, and the yeshiva landscape lay in ruins. Amid this darkness, Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l arrived in America in 1941 with an audacious vision: to rebuild the Torah world on American soil.

After escaping the horrors of both the German and Soviet regimes, Rav Aharon reached San Francisco on Erev Pesach 1941. Spending the second days of Yom Tov in Chicago, he then traveled by train to the East Coast, determined to save as many yidden as possible and establish a new epicenter of Torah learning that would ensure the continuity of the yeshivas.

Numerous Kabolas Panim for the Rosh Yeshiva

Recently discovered articles provide detailed accounts of numerous "Kabolas Panim" receptions held for Maran Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l. One such gathering took place on May 21 at the Young Israel Center, 229 East Broadway. The Morgen Journal reported on the event,

highlighting Rav Aharon's heartfelt words and the urgent mission he presented.


מרכז אגודת ישראל אין אמעריקא

צוזאמען מיט צעירי אגודת ישראל

אין אלע אנגעשלאסענע ארגאניזאציעס און אינסטיטוציעס

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הרב אהרן קאטלער שליט"א

איינער פון די גרעסטע תורה אויטאריטעטען פון אונזער דור, מיטגליעד
פון דער אלוועלטליכער מועצת גדולי התורה, באוואוסטער פיהרער פון
אגודת ישראל אין פוילען, וועלכער קומט אן אין ניו יארק

היינט מאנטאג, 3:30 נאכמ. אויף פענסילוויניא סטיישאן

מיר רופען אלע ארטאדאקסישע אידען צו קומען מאסענווייז צום
פענסילוויניא סטיישאן, אפצוגעבען כבוד התורה דעם שר התורה.

מרכז אגודת ישראל
הרב אליעזר סילבער, נשיא
בנימין ז. העכדעלם, מנהל-ראשי

מרכז צעירי אגודת ישראל
אלימלך מרעם, פרעזידענט

Rav Aharon's Plea: Sacrifice for Torah

Rav Aharon explained that his presence in America was driven solely by the dire necessity to save those left behind in war-torn Europe. His plea was particularly focused on rescuing the Kletzker Yeshiva and its 300 talmidim. With deep emotion, he declared, "They must be saved, and with Hashem's help, they will be saved and brought to America."

The revered Rosh Yeshiva moved the audience to tears as he described the unparalleled sacrifice for Torah being made in Europe. He painted a vivid picture of the struggles endured:

"Everywhere, Torah is being studied—even when doing so means giving up one's material existence, one's piece of bread for oneself, for one's wife, and for one's child. Torah is still being studied wherever it was studied before.

But the question remains: What will be tomorrow? How can one, under such circumstances, exist as Bnei Torah?"

Addressing the American Jewish community, he proclaimed:

"On this question, you must provide the answer—especially those who are supporters of Torah, G-d-fearing, and committed to Jewish faith in general. We are confident that Hashem will help those who dedicate themselves to Torah. But if we plead for mercy for them from Hashem the Master of the Universe," Rav Aharon exclaimed passionately, "we must demonstrate an example of mercy, of human compassion. Help the Vaad Hatzalah to save the yeshivas, particularly assisting the 300 Kletzker talmidim who must be brought to America."



A Call to Action

This emotional and inspiring address, interwoven with Divrei Torah, left a profound and lasting impression on all present. The assembly resolved to mobilize all rabbis and lay leaders alike to contribute to the rescue efforts for the Kletzker Yeshiva and the broader mission of the Vaad Hatzalah. Rav Aharon's stirring appeal became a rallying

cry for action, galvanizing support for the survival of Torah and its scholars during one of history's darkest hours.



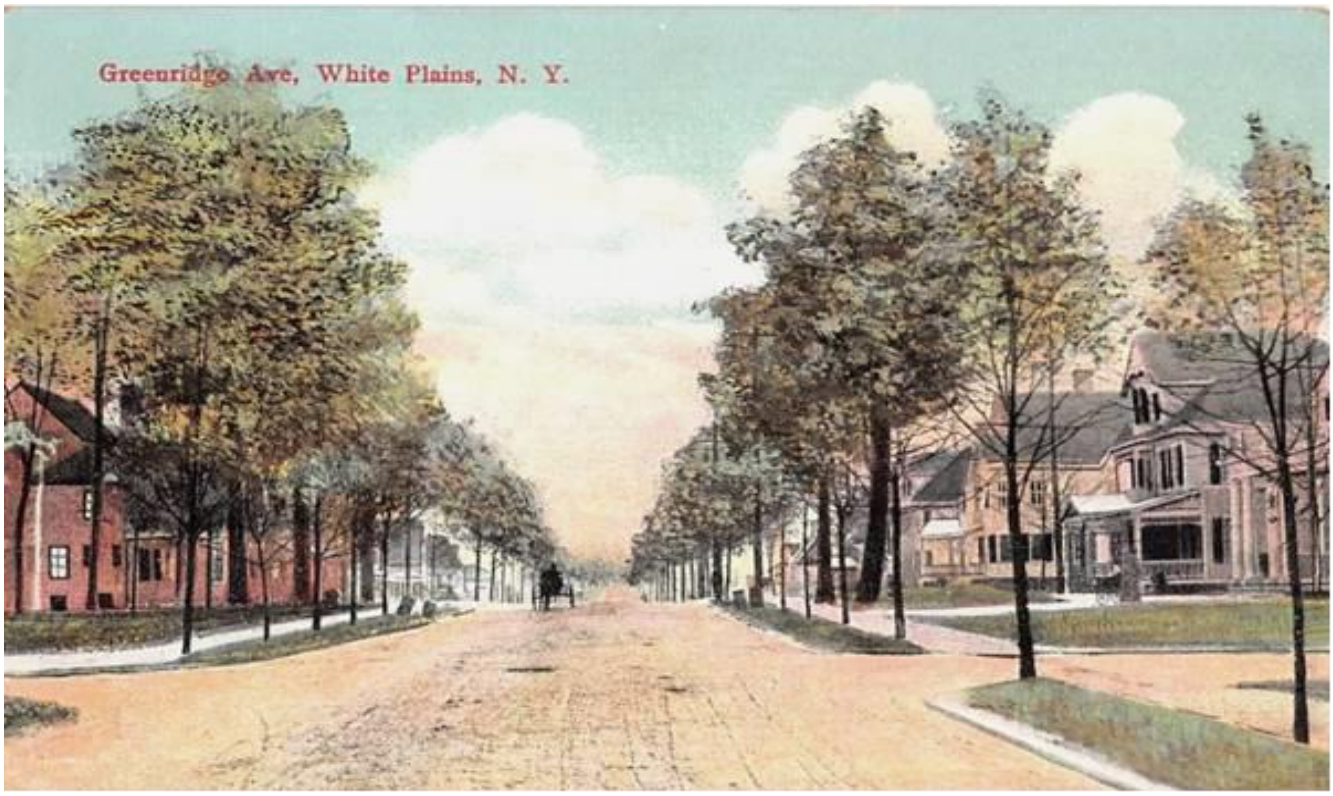
At a pivotal gathering on Manhattan's Lower East Side, Rav Aharon addressed a group of young talmidim. In his speech, he described the historical sequence of the transmission of Torah from Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai through the Rishonim, culminating with the recent Torah giants Rav Chaim Brisker, Rav Meir Simchah of Dvinsk, and Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski. He invoked this unbroken chain of Torah to emphasize their own role in continuing the legacy.

"You are the iron links of this chain," he declared. "Not as dazzling as gold or silver, but essential for the strength and continuity of Torah." Rav Aharon's plea inspired the young talmidim to dedicate their lives to learning Torah, laying the groundwork for a transformative movement.

The Early Days in White Plains

The onset of World War II in Europe forced many North American yeshivah talmidim to return home. These talmidim, who had spent years studying in yeshivos such as Mir, Kaminetz, Slabodka, or Kelm, found themselves back in the United States. Some had even married while in Europe. Upon their return, they were reminded of the very reason they had left America initially: the absence of a yeshivah of the same caliber and commitment as in Europe.

Determined to recreate the spiritual environment they had left behind, these talmidim decided to establish a Kollel where they could immerse themselves in Torah and mussar, Rav Hillel Bishko, who had arrived in the United States in 1940, played a pivotal role in the Kollel's creation.



The group chose White Plains, New York, a suburb in Westchester County, as the Kollel's location, looking for a Rosh Yeshiva they sent a delegation led by Rav Mordechai Yaffe, to present the idea to Rav Aharon Kotler.

Rav Aharon Kotler Assumes Leadership

Rav Aharon accepted, taking on both the spiritual and financial responsibilities for the fledgling institution. He brought not only his vast Torah knowledge but also his unwavering belief that the Torah world could flourish in America through total commitment to Torah learning.

The Move to Lakewood

In 1943, Rav Aharon relocated Bais Medrash Govoha to Lakewood, New Jersey. The choice of Lakewood reflected Rav Aharon's desire for an environment that would allow uninterrupted limud haTorah—

a place removed from the distractions of urban life but still accessible to New York.



Lakewood, then a quiet resort town, offered the ideal setting. With the assistance of dedicated supporters, including Irving Bunim and Menashe Rabinowitz, a property on Seventh Street was secured. Renovations began immediately, and by April 1943, the talmidim resumed their learning in the yeshiva's new home.

A Legacy of Growth

From its humble beginnings in White Plains, Bais Medrash Govoha grew into a monumental institution, shaping the future of Torah learning in America and beyond. Today, the yeshiva stands as a living testament to the vision and perseverance of Rav Aharon Kotler.

These astounding figures underscore the vitality of the Torah world that Rav Aharon envisioned.

[Courtesy of: matzav.com]

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

Successful Parenting

In this week's Parsha, the Torah tells us that Yitzchok loved Eisav. Why? Ki tzayid befiv, because Eisav would supply him with hunted animals. Yitzchok loved Eisav because of the food that he provided him with. There is a big question here. How can it be that Yitzchok loved Eisav because of food? Yitzchak wasn't chas vshalom a glutton. Yitzchok was so great – he was an oleh temimah, he was almost sacrificed on the mizbeach. He was not blemished in any sense. It seems so strange that the reason why Yitzchok loved Eisav was because of the food he would provide him with. What does this mean? Is this really why Yitzchok loved Eisav?

I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that the Shem Mishmuel, Rav Shmuel Bornsztain zt"l says that there's a deeper meaning here. The Torah is teaching us a powerful lesson. Yitzchok understood that food was what mattered to Eisav. Hunting animals was Eisav's hobby. Since Eisav was so into food, Yitzchok was willing to pretend that he cared about food. That's why he took such an interest in Eisav's hunting. Even though he was celestial and divine, Yitzchok was able to meet Eisav where he was. He was able to stoop down to a lower level.

Yitzchok is teaching us all an incredible lesson. When we deal with others, we need to take an interest in them. We need to look for ways to love them. We have the power to give someone self-esteem, a positive self-image, and faith in themselves. We can give a person the courage and fortitude to persevere and swim through difficult times. Vaye'ehav Yitzchak es Eisav, if Yitzchak could love Eisav, we could try to love others no matter how difficult it is.



A few decades ago, there was a young Jewish boy who lived in Canarsie, Brooklyn. He didn't feel fulfilled, and he wanted to go out to explore the world. When he was seventeen, he left home and traveled 2,000 miles west. He went all the way to India to learn and explore more. As he started learning more, he began to dress like them in the traditional Indian garb.

In his quest and journey for truth, he decided to go to South Dakota, where there was a woman who supposedly had legendary foresight and was known as one of the holiest of them all. After a few days of traveling, Ben arrived and approached the wise woman. However, she refused to talk to him. She said, "I heard that you are not one of us. You don't belong here."

In shock, Ben asked her, "Why does it matter that I happen to be Jewish? I became one of you!" The lady refused to accept him and said, "From my understanding, you are not one of us. Go back to your roots. That's where you belong." Ben was dumbfounded. He was rejected. He spent so much time and effort in this Indian lifestyle. He had no idea what to do.

He went back home and began asking others for guidance. One person told him about Rav Shlomo Freifeld zt"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Sh'or Yoshov. Ben called the Yeshiva and scudeled a meeting with Rav Freifled.

When they met, Rav Freifeld discussed Indian culture with Ben. These were the last topics Ben ever thought he would be discussing

with a rabbi. During the next few weeks, Ben and Rav Freifeld spoke together for hours on end. One afternoon, as they were talking in the office, someone knocked on the door and told Rav Freifeld that he was needed outside. Rabbi Freifeld excused himself and told Ben he would return in a few minutes.

Being alone in the office, Ben got up from his chair and began walking around, gazing at the overflowing bookcases filled with sefarim. He walked near Rav Freifeld's seat and noticed something unusual in a draw by his desk. There was a pile of books, and he bent down to look at them. To his amazement, the books were about Indians. It was about Indian culture!

Rabbi Freifeld was studying these books so he could understand where Ben was coming from. Rav Freifeld wanted to understand Ben and his culture to be able to help him return. Before he would meet with Ben, Rav Freifeld would read these books to be more familiar with him and to eventually help him return to Yiddishkeit. Ben studied at Sh'or Yoshuv for a few years, and he kept on growing. Now he is a Torah Jew! This is what it means to connect with others – to understand who they are and where they are coming from.

Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn

Chazal tell us אֵין קִידּוּשׁ אֶלָּא בִּמְקוֹם סְעוּדָה [Pesachim 101a] – '***There is no valid kiddush except in the place of one's Shabbos meal***.'

The Mishmeres Itamar (talmid of the **Chozeh of Lublin**) says that אֵין קִידּוּשׁ - we don't sanctify **ourselves** except in the time of the meal. This means that we must sanctify ourselves with our mouths. We must be careful not only what comes out of our mouths, but also what goes into our mouths. (For instance, when drinking, you don't drink it all in one gulp – eat and drink like a mentch.)

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



Learning From Your Meals

In Parshas Toldos, Yitzchok Avinu summons his son Eisav to stand before him to receive the great blessings of **ויתן לך האלוקים מטל השמים ומשמני הארץ**. And it was much more than a brachah of a father to a son; it was a prophecy for all generations to come, important words that would guide the future of all world events, and manipulate the history of nations.

And therefore, we should listen closely to what Yitzchok chose as the most important preparation for this great event. Because if it was up to us we know what we would have chosen as the best sort of *hachana* for such a great event. Maybe we would have told Eisav to fast and spend the day in *tefillah* and *teshuva*. Maybe Yitzchok should have gone to the mikveh and fasted as well. He could have said tehillim all day long! Now that would be a *hachanah* if there ever was one! That would be *brachos* given **בקדושה ובטהרה**!

Food As A Preparation?!

But what do we find instead? **צא השדה וצודה לי ציד** – "Go out to the field, my son, and hunt some game for me, **בעבור תברכך נפשי** – in order that I should bless you" (Toldos 27:3-4). Now that's a very

queer *passuk*. Yitzchak told Eisav to make him a meal! "If you bring me supper, then I'll be ready to bless you."

Let's say, imagine your son comes to you, and he wants a blessing. He's getting married, or he's going to a new yeshiva or opening a business. Would you say, "The first thing is, I want you to make a meal for me in order that I should bless you"? What kind of nonsense is that?! You can't give him a brachah unless he makes you a meal?! So what was Yitzchok doing here? It's a remarkable thing and we have to make note of that point; it's something that must be explained.

Yitzchok Orders Venison

And not only did Yitzchok ask Eisav to hunt some game for him and prepare for him a meal, but he added, **ועשה לי מטעמים** – "And make for me some tasty food, **כאשר אהבתי**, *like I love*." You hear such words?! Yitzchok didn't ask for just any old meal; no, that wouldn't satisfy him. He wanted it to be prepared "the way that I love." He wants a good piece of roasted venison. Venison tastes good you know. Maybe you never tasted it because it's very expensive – but well roasted venison is a delicacy.

So what are we learning here? That Yitzchok loves food! You hear that?! We ourselves would be loath to admit such a thing. It's a very strong expression. **כאשר אהבתי** – "Like I love." Imagine if somebody would say he loves food in the company of *tzaddikim*. You couldn't get away with such a thing today!

We Have Two Witnesses

And in case you might have thought that this was some sort of aberration, something that was not typical of Yitzchok Avinu, so the Torah lets us listen in on another conversation in this holy house. And we hear Rivka telling Yaakov "If you want to be the one to get the *brachos* from your father, we're going to have to prepare for him a delicious meal **כאשר אהב**, *like he loves*." So **על פי שנים עדים יקום**

דבר, we're told this idea twice already. Once Yitzchok Avinu himself tells us that he loves good food. And then Rivka tells us the same: **כאשר אהב**, "Like he loves." Now we know that Yitzchok Avinu was no glutton – *chas v'shalom*. So we have to understand what's doing here.

So we'll explain as follows: It's clear that Yitzchok loved his son enough even before he would partake of the venison that Eisav placed before him. No question about that. And there's no question that Yitzchok was capable of bestowing a beautiful *brachah* on his son without the incentive, without the *gashmiyusdigeh* motivation of good food. And nonetheless, we see that Yitzchok wanted that he should first partake of a meal that Eisav would make for him – "tasty foods like I love" – and only then would he be ready to give the *brachos*.

Good Food Intensifies The Love

And the reason for this is because Yitzchok knew that this would *intensify even more* his love for his son. "The time has come to give Eisav the *brachos* and I want it to be the best *brachos* possible. Of course I could give Eisav a good *brachah* – I could put my hands on his head and cry copious tears – but a good *bracha* is not good enough for me. I want it to be the best, the most heartfelt *brachah* possible."

And so when Eisav went out to the field to go hunting for him, to catch a deer, so Yitzchok was thinking, "My son will bring me some deer meat and he'll broil it for me and make it taste good. And I'm going to love him even more for that. My love for him will well up in my heart not only as a result of thinking that he's my son, that he's my future; not only that, but look what he did for me – he went and made me something tasty to eat. And as I'm eating the food he prepares for me, my love for him will become even greater than it is now, and my *brachah* to him will be greater as well."

And therefore, he said to Eisav, "Make me a tasty dish, *make it very tasty the way I love it*, **בעבור תברכך נפשי**, so that

my *nefesh*, my *soul* should bless you." Because after eating a good meal that Eisav prepares for me, now it's a *different kind of brachah entirely.* Not merely that my tongue and my lips should bless him. And not even so that my mind should bless him; "*but* **בעבור תברכך נפשי**, *so that my whole being should bless you."* It will come from deeper in my soul, with even more love than was possible beforehand.

Yitzchok Was Human

Now we might say, for Yitzchak Avinu isn't that an insult to him? That by eating of Eisav's food, Yitzchak would be more enthusiastic, more sincere, in bestowing a blessing on him?! And the answer is *yes! Because that is human nature.* And Yitzchok wasn't a *malach;* he *was* a *tzadik* but even a righteous man is *a human being.* And that's how Hashem made human nature. And so Yitzchok understood that in order that the blessing should be *more perfect in enthusiasm,* it was necessary to eat of Eisav's cooking beforehand.

The Entire Universe Is Making Food

Look out the window, the whole world is eating! People are walking in the street, that's a proof that they're eating. Otherwise they wouldn't be able to walk. Everybody is eating! And the entire universe is working to get you a piece of bread, a tomato, a piece of chicken and a potato.

In *sefer Emunas V'deios*, Rabbeinu Saadia Gaon makes a remark that enlightens us about the nature of *Olam Hazeh*. He says that this world is a world that's made for the production of food. The machinery of how the world works revolves *entirely* around the purpose of supplying food. It's a very important observation that nobody pays attention to. But Rav Saadiah Gaon made note of this phenomenon. The entire *Olam Hazeh* is geared for the function of **מכלכל חיים בחסד**.

The first thing that we take note of is that the entire earth, with all its phenomena, is devoted to the purpose of creating and

supporting life, through a wonderful system that supplies the food needs of all the living. The entire soil that blankets this earth is only for the purpose of supplying food. The winds, the sun, the rain, the atmosphere, many factors have the sole function of cooperating in supplying food for the living. The vast phenomena of the sun, the force of gravity, the winds, the rains, the snow and the atmospheric gases all cooperate in the mighty function of supplying you with your breakfast, lunch and supper – as well as all that snacking in between. And of course these systems are all cooperating with each other to feed the world. And if you open your eyes, if you open your mind, you see it all day long.

The marvel of the food supply system is absolutely incomparable to anything else. It's majestic; a remarkable demonstration of the *yad Hashem*. And it's being done for the sole purpose of bringing that slice of bread and that piece of chicken to your plate.

Why Is Food The "Davar Gadol"?

And that leaves us with the glaring question that we should be asking ourselves: What is the purpose of all this? Why is so much going on in this world all for the purpose of food? Such a wondrous and remarkable proliferation and for what?! For what purpose did Hashem do this? And why is it called the *davar gadol*, the most important of all the chasdei Hashem?

And so we'll study a gemara in *Mesichta Chullin* (4b), and there, we will find an answer to this question – why is food such a *davar gadol*? What makes it such an important phenomenon, that it should be the greatest of all the *chasdei Hashem*?

The Way To A Man's Heart Is Through His Stomach

We find there a very interesting observation that Chazal make. They tell us that the most effective way to persuade a person, to entice a person, is not with words. **אין הסתה בדברים** – "You can't really entice somebody with words," they say. The real way to persuade somebody

is with **אכילה ושתייה**, with food and drink. And Rashi explains there that **אדם שצריך לאכילה עיקר הסתה באכילה ושתייה** – for a person living in this world of *gashmiyus*, the way to his heart, the way to buy his love, is with good food. When you want to make that big sale to an important customer, you make sure to take him out to a good restaurant. Of course, you'll be talking about how your prices can't be matched, and about the quality of your goods, you'll show him that the deal is a no-brainer – but still you need to put that good steak in front of him so that he should like you, and to induce him into closing that deal.

And now we can understand why Hashem gives us food. We thought that there's food in the world merely because we have to live – we need the nourishment, the vitamins, in order to survive. We need energy to do mitzvos, to learn Torah. And we thought that food is the *heicheh timtzei* to be able to live. But no, that's not the real purpose. Because our nourishment could have been tasteless and colorless, and without aroma. *Hakodosh Boruch Hu could have given us the fuel we need without all the fun of eating*!

One White Pill Three Times A Day For 120 Years

Hashem could have made apples that have all the materials you need to regenerate your worn-out tissues, to give you the energy you need. And the apples could be without taste and without color. You wouldn't enjoy it. As much as you enjoy the gasoline you put into your car, that's how much you'd enjoy the apples. You'd chew them anyhow; what could you do? You have to refuel. But instead Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave you apples that are red, or golden delicious, and they taste good, all different types of flavors, and sweet aromas too.

And who needs apples at all? Hashem could have given us white pills without any taste. And **בלית ברירה**, with no other option, we would eat the white pills. And we would have been happy to ingest the life-giving materials which would supply us with energy. It would keep us

going like vitamins. They don't have any taste. Sometimes they're bitter. But we'd eat them because we have to.

Hashem Is Persuading Us!

But instead He gives us "pills" that taste good. He feeds us **בטובו בחן בחסד וברחמים**, in His goodness, kindliness, grace and mercy. Hashem made the eating function into a considerable pleasure by bestowing on our food a wide variety of tastes, colors and aromas. The large amount of fruit, with each fruit itself coming in various flavors and shades of color. A variety of poultry and fish and meat. Varieties of grains and vegetables and fruit. And various spices and condiments.

And that's what the gemara in Chulin is teaching us: What's it all for? Why is there an endless variety of foods and tastes? The wide variety of foods and drinks in this world is *Hashem trying to persuade us*. He is doing His best to persuade us to perfect ourselves in Awareness of His kindliness, of the *chesed* He's doing for us, so that we should be tangibly feeling His *chesed* all day long, and falling in love with Him. All day long Hashem is trying to seduce you with the endless variety of good foods, tasty foods, **מטעמים כאשר אהבתי**. And after every meal, you should be a different person, you should feel an even greater love and appreciation of Hakodosh Boruch Hu who just took you out for supper!

Feel The Tangible Love

And that is the real reason why this world is a food making machine. So that we should rejoice in this endless variety and appreciate the infinite kindness of Hashem. And it's all for the purpose of inducing us to love Him. That's the reason we're eating and enjoying these things!

And that's what we say in birchas hamazon every day: You're feeding us Hashem; and You do it **בחן בחסד וברחמים**. And what's it's all for? It's for one purpose, **בעבור שמו הגדול**, for the sake of His great name,

so that we should appreciate what You're giving to us and feel an actual love, a tangible love for You.

And just like Yitzchok's eating from Eisav was the catalyst for an entirely different *brachah*, that is the goal of all of our eating. If we eat this way, with the thoughts of what Hashem is giving to us, then our gratitude and love, and our *brachos* to Him become entirely different than they were before the meal.

Putting Kneidel Into Your Head

And so when you eat for the purpose of His great name, even though you're eating it with joy – you know it's fun eating the *kneidelech* – but you're becoming a new person while you eat the *kneidelech*. Because besides for the extra weight you put on, you're also putting something into your mind.

It's not difficult. It's the same eating; you don't have to forgo any of the pleasures of the breakfast table. But what you *do* have to do is reconsider the entire subject of eating. Because if you're sitting here, if you come to this place, you already know all about how good Hakodosh Boruch Hu is to you. He is giving you a heart that's beating, a kidney that's functioning, lungs, a spleen, and eyes; it's endless! You can walk and talk and breathe – it's all *chasdei Hashem*! But it's *the food*, *the drink*, that touches the spot and is the best catalyst to actually loving Him and fulfilling the mitzvah of **ואהבת את השם אלוקיך**. And that's what Yitzchok labored in all the days of his life. He knew that the function of eating is the very important function in gaining a knowledge and love of Hashem. And the person who eats like an *eved Hashem* is supposed to eat, and makes *brachos* like an *eved Hashem*, that's the person who comes closer and closer to Hashem all the days of his life and achieves the perfection that he came to this world for.

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar

Stamped in Red

Yocheved Brody was all of fifteen when the Nazis invaded her native Austria one year before the outbreak of World War II. Until that day, she lived an idyllic existence, and nothing prepared her for the drastic turn her life would take along with the Anschluss. She never forgot the day when all Austrian Jews were ordered to ap- pear in the town square and form a long line to receive their new German passports, stamped with a large, red J. Her father was so distraught by the demeaning treatment of the sovereign nation that he determined the time was ripe for the family to leave Europe behind and emigrate to Eretz Hakodesh.

Following intensive efforts, and a considerable sum of money disbursed in fees and bribes, Mr. Brody obtained tickets. The family retroactively learned that this was the final ship that reached the shores of Palestine before the British closed the ports to foreigners. Thus Yocheved and her immediate family were spared the fires of the inferno. However, all her relatives and friends, and the community she loved perished al kiddush Hashem.

Grieving an entire world turned to ashes, Yocheved deliberately abandoned her past, detaching herself emotionally from Europe and the intense heartache it evoked. After the war, when the new German government declared that anyone who had suffered as a result of the Nazi conquest was entitled to reparations, and a citizen of any country annexed to Germany was eligible for German citizenship, Yocheved rejected the opportunity in disgust. She so despised the German regime that she gave all her old personal documents to a friend for safekeeping, unable to bear them in her home.

Years passed. Yocheved married, built a beautiful family, and raised children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in the path of

Torah and yiras Shamayim, eventually restoring her neshamah to Heaven.

Months later, Rivka Levi was astonished by the strange package she received in the mail. Peering at the aging, yellowed documents, she found herself gazing into the eyes of her grandmother as a small child. Never before had she seen a photo of her grandmother as a young girl, and suddenly, all the stories that she'd heard growing up came to life before her eyes. A chill ran up her spine as she saw the red J stamped across her grandmother's passport.

She deliberated what to do with the items, which a brief note inserted into the envelope explained had been sent to her by a grandchild of her bubby's old friend, who had also passed away several months earlier. In the back of her mind, she vaguely recalled her high school history teacher mentioning that the German government awarded citizenship to the resident of any country annexed by the Germans during the Nazi conquest, as well as all their family members. With that in mind, Rivka stuck the envelope in a bottom desk drawer along with a large pile of papers that needed to be sorted.

Three years passed, and Rivka's nine-year-old daughter Rochie began exhibiting signs of general physical weakness. The doctor ordered a full course of blood tests, and soon it emerged that the child was suffering severe liver failure. Rochie's skin turned sallow, and her body was so weak she could barely lift her hands. She was quickly hospitalized and kept in isolation to ward off an infection her body was too weak to fight.

The Levis's lives turned upside down, the exclusive focus on their desperately ill child, who was fighting a losing battle for her life. The family sought the opinions of top Israeli specialists, yet all admitted they lacked the expertise to treat this particular illness. Further research led them to discover that Rochie's best-and perhaps only option for treatment was in a medical center in

Germany that specialized in this particular field. Yet further inquiries revealed that the cost of the requisite two-month hospital stay for noncitizens, added to the cost of international airfare and accommodations in a foreign country, amounted to an astronomic one million euros, none of which was covered by the family's standard health insurance.

Rivka ended her call trembling and tearful. One million euros! How in the world can we come up that? It's impossible, but one million euros is Rochie's only hope! If only we could get German citizenship, the medical care would be free!

Her heart skipped a beat. Bubby's passport! By law, Bubby and all her descendants are entitled to German citizenship!

She ran to her home office and rummaged through piles of paper-work awaiting her attention, until she found the manila envelope that had struck her as so strange years earlier. Dumping the contents on the desk, she found the coveted passport with its yellowed pages and blood-red stamp. One frenetic week later, the Levis and their daughter boarded a plane to Germany. In Berlin, they appealed urgently to every party and authority that could help, engaging the local Jewish community to assist them as well.

Finally, one week later, Rivka Levi and all her children received their official German citizenship - a status that reduced the cost of Rochie's life-saving treatment to several tens of thousands of euros.

Seventy years after the red stamp bearing the large, red "J" humiliated a young Jewish girl and her family, it saved the life of another little girl - her very own great-granddaughter.

Only a monkey mimics the behaviour of his neighbor. ~ The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

The pasuk tells us that Yitzchok and Rivka were childless for many years - וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ '***And Yitzchok prayed to Hashem opposite his wife because she was barren, and Hashem accepted his prayer, and Rivka his wife conceived***.' - He davened <u>because</u> she was barren.

The gemara Yevamos 64a tells us a very important *yesod* in Tefillah: אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: מִפְּנֵי מָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ עֲקוּרִים מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מִתְאַוֶּה לִתְפִלָּתָן שֶׁל צַדִּיקִים – '*Rabbi Yitzchok said: For what reason were our forefathers initially infertile? Because the Holy One, Blessed be He, desires the prayers of the righteous.*' - The tefillos of the Tzadikim are cherished by Hashem – and therefore they were barren.

The first thing that we need to understand from this gemarah is a very important yesod in tefillah: We often understand, superficially perhaps, that tefillah is a means to an end. A person who **לא עלינו** is in a difficult situation, and needs salvation, will daven, because we know that tefillah has a tremendous strength, and will hopefully lead to a yeshua.

The gemara is telling us that the opposite is the truth. The tefillah is not the means to the end, - it is the end – that is the tachlis in its own right! Hashem wants our tefillos because the tefillos themselves are highly valued to Him.

Really the pasuk should have mentioned that Rivka was barren and therefore Yitzchok davened. But it mentions the tefilla coming first just like the gemara suggests.

Secondly, you should know that tefilla is an avoidah. You musn't measure the power of a tefiila on the strength of how much it was answered or achieved. Tefilla is a treasured avodah in itself. True, it brings rachamim, but it is worthwhile in its own right. That's why the gemara says that's why sometimes a person finds himself in a situation of difficulty.

I saw that Rav Pam has a different slant on this inyan: Why should Yitzchok and Rivka suffer so much in this manner in order to solicit their tefillos?

Rav Pam answers that what the gemara intends by saying **מִתְאַוֶּה לִתְפִלָּתָן שֶׁל צַדִּיקִים** , it means that a child, shidduch or any other yeshuah that has come about through tefilla, is on a different level/product altogether, compared to something that has come about '*naturally*'. Therefore, as the gemara suggests, Hashem particularly wanted tefillos to bring about Yitzchok and Rivka's yeshuah. The child that is born through tefilla is therefore born with a different level of kedusha altogether.

In last week's sedra Eliezer says **וַיְסַפֵּר הָעֶבֶד לְיִצְחָק אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה** – '*And the servant told Yitzchok all the things that he had done.*' (24:66) . Rashi comments: **וְשֶׁנִּזְדַּמְּנָה לוֹ רִבְקָה בִּתְפִלָּתוֹ** - '*Rivka had come to him providentially as a result of his prayer.*' - It wasn't just a chance meeting – it came about through his tefilla! Eliezer wanted to emphasize the fact that this shidduch came about through his tefilla! It was on a different level altogether!

Famously, the gemara in Berachos 31b tells us about Chana who gave birth to Shmuel [Who was perhaps **מורה הלכה בפני רבו**]. Eli said that really he deserves to die, and offered Chana somebody as a replacement even more choshuv than Shmuel. Chana turned round and said, **אֶל הַנַּעַר הַזֶּה הִתְפַּלָּלְתִּי** - "***For this child that I davened for, it can never be replaced***!"

Rabboisai – we don't need to wait **חָלִילָה** for challenges that then require our tefillos. But the tefillos that bring about our beracha, children, parnasso, gezunt, should come prior, with the understanding that everything comes from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. May Hashem answer and accept all our tefillos.

Yeshivas Bircas Hatorah
ישיבת ברכת התורה

Selling His Birthright



This week's Parsha mentions the episode of Esav's sale of his birthright to Yaakov. The Gemorah in Bava Basra **דף ט"ז** mentions that on the day that Esav sold his right to the firstborn, he transgressed 5 sins.

The Passuk says, **ויאכל וישת ויקם וילך ויבז עשו את הבכורה**. Rashi comments that we see from this seemingly innocuous verse the magnitude of Esav's iniquity of selling his birthright. One could certainly ask, out of these five heinous crimes mentioned in the Gemorah, we would certainly not assume that the most severe was the selling of his birthright?!

Similarly, the **Ramban** explains that his main sin wasn't even the selling of the birthright, but rather what the verse says what he did immediately after the sale; "He got up and went on his way to go hunting", which means to say, he went on with his normal life. How does the Ramban understand this ostensibly insignificant act of going back to his normal life as Esav's greatest sin?

Perhaps we could answer that when a normal person does a sin which he was driven to by his animal instincts, this doesn't necessarily testify that he is a wicked person in his core, as we all have base desires. But by Esav selling his birthright, which he had no desire to

have as there was no inherent pleasure involved, he succeeded in denigrating the spiritual value of the birthright. Such scorn stems from a far worse source then a simple "indulging" of one's desire and really evidences the true nature of where Esav was holding.

The Rabenu Yonah explains this concept based on a Passuk in Mishle which says that just as the integrity of gold and silver can be determined by melting it into a liquid, and revealing it's impurities, so can human beings be evaluated based on where they place their importance. The things that a person holds in esteem will usually be indicative of what his true essence is.

Based on this Rabenu Yonah, we may now respond to the question that we asked on the Ramban. Perhaps we could have justified Esav's actions of selling his birthright by explaining how hungry he was and he just wanted to enjoy a little Chollent. But when we see that he went about his normal life after the sale as opposed to feeling remorse for his crime, this shows beyond all doubt that he didn't value the spiritual importance of the Birthright.

Some ask how Esav's sale of his birthright was considered valid as he didn't receive the proper payment for such a valuable commodity. Based on what we said, we could answer that to Esav, the amount that he received was truly how much he felt this birthright was worth. By him believing this to be the value, he made this his reality and transformed the objective cost of birthrights – vis-à-vis Esav – to be a bowl of Chollent.

The Gemorah in Kesuvos, **קי"א** says that an individual who possesses the light of Torah, that light will sustain him in the after-life, and one who lack's this light, will not be sustained.

R' Shteinman explains this Gemorah to mean that only somebody who has reached the level that the Torah is appreciated by him as the "light of his eyes", (meaning to say that the Torah is his greatest delight in life), will be sustained by it in the world to come.

May we be Zoche to follow in the footsteps of our forefathers and recognize the truly valuable things in this life!

This week's Parsha tells us how Yitzchak and Rivka were childless for many years. The verse says that they both prayed opposite each other – meaning to say for the same purpose – to have children. The Gemorah in Yevamos (64) makes note of the fact that the verse says that Hashem answered him (Yitzchak), when it should have said that Hashem answered them.

The Gemorah explains that one cannot compare Yitzchak's prayer, who was righteous and his father was righteous as well, to Rivka's prayer, who although being righteous herself did not have a righteous father.

One could ask on this Gemorah, it seems strange that Hashem would show favoritism to one who grows up in a home of righteous people. Isn't it more impressive for one to make something of themselves despite their coming from a background which would hinder righteous activity? Furthermore, Rashi in this week's Parsha praises Rivka specifically for her remaining righteous in spite of the fact that she was surrounded by wicked people, and it is well known that in the place where Baale Teshuva stand, even completely righteous Tzadikim cannot approach this place. Why then was Rivka not deserving that her prayers should be answered as well?

R' Simcha Ziesel explains that there are two different kinds of prayers in the world. The first is a prayer which is borne out of desperation that one feels because of his situation in life and his recognition that Hashem is the only one who can save him. While this prayer is certainly a lofty prayer, and is well received by Hashem, and will usually generate a lot of Kavana in the one who is praying, R' Simcha Ziesel explains that this kind of prayer is not completely for the sake of Hashem, but rather a desperate cry for

help which is coming from a certain place of selfishness and one's desire for his own good.

On the other hand there is a prayer which is far loftier, but at the same token is far more difficult to generate concentration for. This is a prayer that one makes to Hashem, not on account of any difficulty that one is experiencing, but rather solely for the ability to stand in front of Hashem and talk to one's creator. (This kind of person may indeed have difficulties but that is not his reason for praying). He calls this "Prayer for the sake of Prayer". This kind of prayer evidences that this person has no selfish motivation, rather he is one who possesses an unconditional love for Hashem.

This, explains R' Simcah, is what the Gemorah is referring to when it says that one should always precede his difficulties with prayer and not wait until he has anguish to begin praying.

With this principle the Mashgiach removes our difficulty. While it is certainly true that both Yitzchak and Rivka's prayers were very special, Yitzchak himself had no reason to pray. Yitzchak, being the son of Avraham Avinu was already assured that he would be made into a great nation and have many children. The only thing he wasn't sure of was whether or not his progeny would come through Rivka or another woman. His prayer, therefore, was not borne out of desperation, but rather was just his normal everyday prayer which happened to have a request in it. Rivka on the other hand had no such assurance. Her prayer ergo could not have been totally for the sake of heaven and was therefore not as fitting to be answered as Yitzchak's was.

May we merit to realize the valuable opportunity that we are given on a daily basis and take full advantage of it!



A Person Can Get Used to Anything

The *pasuk* says "When Esav was forty years old, he took as a wife Yehudis daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite; and they were a provocation of the spirit to Yitzchak and Rivka." (Bereshis 26:34-35).

The Medrash notes the fact that the Torah points out that the daughters-in-law behavior was painful **to** Yitzchak and **to** Rivka (*l'Yitzchak **u'l'**Rivka*) rather than merely stating that their behavior was painful to Yitzchak and Rivka (*l'Yitzchak v'Rivka*) – without the second "**to**".

The Medrash states that the nature of the Yitzchak's pain differed from that of Rivka's pain. Rivka, having grown up in the house of idolaters, was better able to handle pagan daughters-in-law than was her husband, who grew up in the house of Avraham and Sora.

Rivka was a *tzadekes* and of course *avodah zarah* bothered her, but having experienced it at home, she did not have the same visceral reaction to it as did Yitzchak.

Dr. Abraham Twerski, zt"l, makes the point that a person who is exposed to negative phenomenon on a daily basis can lose their sensitivity to it. If you see something day in and day out, you can get used to it. You can get used to anything.

That can be a tremendous advantage, but it can be a horrible disadvantage as well – if someone loses his sensitivity to evil.

And Yitzchak Gave the Wells the Same Names as His Father Had Given Them

The *pasuk* says, **וְכָל־הַבְּאֵרֹת אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ עַבְדֵי אָבִיו בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו סִתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיְמַלְאוּם עָפָר** - "*All the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Avraham his father, the Plishtim stopped up, and filled them with earth.*" (26:15).

The Chumash continues: **וַיָּשָׁב יִצְחָק וַיַּחְפֹּר אֶת־בְּאֵרֹת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיְסַתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקְרָא לָהֶן שֵׁמוֹת כַּשֵּׁמֹת אֲשֶׁר־קָרָא לָהֶן אָבִיו** - "*And Yitzchak dug anew the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Avraham his father and the Plishtim had stopped them up after Avraham's death; and he called them by the same names that his father had called them.*" (26:18)



Avraham dug wells and the Plishtim stopped them up. Yitzchak came along and re-dug those same wells. Not only did he re-dig the same wells, but he also renamed them with the very same names that Avraham had originally called them.

One might ask—although this is a somewhat irreverent way to state it—Who cares? Lech-Lecha, Vayera, and Chayei Sarah relate the life story of Avraham. Vayetzei, Vayishlach, Vayeshev and then Miketz, Vayigash, and Vayechi relate the life stories of Yaakov and Yosef. Yitzchak only gets a single parsha, Parshas Toldos. Is this event so significant? Do we really need the story of the wells in the one short parsha devoted to Yitzchak? Obviously, this must be significant if the Torah, which includes precious few words about Yitzchak, goes through the effort of including all these details. What is the deeper message here?

The *sefer* HaKesav v'HaKabalah explains that Avraham's digging of the wells was a tremendous public service. Society back then was not like it is today. Someone could not go to the faucet in his home, turn on the tap and get water. Having a well was a big deal. When people travelled, there were no rest stops where they could stop to get a Coke or lemonade. There was no indoor plumbing. There were none of these things.

What did Avraham do? He called each of the wells he dug by a specific name. The HaKesav v'HaKabalah writes that the names Avraham gave his wells all had to do with the Name of Hashem. He called Yerushalayim "*Hashem Yir-eh*" (G-d sees) and he called another city "*Beis El*" (the House of G-d). Avraham Avinu wanted to put the Name of *Hashem* into the mouths of people. He was a revolutionary, an iconoclast. His introduction of monotheism into a world of polytheism was a spiritual revolution.

The Rambam writes that he was successful in bringing tens of thousands of people under the Wings of Divine Presence. He weaned the masses from idolatry and put the Name of G-d into their vocabulary. He did that through feeding people and being *m'karev* people. But he also did it by digging wells and giving each of them names that had to do with Hashem.

When a person would ask another traveler, "Where did you get your water?" he would answer, "Oh, I got it at the Well of Hashem, the *Be'er Elokim*, the *Be'er Shakai*. That had a tremendous impact on people because they had to think: G-d's Well! People associated water and public service with the *Ribono shel Olam*.

When the Plishtim stuffed up the wells, it was not just an act of vandalism. They had to have a motivation for doing this—as obviously they needed the water as well. They stuffed up the wells because they saw what effect those wells had on society. People were now abandoning the pagan gods and believing in the *Ribono shel Olam*.

They stuffed up Avraham's wells to eradicate the Name of Hashem from the lips of the masses. Their goal was to reduce the mention of the *Ribono shel Olam* in the mouths of people.

The HaKesav v'HaKabalah writes that Yitzchak wanted to re-implement the original plan of his father. He re-dug those same wells AND—what is more important—he called them the same names that his father called them, to reintroduce the concept of "the *Be'er* of*Hashem*," "the *Be'er Shakai*," the "*Be'er Tzivakos*," or whatever he called them. These were not just water holes. This was a religious war, a cultural battle to wean people from *avodah zarah*.

Therefore, this is far from an insignificant act in the life of Yitzchak. It is a very significant and characteristic act on the part of Yitzchak Avinu.

Yitzchak Trembled Twice in His Life

The following is part of a Teshuva Drasha that **Rav Yaakov Breish** (1895-1976) said in Switzerland on the Yom Kippur following World War II.

Eisav came into Yitzchak and said, "…I am your first-born son Eisav." The very next *pasuk* says "Yitzchak trembled a great trembling…" (Bereshis 27:32-33)

The Medrash Tanchuma notes that Yitzchak trembled twice in his life. The first time was when his father placed him on the Mizbayach at the time of *Akeidas Yitzchak*. The second time was when Eisav entered after Yaakov had taken the *brachos* (blessings).

Which was the greater of the two frights? From the fact that the *pasuk* says by the second trembling "*Gedolah ad me'od*" (exceedingly great), we understand that Yitzchak trembling when Eisav entered after Yaakov took the *brachos* was the greater of the two frights.

Rav Yaakov Breish said an incredible thing in that Yom Kippur drasha, given the historical context:

Over the centuries, Klal Yisrael has lost millions of people. They have lost millions of people in two ways.

(1) They lost millions of people because people "were *moser nefesh al gabay hamizbayach*" – i.e., people were willing to give up their lives for Yiddishkeit. They did this throughout the millennia.

(2) Unfortunately, there was also another way how Jews have been lost and that is through assimilation. This is the expression we hear all too often today: We are witnessing our own holocaust. It is not a holocaust of people being killed; it is a holocaust of shrinkage through assimilation. The number of Jews in America has remained steady at approximately five million for the last fifty years. Simple demographics dictate that if there were five million Jews forty or fifty years ago, then there should be a significant geometric progression by now. It should not remain constant at five million.

Why are there still only five million? The answer is that people are intermarrying, and we are losing people. It is not because our enemies are killing us, it is because they are embracing us. The major trembling that Yitzchak experienced here was that Eisav was bringing him delicacies. He was trying to win our favor. He was trying to be open to us.

Which is a greater fear—losing Jews who are martyred or losing Jews to the fact that Eisav is bringing delicacies and trying to win us over to his camp? That is the question the Medrash poses. And the Medrash answers that the latter fear is the greater of the two. *Charada Gedola ad Me'od*. This is a far greater tragedy about which one must tremble exceedingly.

At Least We Should Try To Act Like Eisav!

The Torah speaks of Eisav's special set of clothes in which Rivka disguised Yaakov [Bereishis 27:15]. Our Sages infer that this was a special set of clothing that Eisav reserved for serving his father.

Although he was a thoroughly wicked person, he showed tremendous respect to his father and honored him in an extraordinary fashion. Whenever Yitzchak asked him to do something, Eisav would not merely appear in his street clothes or his hunting clothes. He had a special set of clothing reserved only for the service of his father. [Rabban Shimeon ben Gamliel comments - "all my life I tried to faithfully serve my father according to halacha, but I did not pay him 1% of the honor that Eisav gave to his father, Yitzchak."]

At this time, Yitzchak was already blind, as we clearly see from the story of the blessings. So when Eisav would dress up in his special clothing, it did not even make a difference to Yitzchak. Yitzchak would have no way of knowing what Eisav was wearing. Therefore, this fact demonstrates that when Eisav was serving his father it was not merely an act. He put on his best clothes even when his father was not aware of it. That was the extent of the Kibud Av of Eisav.

Many people are blessed with parents who are older. Sometimes when people become old, they loose awareness of their surroundings The parents may sometimes not even recognize that the person in the room is their son or daughter.

We must learn from Eisav. Eisav dressed up for his father, even when his father would not have known if Eisav was wearing street clothes or Shabbos clothes or no clothes. His Kibbud Av was such that "It does not matter what my father knows or what my father realizes. I have a responsibility to honor my father." - In this sense we all must try to emulate Eisav.

Not Taking "No" For An Answer When It Comes To Praying To The Almighty For Our Needs

In this week's parsha, the Torah says that Yitzchak was forty years old when he married Rivka. *Rivka Imeinu* was barren – as was the case with *Sarah Imeinu* and as was the case with *Rochel Imeinu* (which is the subject of a discussion in Tractate Yevomos 64a). Yitzchak prayed to Hashem that his wife should be able to have children. The expression the Torah uses to express the nature of Yitzchak's prayer is "*Va'Ye'etar Yitzchak l'Hashem…*" [Yitzchak entreated Hashem] [Bereishis 25:21]. Rashi explains this to be "**הִרְבָּה וְהִפְצִיר בִּתְפִלָּה**" [he importuned much through prayer]. This means, not only did Yitzchak daven for Rivka, but he was persistent in his davening. *L'Haftzir* means to persist and to do something over and over again.

Rav Shimshon Pincus, z"l, notes that the Talmud in fact comments [Brochos 32b] "If a person sees that his prayers are not being accepted, he should repeat them, as it is written **קַוֵּה אֶל־ה' חֲזַק וְיַאֲמֵץ לִבֶּךָ וְקַוֵּה אֶל־ה'** - '*Hope to Hashem, strengthen yourself and He will give you courage, and hope to Hashem.*'" [Tehillim 27:14] This in fact is what Yitzchak did here.

However, we must ask, why is it like that? For example, if someone asks to borrow your car and for whatever reason you decline to lend your car, what is the appropriate approach for him to use in order to convince you to lend your car? It is certainly not to return ten minutes later and ask once again "Can I borrow your car?" It is not advisable to go back even the next day and say "Can I borrow your car? Can I please borrow your car? Can I 'pretty please' borrow your car?" Being a nudge is not the way to get somebody to lend you his car, after he has already refused to lend it to you.

When someone turns you down, perhaps you might ask a second time but not "*hiftzir*" – not asking over and over again. It is not wise. It is not polite. A person does not do that. Yet, that *pasuk* teaches

regarding the Master of the World "*Kaveh el Hashem*" [express hope to G-d through prayer] and if you are not answered then the solution is "*v'Kaveh el Hashem*" [once again pray to the Almighty]. This is what Yitzchak did. Rivkah was barren for many years. They got married when Yitzchak was forty. Rivka did not give birth to Yaakov and Eisav until Yitzchak was sixty!

Yitzchak *davened* and *davened* and *davened*. This is what Rashi is teaching us with the words "**הִרְבֵּה וְהִפְצִיר בִּתְפִלָּה**". So why is there such a difference between the way we should ask G-d and the way we should ask man?

The answer is very simple and very fundamental. When we ask someone to lend us his car or do some kind of favor for us and he declines, the whole issue is that we want the car or the money or the favor – some specific item that the other person does not want to give it to us or will not do for us. Period. We received our answer. Either he cannot or he does not want to satisfy the request and there is no point arguing about it.

Obviously, the *Ribono shel Olam* can do anything. He is never unable to do something. The *Ribono shel Olam* is not saying "no" because He is not capable of granting the request. The reason the Almighty wants us sometimes to *daven* over and over and over again is because He wants the relationship. He wants us to ask (sometimes multiple times) because He wants us to have a *shaychus* with Him.

The Talmud says that the *Ribono shel Olam* desires (*mis'aveh*) the prayers of the righteous. Our tendency is that if we have everything, we forget the *Ribono shel Olam*. When things are going well, He is not so much a part of our lives. When things are not going well, we all become a little more "religious" and we all *daven* a little more. This is what He wants – He wants that we should involve Him in our lives.

By human beings, if you receive a "no" once and certainly, if you receive a "no" twice, the prudent course is to stay away. On the

contrary, it is just the opposite by the Master of the Universe: קַוֵּה אֶל־ה' חֲזַק וְיַאֲמֵץ לִבֶּךָ וְקַוֵּה אֶל־ה' [pray to G-d; strengthen your heart; and then – if necessary – keep praying further].

Eisav's Distinguishing Character Trait: Cynicism

The pasuk states: "And Yakaov gave Eisav bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, got up and left; thus, Eisav spurned the birthright." [Bereishis 25:34] Eisav sold Yaakov the birthright for a bowl of soup. He got up and walked away from it. He scoffed at the value of the birthright.

Rashi comments that this action testifies to Eisav's wickedness, for he scorned the Service of the Almighty. **The Sifsei Chachomim** points out that this comment of Rashi comes to answer a question. The question is "Why does the Torah need to tell me וַיִּבֶז עֵשָׂו אֶת־הַבְּכֹרָה [that Eisav scorned the birthright]?" It should be obvious to anyone who reads the pasukim that Eisav scorned the birthright! Rashi states that the Torah wanted to explicitly "put it on the record" that Eisav in fact scorned the birthright.

I saw a comment from **Rav Hutner, zt"l**, in his Pachad Yitzchak on Purim. The pasuk 'Vayivez Eisav es haBechora' is a fundamental pasuk. It has to do with Jewish history throughout our existence. The Torah is teaching that Eisav's sin was not that he sold the soup for the birthright. That was a stupid mistake, but that was not the sin. The sin was that he scorned and scoffed at the birthright. The cynicism he exhibited to anything having to do with the Service of Hashem was his primary crime.

"All these things Yaakov told me about the duties of the first born are not worth a bowl of soup. I'm getting the better of the deal!" He exhibited a quality that is among the worst traits that a person can have – the ability to take that which is important and sacred and

noble and to say it is worth nothing. This is Eisav's sin, and this is Eisav's distinguishing character trait.

The reason this is so fundamental is because Eisav had a descendant that played a significant role in Jewish history — then and in the time of Moshe Rabbeinu and in the time of Shaul and up until even our days. That descendant is Amalek. The distinguishing character trait of Amalek that he inherited from his grandfather Eisav is this ability to look at something that is holy and good and to say it is not worth anything.

It takes only one idiot to come along and say "Agh! This is nothing but nothing to get excited about." This is a characteristic that exists potentially in all of us. It is the trait whereby we can hear words of inspiration or we can witness near miraculous events that impresses everyone — everyone, except for that one guy in the crowd who says "Agh!" One nay-sayer pushes away one thousand expressions of chastisement.

That is why the Almighty has this eternal battle with Amalek. That is why Amalek has to be eradicated and wiped out. My Throne cannot be complete until Amalek is eradicated. As long as Amalek survives there will always be someone who says "Agh! This is nothing!"

Where did this originate? It originated with the sin spelled out in this week's parsha. "And Eisav scoffed at the birthright." This crime resounds throughout all generations in his descendant Amalek.

"Quite often, Hashem will send us a challenge in order to reveal our hidden strengths. Because sometimes we don't know how strong we are, until being strong is the only choice we have." ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman.

The Value of Planning, Forethought and Process

The *pasuk* says, "And Yaakov boiled a stew, and Eisav came in from the field, and he was exhausted." (Bereshis 25:29). The sad news reached the family that Avraham Avinu has passed away. Yaakov Avinu was cooking lentils because it is customary to serve a mourner round food items. (This is why an egg is typically eaten at the *Seudah Mafsekes* before Tisha B'Av.) Yaakov Avinu was cooking lentil soup for his father as part of the customary "*Seudas Havra'ah*" (the first meal a mourner consumes following the funeral, typically prepared by neighbors). Eisav came home from the field tired and famished. We know the rest of the story. Eisav asked for the lentil soup. Yaakov made a deal with him. Eisav sold the birthright to Yaakov and thus abandoned the *bechora*. This is the beginning of Parshas Toldos.

The Tolner Rebbe asks three interesting questions:

1. On the above cited *pasuk* (*vayazed Yaakov nazid*), Rashi explains that the word *vayazed* means to cook. However, the far more common word for cooking in the Torah is the word *bishul* or some derivative of that root word. Why suddenly over here when the Torah wants to say that Yaakov was cooking lentil soup does the Torah use the word *vayazed*, necessitating for Rashi to explain that *vayazed* is the same as *bishul*?

2. What was the dish that Yaakov cooked? The Torah here calls it *nazid* (some kind of soup). It is not until five *pesukim* later (Bereshis 25:34) that the Torah calls it *nazid adashim* (lentil soup). Why do we need to wait to find out what Yaakov was cooking? Get to the point right away!

3. Yitzchak was a wealthy man. Avraham Avinu was a wealthy man and he gave everything that he had to Yitzchak. We are not aware of Yitzchak suffering any financial setbacks. Would we not expect Yitzchak to have servants in his house who did

the cooking? Yaakov was a diligent student. He spent his time in the Yeshiva of Shem v'Ever. He learns all the time. Later in life, he learned fourteen years straight without sleeping. Yet what is he doing at the beginning of Parshas Toldos? He is cooking! What about the servants? In fact, the Medrash here points out the humility of Yaakov Avinu that he was cooking lentil soup himself, despite the fact that his father had many servants!

The Tolner Rebbe cites a Malbim who explains the relationship between the word *vayazed* and the idea of cooking. The Torah uses the same root word in the expression "*Ki ba'davar she'ZADU aleihem*" (Shemos 18:11), where it means planned or schemed. The Malbim asks: Why is the same root word in *Lashon HaKodesh* used for cooking and also for planning and scheming?

The Malbim answers that when a person schemes, he is cooking up a plan. The word *zeidim* (as in the expression *zeidim b'yad osekei Torasecha*) refers to people who plan nefarious and malevolent schemes. These plans that they "cook up" need to first percolate until they are fully ready to be put into action.

There is an expression – if someone wants to cheat in business, he "cooks the books". What kind of expression is that? It is the same idea. If someone wants to try to fool his partner or the government or someone else, he may plan how to charge this expense and how to charge that expense. That is "cooking the books".

That is why the expression *vayazed* is synonymous with the expression "*bishul*"—it requires this great forethought of planning, which is synonymous with "cooking up a plan" to do something.

Now we can explain why the *pasuk* specifically uses the verb *vayazed Yaakov nazid*. The Torah is trying to indicate that Yaakov Avinu carefully planned this activity with great forethought and intent. He reasoned: My father just became an *avel*. I want to cook for him. Yaakov's action was done with great planning and forethought in

order to fulfill the commandment of honoring his father. This answers the first question.

That is why he did not just let the servants cook the soup—the third question. This was not just a bowl of soup. This was *Kibbud Av*. Yaakov wanted to do it, and he wanted to do it from the get go. "I don't just want to serve my father. I want to cook the soup and I want to prepare the soup. This is how I want to serve my father." The purpose of the cooking was not just to get something on the plate (for which the word bishul would have sufficed). The cooking over here was a well thought out plan of providing the Seudas Havra'ah and fulfilling the mitzvah of Kibbud Av v'Em.

This is also why the Torah does not state right away that it was a bowl of lentil soup—the second question. That is immaterial at this point. At this point, the Torah is interested in stating that Yaakov was doing the act of cooking, the act of preparing food to serve his bereaved father. If his only interest was to convey the bottom line, then the menu would have been mentioned up front: A bowl of lentil soup. However, that is not the Torah's intent over here. The Torah is trying to emphasize that Yaakov did this entire act with great forethought.

This answers all three questions.

"The greatest kindness is to help relieve someone else's pain. Not all wounds can be seen. Sometimes, ordinary eyes hide extraordinary struggles, and their closed lips may be holding back floods of emotions. To know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived – this is to have succeeded." ~ Inspired by the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Yisrael ben Eliezer (1698-1760).

Approach to a Redundancy

Parshas Toldos begins, **וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק** - "***And these are the offspring of Yitzchak son of Avraham — Avraham begot Yitzchak.***" [Bereishis 25:19] Virtually all Chumash commentaries — including Rashi, the Ibn Ezra, and others — are quick to point out that the wording in this *pasuk* is superfluous. Once the *pasuk* said that Yitzchak was the son of Avraham, saying Avraham begot Yitzchak is completely redundant!

The Ibn Ezra suggests that the expression "**אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק**" does not mean he gave birth to him. Rather, **הוֹלִיד** means he raised and trained Yitzchak (*geedail v'reebah*). The Ibn Ezra cites other places where the verb *holeed* does not mean 'gave birth to,' but rather 'raised and brought up,' as in the *pasuk* "…even the sons of Machir son of Manasseh were raised (yooldu) on Yosef's knees" [Bereishis 50:23].

Nevertheless, it remains somewhat strange that this is the only time in Chumash where the Torah finds it necessary to say that a father raised and trained his son. Of course we assume it, but nowhere else does the Torah explicitly mention such a fact. What, then, is going on here?

The Sforno in Parshas Lech Lecha, on the *pasuk* "Then Avram said, 'See, You have not given me offspring, and see my steward inherits me'" [Bereishis 15:3] explains: Avraham 'complains' to the Almighty that he has no children, and Eliezer, his servant, will inherit all that he owns. The Sforno elaborates that Avraham is stating a double 'complaint': First, "I have no son to succeed me — to take over my financial and spiritual estate." Second, "even though I might eventually have a son, by that time I will be very old. I will not be capable of raising a young son. I will not be able to train him to follow in my footsteps."

The Sefas Emes in Parshas Lech Lecha comments on this theme as well. He notes that Avraham Avinu did not doubt that he would eventually have a son, as G-d promised him, but he was afraid that by the time this son would be born, he would be so old that he would not be able to give over to this son the essence of his life philosophy and life mission. Every parent wants to give over to his offspring his values and belief system. Parents spend almost a lifetime trying to give over to their children who they are, what they believe in, and what they feel their children should believe in — to carry on the traditions of the home.

Avraham wanted his <u>own</u> child to give over the values that he nurtured and the worldview that he brought into existence, to the next generation.

Therefore, the Ibn Ezra explains, the *pasuk* at the beginning of Toldos emphasizes that the Almighty kept His Word to Avraham. Not only did Avraham have a son (*Eleh Toldos Yitzchak ben Avraham*), but even more than that,*Avraham <u>holeed</u> es Yitzchak* — he was able to <u>raise and train</u> his son so that he could faithfully follow in his father's footsteps. That is why the Torah goes out of its way here, and only here, to tell us that — contrary to his own expectations — Avraham <u>was able</u> to raise and train his son Yitzchak to become not only his financial heir but his spiritual heir as well.

That is the reason for this significant redundancy in the opening *pasuk* of our parsha, in order to confirm for all time that indeed Avraham begot Yitzchak.



"***The Jewish people are a symphony of many instruments, each with its own distinct sound; yet when played together, they create a magnificent harmony." ~ Rabbi Shamshon Raphael Hirsch***



To *Be* and Not To *Do* — That Is the Question

The verse says - **וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב** "And Yitzchak loved Esav, for game was in his mouth; and Rivkah loves Yaakov" [Bereishis 25:28]. There is a strange use of grammar in this verse. By Yitzchak it says "**וַיֶּאֱהַב**", meaning "and he loved" — in the past tense. By Rivkah it says "**אֹהֶבֶת**" 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. 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.

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.



I remember it like it was yesterday. It was a dark, rainy, stormy Friday night here in Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh. There was a knock on my door. I get up from my seudah, and there is a young fellow at the door asking a shaaloh. The electricity cut off right before Shabbos and the electric company sent engineers to fix the problem on Friday night. The electricity comes back on when it is already Shabbos. There is food on the hot plate, crock-pot and oven. He wants to know if he can partake of that food or not.

I assured him that it was absolutely ok. But, I asked him, "Didn't you anticipate that this might happen, and you already asked me this shaaloh just before Shabbos and I said that everything is ok.?"

He said to me, "That's true, but I'll tell you why I came knocking on your door to ask again.

There is a young widow with small children living in my building. She came knocking on my door as soon as the electricity came back on.

She said, "Is it halachically permitted to partake from all the food that's in the oven and on the hot-plate?"

I said to her, "I already asked this shaaloh, and I was assured that it was ok."

"Yeah, but maybe it's different."

I wanted to put her at ease and alleviate her fears, so that she could relax and enjoy the rest of Shabbos. So I came in the rain to ask you this specific shaaloh again."

What an amazing act of kindness.

Yaakov Avinu in this week's sedra is called Yaakov because he grabbed the heel of his brother Esav when they were born.

I always wondered, out of all the accomplishments of Yaakov Avinu, that's what he is remembered by? We have organisations named after him called Beis Yaakov. Why? Because he held on to his brother's heel when he was born? – What does it mean?

The Tur al HaTorah explains that the greatest act that a person can do in this world is to help another Yid. **The Baal ShemTov** goes even further, and says, "The greatest act is to alleviate the pain and discomfort of someone else."

Yaakov Avinu had rachmanus on his mother even before he was born. He didn't want her to go through too much pain in having two separate births. So as soon as his brother Esav was being born, Yaakov grabbed hold of his heel so that they would come out together. – That is why he was named Yaakov.

The message is clear… The greatest act that we can do is to help another Yid and to alleviate somebody else's pain.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter



מן האדם האדם 25:30 **רש"י** – Yaakov Avinu was preparing red lentils for the Seudas Havra'ah, the first meal eaten by mourners after a funeral. This meal is not to be prepared by the mourners, rather it is provided by others.

Why are lentils served at this meal? Because they resemble a wheel, and mourning is a turning wheel in the world (*Bava Basra 16b – Just as a wheel turns, so too, mourning goes around in an inescapable cycle, which befalls the inhabitants of the world).*

Another reason for lentils is because lentils have no mouth or opening. The mourner, as well, has no mouth, as he is forbidden to speak (for the first three days a mourner is not permitted to respond to someone with a greeting). Eggs are also eaten at this meal, for they too are round and do not have a mouth.

מן האדם האדם 25:30 **ספר הגן -** Eisav was requesting of Yaakov to pour some "red" lentils for the one known as "red," referring to himself – Eisav.

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מן האדם האדם - חזקוני **25:30** "That which is "very" uses a double Loshon. "The red, the red," means that the food was very red. Just as when referring to that which is very green, the word **ירקרק** is used.

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מן האדם האדם - נר השכלים Why does the Posuk repeat, "the red?" There were two items that were red that Eisav requested. He requested the red lentils, as well as red wine - as the Posuk says (34) – **ויאכל וישת**, and he ate and drank.

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מן האדם האדם 25:30- **רבינו מנחם** - The Posuk says "red" twice because Eisav saw that there was soup cooking. The soup received its red colour from the red lentils. Eisav requested from both of the red items: the red soup and the red lentils.

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הלעיטני נא - ר' שמשון רפאל הירש – The word **הלעיטני** means to gulp down greedily. The colour attracted Eisav as much as the food itself. The colour reminded him of the blood from a dying animal, which delighted his eye when his arrow has found its mark.

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הלעיטני נא מן האדם האדם הזה– של"ה . Eisav wanted to eat the lentils in an improper manner, by having it poured down his throat.

One must eat in a suitable manner, with Kedusha and Tznius, as one would eat in front of a king. *Shemos 24:11* " **ויחזו את האלקים ויאכלו וישתו**" – ***"They gazed at Hashem, yet they ate and drank."*** Even as one eats, he must retain his attachment to Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

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הלעיטני נא מן האדם האדם הזה - אהל יעקב

Why did Eisav use a double Loshon of red? Eisav was comparing like to like, he was red, and the lentils were red. Being that they were both red, it was appropriate for him to eat it. It is inherently not proper to call someone by a name which has a derogatory connotation. However, when the individual calls himself by that name, then all can call him by that name. Being that Eisav compared,

and called himself Edom, from that time on all can refer to him by the derogatory name, Edom – red.





The Gemara teaches that when someone is chayav skilah (a form of death penalty from beis din) he is thrown off a two-story building to his death. The Gemara asks, why does he need to be thrown off a two-story building? Even ten tefachim is a sufficient to cause death (we learn this from the laws regarding a pit).

The Gemara answers, "ve'ahvta lereiacha kamocha — you shall love your friend like yourself," so we choose the easiest and quickest death. A person can die by falling off a smaller height, but it will be more painful, and it will take longer. Therefore, a two-story high building is the preferred way to induce the death.

The Yerushalmi gives another answer. The Yerushalmi says that ten tefachim causes death when one falls unexpectedly into a pit. However, when one is prepared for his fall, ten tefachim will not kill him. This is the reason a person in death row was thrown off a two-story structure.

We learn from this Yerushalmi that when one is prepared for his fall, he will brace against the fall. Being prepared for injury helps him survive. But if one doesn't expect to fall and be tested, then he is startled, and even a small fall can be fatal. Therefore, it is very helpful when one knows that he is being tested by the yetzer hara.

The Yetzer Hara

"If the yetzer hara can seduce me to lowly deeds, I must be on a very low level." This is a misconception, because the yetzer hara can seduce any person to commit all types of sins, and it doesn't mean that he is on a low level. It means that Hashem has pleasure from him, when he overcomes his yetzer hara to serve Him.

Someone once came to the Baal Shem Tov, complaining that he doesn't have parnassah. The Baal Shem Tov told him, "You should invest in the first business opportunity that comes your way and you will succeed." This Yid had one hundred rubles. He came to a hotel and asked how much a night's stay costs. The price was one hundred rubles. He realized that if he will pay, he wouldn't have money left over for the investment that the Baal Shem Tov advised him to make, so that night he slept in the inn's restaurant, seated by one of the tables. A group of rowdy people came in; their loud laughter woke him up. He heard one of them say, "If someone would offer me a hundred ruble for my Olam HaBa, I would gladly sell it to him, because it isn't worth much," and all his friends laughed heartily.

The Yid thought, the Baal Shem Tov told me to invest in the first opportunity that comes my way. Perhaps his intention was this? He got up, and said, "I want to buy your Olam HaBa. Are you serious that you want to sell it?" "By all means," the man replied, and his friends laughed with him. "Are you willing to write up a shtar [document]?" The man agreed. On a piece of paper, he wrote that he is selling his Olam HaBa for one hundred rubles, and the transaction was finalized.

Later that night, this rowdy man returned home, and told his wife everything that occurred to him throughout the day. He also told her how he sold his Olam HaBa for one hundred rubles to a poor Yid, who was sleeping at a table in the inn. He laughed as he spoke, thinking that his wife would also find this story humorous, but she was outraged. "You sold your Olam HaBa for one hundred rubles?" she was incredulous. "I don't want to be married to someone who doesn't have Olam HaBa. Get your shtar back, otherwise, I'm leaving."

The man knew that she was serious, so he returned to the Yid, explained his predicament, and requested that he return the shtar. The Yid replied, "I'm sorry, but a deal is a deal. I bought your Olam HaBa, and I'm not planning on selling it." "I'll give your more money. I will pay two hundred ruble…" But the Yid refused. "I'll pay five hundred… a thousand…" but the buyer repeatedly said, "I buy Olam HaBa, I don't sell it."

Finally, the man said, "How much do you reckon my Olam HaBa is worth?" "According to my opinion, your Olam HaBa is worth 250,000 ruble." The man knew that he didn't have a choice. The only way he could save his marriage was by selling his possessions until he had enough money. The Yid, now turned wealthy, returned to the Baal Shem Tov and confessed that he feared that he dealt dishonestly. Because if the man's Olam HaBa was truly worth 250,000, why did he originally buy it for only one hundred rubles for it? And if it really was worth one hundred rubles, why did he sell it for 250,000 rubles?

The Baal Shem Tov explained, "At first, his Olam HaBa was worth only one hundred rubles, later it was worth 250,000. Because the value of one's Olam Haba is in accordance to how people value it. In the beginning, he didn't value his Olam Haba, and therefore it wasn't worth much. Later, when he attached importance to it, it was worth far more."

This story is related to our parashah, because Eisav sold his bechorah for nezid adashim (a bowl of red lentils). In his eyes, that was its value. But Yaakov understood its true worth.

Let us think some more about this story; why did this man not appreciate his Olam HaBa? Why did he think, at the onset, that it was worth a hundred rubles? It is possible that he had the misconception that we are discussing.

The yetzer hara was burning inside him, and he thought that this indicates that he is on a very low level. His low self-esteem eventually brought him to sin, rachmana litzlan. But if he would have known that everyone has a yetzer hara, and that the yetzer hara seduces a person to all types of sins, he would have viewed himself differently.

This is a message that everyone should know. We must not interpret temptations as a sign that Hashem doesn't want our service, or that we are on a low level. On the contrary, they are a sign that Hashem is awaiting for us to overcome the yetzer hara to serve Him.

"*The tests are too difficult for me. It is impossible for me to pass them.*"

This notion is a misconception, because the rule is that Hashem doesn't test a person beyond his abilities. When a person has a test, it means that he has the powers to pass it. This is logical, because why should Heaven test us, if it is beyond our capabilities? Compare this, lehavdil to, a teacher in a school. It would be ridiculous if the teacher of elementary students would test his students on a college level. So too, Hashem certainly doesn't test us beyond our capabilities. We always have the option and the ability to overcome the challenges, if we desire to do so.

A student of **Rebbe Zusha of Anipoli zy"a** received a letter that he must return home, because his mother died. This student broke

down and cried heart-rending tears. He was totally broken. Rebbe Zusha told him, "Don't worry. You don't need to go home. Your mother is still alive. This letter is a mistake." The student believed his rebbe and remained in yeshiva.

Sometime later, the student received another letter. It said that his mother passed away, and he should go home for the levayah. He cried, of course, but Rebbe Zusha saw that he wasn't shattered like he was the first time. Rebbe Zusha told him, "This time, it is true. You should go home." He went home and saw that it was as Rebbe Zusha had said. Rebbe Zusha explained, "It wasn't ruach hakadosh. Hashem doesn't test a person beyond his abilities. The first time you were summoned home, you were totally devastated, so I knew that it couldn't be true. You wouldn't be tested, if you can't handle it. But the second time, I saw that you were handling it well. That's why I knew it was true."



האדמו"ר ר' ישראל פרלוב זצ"ל

A similar story happened to a chassid of **Rebbe Yisrael of Stolin zy"a.** He invested a lot of money in a shipment of merchandise. As he was waiting for the cargo to arrive, he received a telegram stating that the ship sunk and all the merchandise was lost. The man was devastated, and he even fainted. The rebbe comforted him, "You have nothing to worry about. It was another ship that sank." And it was exactly so. The rebbe explained that when he saw how his chassid was devastated, he knew that it most probably is a false rumour. Hashem doesn't test people beyond their abilities. Tests and challenges are always in proportion to people's abilities.

The Vilna Gaon writes, "It is nikar niflaos haborah (it is vividly clear the wonders of the Creator) how He holds onto the yetzer hara with

iron chains, not letting him test anyone beyond their abilities." Many people can testify to this miracle. The yetzer hara has the power to set up various degrees of tests. He can give weak tests or very difficult ones. People are amazed at how their yetzer hara is perfectly suited for their personal level. Any stronger, it would be unbearable, any less, would be too easy.

Recognizing this should give us the stamina that we need to pass all our tests. However, there are times when people have tests that seem beyond them, and they don't see any way that they can overcome their challenges. They try, they even try very hard, but they find themselves facing a brick wall; they are unable to overcome their yetzer hara. How should we explain this? What happened to the principle that tests are always in proportion to our abilities? Does it mean that they really can pass the tests, if they would only try harder? To answer this question, we will relate the renowned story, of how **Reb Eizel Charif zt"l** found a shidduch for his daughter:



Reb Eizel Charif came to a yeshiva where there were three hundred bachurim and asked them a very difficult question. He said, "The bachur who knows the answer to this question can marry my daughter." A rischa de'oraysa (a fiery surge in Torah study) started, because all the bachurim desired to have this Torah giant as their father-in-law. In the meanwhile, Reb Eizel Charif sat in a side room, waiting for the bachurim to resolve the question. When a bachur thought he had the right answer, he would go to Reb Eizel Charif's room and tell him. But each time, Reb Eizel showed him that the answer isn't valid.

After waiting some time, and none of the bachurim came up with the correct answer, Reb Eizel decided that it was time for him to move on. He didn't find a shidduch for his daughter.

Reb Eizel Charif was already sitting in the coach, when he saw a bachur from the yeshiva running after his wagon. "Oh? So you've found the answer to the question?" "No. I don't know the answer, and therefore, I don't merit marrying your daughter. But I came anyway because I want to hear the correct answer." Reb Eizel Charif exclaimed, "You are the bachur I was looking for! You will become my son-in-law." When Reb Eizel posed his question, he knew that none of the bachurim would know the correct answer. His primary goal wasn't to find a bachur who knows the answer to his question, rather to find the bachur who truly desires to know Torah. This bachur passed the test.

With this story, we can explain why sometimes we are confronted with tests, which seem beyond our abilities. It only appears beyond our strengths, because we aren't aware of what the test actually is. Sometimes, the test isn't to succeed and overcome the yetzer hara. At times, the test is to discern how dear and important avodas Hashem is for us. Hashem wants to see how much it bothers us that we aren't serving Him properly. He wants to count how many times we cry out and pray to Hashem, "hashiveinu Hashem eleicha venashuvah — return us to You, Hashem, so we will return…" Those who try their best passed the test, even if they didn't succeed to keep the Torah perfectly yet. And when one continuously strives and prays, in the end, he will succeed. He will eventually overcome the yetzer hara and do as the Torah commands.

It is important that a person not fool himself. He shouldn't excuse himself by saying, I just can't. This is beyond me, because often he can succeed, if he would only try harder. This story reminds us that whenever we claim that we can't pass a test, we should ask, "If someone would offer me one hundred reinish to pass this test, would I also claim that it is impossible for me to pass? Often, when one

places matters in this perspective, he realizes that he can do a lot more, than he thought he can.

*An elderly person asked **Rebbe Ahron of Belz zy"a** whether he may say Shemonah Esrei while sitting down. Rebbe Ahron told him, "According to halachah, it is permitted. But my father, **Rebbe Yissacher Dov**, would say, 'It isn't good for a person to give in."*

Challenges

A wealthy man told me that whenever he sees yeshiva students and kollel yungerleit, he is jealous of them. He sees that they have a vivacious life, always delving into the sweet Torah, learning one sugya after the next, while his life surrounds money and doesn't seem to have any purpose. He told me that he has good children, but he still feels a spiritual lack, that doesn't exist by the bnei Torah.

In the **Chasam Sofer's** time, there was a wealthy person who committed suicide. In his last note, he wrote, "I have everything good in my life; I have wealth, health, and all my hearts desires. I am not lacking anything, and that's why I'm committing suicide."

The Chasam Sofer explained that a person needs challenges in his life; otherwise, his life is purposeless. This is the reason Eisav was blessed, "al charbecha tichyeh — you will live by your sword." When one doesn't have Torah, he needs challenges to give his life purpose. The issues, which they must resolve, give them a reason to wake up in the morning.

The Chasam Sofer writes, when one lives a life of Torah, he always feels fulfilled. That is the reason the Torah writes, "venasati shalom ba'aretz — I will put peace in the land" (Vayikra 26:6). There can be tranquillity, people can be freed from all problems, and their life will still be filled with purpose, because they are occupied and find contentment in Torah and mitzvos.

The following story happened a couple of years ago: *On Erev Succos, in a supermarket in Eretz Yisrael, there was a consumer at the cashier that was repeatedly rushing to the back of the store, to pick up some item that he forgot to put in his wagon. "One minute" the consumer said, "I just want to bring a bottle of bleach," and he rushed to get the bleach while everyone in line waited impatiently. A moment later, he remembered that he didn't buy tissues. He dashed to the back of the store to get those, as well.*

One of the people in line lost his composure and rebuked him with very loud and harsh words, "You can't make everyone wait like this!" he shouted. At first, everyone in the line agreed with the angry person. They were also upset with the long delay. But he continued shouting insults and epithets, until the people in line told him to calm down. He realized that he overreacted, and he regretted his outburst. He apologized to the consumer, "How much does your purchase cost?" The man said that it was 2,500 shekel. "I'll pay it," he said, and he gave the cashier a check for that amount. They both left the store at the same time, and he saw that the consumer was crying. "What's the matter?" he asked. "Is there a problem? I already paid for your shopping… I already asked forgiveness." "Everything is fine," he replied. "I am not crying from sorrow; I am crying because I just saw Hashem's amazing hashgachah (providence)."

He explained, "My wife told me that I should go to the store and buy for Yom Tov. I told her that this was impossible, because we don't have money. She told me that she will stay home and say Tehilim, and I should go to the store. She encouraged me that somehow everything will work out. That was the reason I was delaying with my purchase, gathering bleach and tissues, I simply didn't have any idea how I was going to pay for it all. And then you came and paid for it. I see clearly how Hashem helps me…"

"Can you prove that this is true?" the man asked. "Here, take my phone, and call my wife. She will tell you." When the wife saw her husband's phone number appear on her screen, she thought she was speaking to her husband, and she said, "Nu…aha… nu… Everything is fine. I am still saying Tehillim. Just keep shopping. Everything will work out. Don't worry!"

The man took out his check book and wrote twelve checks for 2,500 shekels each. "I am paying for your groceries, for each month the entire year," he said.

This story teaches us the power of bitachon and the potency of Tehilim… But it also reminds us that when one endures embarrassment, he can expect something good to happen afterwards. He was humiliated by the shopping line, and then Hashem's blessings came raining down on him. *(A copy of these twelve checks is preserved by a certain rav in Bnei Brak, because he wants to show people the miracle that occurred.)*



Reb Chaim Brisker zt"l once heard a speaker say, "Torah is like oxygen. Just like we can't live without oxygen, we can't live without Torah…" Reb Chaim disagreed. "Oxygen helps people live, but Torah is life itself."

One of the primary solutions for our present predicament is to attach ourselves to the Torah and then we, and the entire nation, will be protected.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

ויתן לך אלקים מטל השמים ***And may Hashem give you of the dew of the heavens*** *(27:28)*

Why did Yitzchak bless Yaakov specifically with dew? It is brought in the sefer 'Bais Hayayin' by **Rebbe Raphael Yitzchak Yisroel of Izmir** in the name of the sefer 'Minchas Eliyahu' who wrote that it is known that the day Yaakov received the brachah it was Pesach. This is why Rivkah instructed Yaakov to take two young goats – one for the Korban Pesach and one for the Korban Chagigah as Chazal have explained. Therefore, Yitzchak blessed him with dew because on Pesach we ask for dew. (Umatuk HaOhr)

A Man's Wife Fell Ill And The Doctors Abandoned Hope.



Desperate, he went to the **Chofetz Chaim** in Radin who promised to pray on condition that the man not reveal that he had asked the Chofetz Chaim for help. The woman had a miraculous recovery. Years later, someone else fell ill with the disease. Seeing their distress, the man broke his promise and revealed that when he faced this issue he'd gone to Radin. Shortly thereafter, his wife's illness returned.

Immediately, he ran back to the Chofetz Chaim. "I am sorry but I cannot help you," said the sage. "But last time you davened and my wife was healed!" responded the distraught man. "When you came to me last time," said the Chofetz Chaim, "I was a younger man. I fasted

FORTY days for your wife to be healed. I am sorry, but I don't have the strength anymore."

What devotion great people have to their fellow Jews! Let us strive for greatness.

A Father's Love – Rabbi Lord Jonathan sacks Ztl

"The boys grew up. Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the outdoors; but Jacob was a mild man who stayed at home among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob" *(Gen. 25:27-28).*



We have no difficulty understanding why Rebekah loved Jacob. She had received an oracle from G-d in which she was told: "*Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23).* Jacob was the younger. Rebekah seems to have inferred, correctly as it turned out, that it would be he who would continue the covenant, who would stay true to Abraham's heritage, and who would teach it to his children, carrying the story forward into the future. The real question is why did Isaac love Esau? Could he not see that he was a man of the outdoors, a hunter, not a contemplative or a man of G-d? Is it conceivable that he loved Esau merely because he had a taste for wild game? Did his appetite rule his mind and heart? Did Isaac not know how Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup, and how he subsequently "despised" the birthright itself (Gen. 25:29-34). Was this someone with whom to entrust the spiritual patrimony of Abraham?

Isaac surely knew that his elder son was a man of mercurial temperament who lived in the emotions of the moment. This was not a man to carry forward the Abrahamic covenant which involved a measure of distance from the Hittites and Canaanites and all they represented in terms of religion, culture and morality. Yet Isaac clearly did love Esau. The depth of feeling the Torah describes in speaking of Isaac and Esau at that moment is thus rare and almost overwhelming. Father and son share their sense of betrayal, Esau passionately seeking some blessing from his father, and Isaac rousing himself to do so. The bond of love between them is intense. So the question returns with undiminished force: why did Isaac love Esau, despite everything, his wildness, his mutability and his outmarriages?

The sages gave an explanation. They interpreted the phrase "skilful hunter" as meaning that Esau trapped and deceived Isaac. He pretended to be more religious than he was. There is, though, a quite different explanation, closer to the plain sense of the text, and very moving. ***Isaac loved Esau because Esau was his son, and that is what fathers do. They love their children unconditionally***. That doesn't mean that Isaac could not see the faults in Esau's character. It doesn't imply that he thought Esau the right person to continue the covenant. Nor does it mean he wasn't pained when Esau married Hittite women. The text explicitly says he was. But it does mean that Isaac knew that a father must love his son because he is his son.

A father does not disown his child, even when he disappoints his expectations. Isaac was teaching us a fundamental lesson in parenthood. Why Isaac? Because he knew that Abraham had sent his son Ishmael away. He may have known how much that pained Abraham and injured Ishmael.

There is a remarkable series of midrashim that suggest that Abraham visited Ishmael even after he sent him away, and others that say it was Isaac who effected the reconciliation. He was determined not to inflict the same fate on Esau. Likewise he knew

to the very depths of his being the psychological cost on both his father and himself of the trial of the binding. At the beginning of the chapter of Jacob, Esau and the blessing the Torah tells us that Isaac was blind. There is a midrash that suggests that it was tears shed by the angels as they watched Abraham bind his son and lift the knife that fell into his eyes, causing him to go blind in his old age. The trial was necessary, otherwise G-d would not have commanded it. But it left psychological scars, and it left Isaac determined not to have to sacrifice Esau, his own child. In some way, then, Isaac's unconditional love of Esau was a tikkun for the rupture in the father-son relationship brought about by the binding. Thus, though Esau's path was not that of the covenant, Isaac's gift of paternal love helped prepare the way for the next generation, in which all of Jacob's children remained within the fold.

"Isaac's gift of paternal love helped prepare the way for the next generation, in which all of Jacob's children remained within the fold." To take seriously the idea, central to Judaism, of Avinu Malkeinu, that our King is first and foremost our parent, is to invest our relationship with G-d with the most profound emotions. G-d wrestles with us, as does a parent with a child. We wrestle with Him as a child does with his or her parents. The relationship is sometimes tense, conflictual, even painful, yet what gives it its depth is the knowledge that it is unbreakable. Whatever happens, a parent is still a parent, and a child is still a child. The bond may be deeply damaged but it is never broken beyond repair. Perhaps that is what Isaac was signalling to all generations by his continuing love for Esau, so unlike him, so different in character and destiny, yet never rejected by him – just as the midrash says that Abraham never rejected Ishmael and found ways of communicating his love. ***Unconditional love is not uncritical but it is unbreakable. That is how we should love our children – for it is how G-d loves us.***

The Precious Gift of Shabbos



During Kabbalas Shabbos, towards the end of Lecha Dodi, we recite the phrase "Bo'i Kallah". **Rav Ovadia Yosef, zt"l**, writes (Halichos Olam) that when saying this, one should have in mind that he is accepting the 'Nefesh' of the Neshamah Yeseirah, the additional Neshamah that we receive on Shabbos. Additionally, the prevalent custom is to turn to face the western side of the Shul when reciting this to greet the Shabbos Queen. By doing this, our backs will be turned to the east side of the Shul, where the Aron HaKodesh is. Although this is generally forbidden, Rav Ovadia writes (Yechaveh Da'as 3:19) that this is permissible for the purpose of giving honour to Shabbos. Furthermore, he notes, the Torah scrolls are closed in the Aron at this time, and it is also covered by a Paroches. Additionally, the Aron is also above ten Tefachim from the ground. Because of all these reasons, it is not that we are actually turning our backs to the Torah.

כז:לג וַיֶּחֱרַד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְּדֹלָה עַד־מְאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵפוֹא הוּא הַצָּד־צַיִד

The Baal haTurim notes that the first letters of "Va'yomer Mi Eifoh" spell backwards forms the word **אמו** – '***His mother***.' It seems that Yitzchak guessed the mastermind behind the plot.

"Ask yourself what you are willing to die for and then live for it!" – Rabbi Noach Weinberg

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



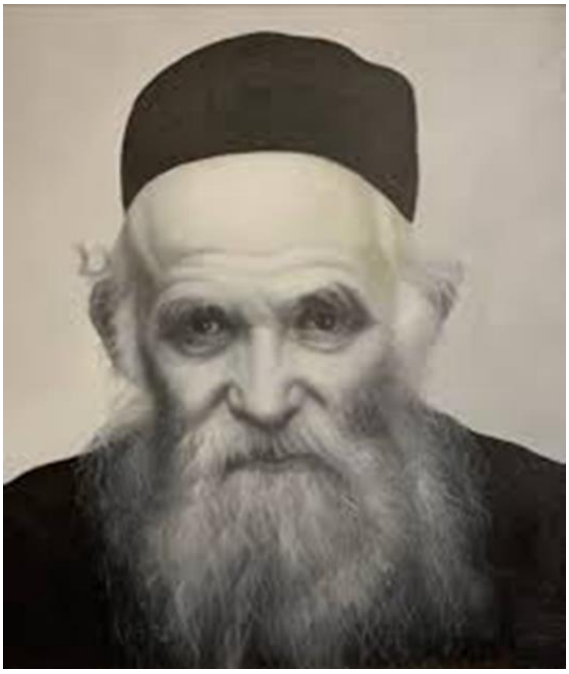
Rabbi Shlomo Price asks, "Why is it that sometimes after people are inspired by a lecture or Shiur, it doesn't last very long? If this is the case, what use is there of even going in the first place?" He answers that this can be compared to a person who was lost in a big forest late at night. It is very dark in the forest, and he does not know which way to go so he can get out of the forest. All of a sudden, a bolt of lightning strikes and lights up the forest for a second or two, and this person can see that there is a way out in a certain direction. However, after the flash of light, he is back in the dark! What was the point of the flash of lightening?

The answer is that true, he is still going to be stumbling in the dark, and it will still take him a long time to get out of the forest, but at least he now knows which direction to stumble in. The same is true with an inspiring lecture or Shiur, or any moment of inspiration. It may take one a while to get where he knows he should be, but at least he now has a glimpse of which direction to go in!

The Chofetz Chaim, ZT"L would say:

"Everything a person has is allotted to him by the Ribono Shel Olam. Don't think that if something is not going well in a person's life, it could still be better. If it could be better, it would be better!"

Rav Aharon Kotler [Yartzeit 2nd of Kislev]



This seemingly too incredible-to be-true story actually took place. It was during World War II when twenty-four Rabbonim were being held in Italy and faced being returned to Nazi-occupied Europe and certain death. **Rav Aharon Kotler**, founder and Rosh Yeshiva of the Lakewood Yeshiva, turned to the well-known askan and subsequent author of Ethics From Sinai, Mr. Irving Bunim, and asked him who could intercede on behalf of these twenty four Rabbonim. Mr. Irving Bunim suggested the Italian Mafia. Rav Kotler urged Mr. Bunim to contact them immediately. After contacting them, he asked Rav Aharon, "Who are we sending to the meeting?" Rav Aharon replied, "You and I are going." Off they went to meet the godfather of the Mafia, Joe Bonnano. Rav Aharon did not speak English, so it was Mr. Bunim who explained the problem of the twenty-four Rabbonim trapped in Italy.

The Mafia chief asked Mr. Bunim, "Who is the elderly man sitting next to you?" He told him, "He is the godfather of the Jewish people." "Really?" asked the Mafia chief. "Yes!" replied Mr. Bunim emphatically. "Tell him I want a blessing." So Mr. Irving Bunim turned to Rav Aharon and in Yiddish told him, "Ehr vill a bracha fun de Rav. (He wants a blessing from the Rav)." "Zog eim ehr zol leiben lang un shtarben in bet." Mr. Irving Bunim turned back to the mafia chief Joe Bonnano and told him, "The Rav blesses you with long life and you should die in bed."

Upon hearing this, the Mafia chief replied, "I like that," and promised to arrange the freedom of the twenty-four Rabbonim stuck in Italy within two weeks, which he did indeed accomplish.

Twenty-something years later, in 1964, a shiny black stretch limo pulls up in front of Lakewood Yeshiva in Lakewood, New Jersey. Two fancily dressed men get out and walk up to the office. They say are looking for Rav Kotler. Out comes a man who introduces himself. "No, not you," say the two Italian guys. "We are looking for an older man." "That was my father," says the Rosh Yeshiva, **Rav Shneur Kotler**, "but he passed away a number of years ago." The Italian men explain that they are the Bonnano brothers, and that their father always "attributed his long life to your saintly father's blessing. Now that he has just retired, we are taking over the business and we came here for the same blessing."



"I'm sorry," says Rav Shneur, "my father could do that, but I am not on that high level." Disappointed, but clearly understanding the concept of yeridas hadoros (spiritual descent of the generations), the new Mafia chiefs bid farewell to Rav Shneur. For saving twenty-four Rabbonim from the Nazis, and with Rav Aharon Kotler's berocha, Joe Bonnano – the Mafia godfather – lived to ninety-seven years old.

אֵת-רִבְקָה בַּת-בְּתוּאֵל הָאֲרַמִי מִפַּדַּן אֲרָם אֲחוֹת לָבָן הָאֲרַמִי-בראשית פרק כה,כ

The word הארמי can be understood in rearranging the letters to הרמאי the trickster.

Rav Ozer Alport - Parsha Points to Ponder



1) Rashi writes (25:26) that Yaakov came out of his mother's womb holding Eisav's heel. In what way did this conduct demonstrate his righteousness even at such a young age? (Paneiach Raza)

2) When Eliezer originally met Rivkah by the well, the Torah refers to her (24:16) as **טובת מראה מאוד** – very pretty. When she moved with Yitzchok to Gerar, she is described (26:7) merely as **טובת מראה** – pretty. What happened that caused her to lose some of her good looks? (Chizkuni)

3) What legal right did Rivkah have to give Eisav's precious garments, which he entrusted to her for safekeeping, to Yaakov (Rashi 27:15) so that Yaakov could trick Yitzchok into thinking that he was really Eisav? (Toras Moshe, Lev Shalom, Chavatzeles HaSharon, Ma'adanei Asher 5771)

4) Why did Yaakov bring his father wine to drink (27:25) when his mother only commanded him (27:17) to give him bread and meat, and from where did he get the wine? (Daas Z'keinim, Chizkuni, Tosefes Bracha, Torah L'Daas Vol. 9)

Answers to Points to Ponder:

1) **The Paneiach Raza** explains that Yaakov knew how difficult labour is for a woman, and the birth of twins all the more so. As a result, he came out holding Eisav's heel, as he reasoned that once Rivkah's womb was open for one delivery, he would come out as well to make it as easy as possible for her.

2) **The Chizkuni** writes that although Rivkah was initially described as very pretty, at this point she had given birth and was no longer considered as attractive as she had been prior to her pregnancy.

3) **The Chasam Sofer** cites the ruling of the Gemora (Bava Metzia 12b) that as long as a child depends on his father for his material needs, he is considered a minor for the purpose of acquiring possessions. As such, all of Eisav's possessions, including his clothing, belonged to Yitzchok, and Rivkah was permitted to lend them to Yaakov. Rav Eliyahu ibn Chaim suggests that because Rivkah was prophetically told that she would give birth to twins and the older son would serve the younger (25:23), Eisav was legally considered Yaakov's servant and all of his possessions belonged to Yaakov, who was therefore entitled to wear his clothing. The Chavatzeles HaSharon notes that the Yerushalmi (Megillah 1:11) explains that Eisav's precious garments were the ones that were worn when bringing offerings, so when Yaakov bought the birthright from Eisav, the clothes became part of the package and now legally belonged to him.

Rav Shalom Schwadron answers that the Daas Z'keinim (25:30) writes that Eisav took these clothes from Nimrod, whom he was able to kill based on advice that he received from Yaakov. Since the clothes were obtained with Yaakov's assistance, he was entitled to wear them. The Ma'adanei Asher cites the ruling of the Taz that a guardian may use objects deposited with him for safekeeping by non-Jews if he doesn't damage the item and the owner won't find out, as this is not considered stealing.

4) **The Chizkuni** explains that Yaakov's goal was for the alcohol to slightly confuse his father so that he wouldn't pay so much attention to determining his true identity. The Tosefes Bracha suggests that the wine was for reasons of health, as the Gemora in Shabbos (41a) teaches that it is unhealthy to eat without drinking. The Torah L'Daas suggests that if the meat was from the Korban Pesach (Rashi 27:9), then Yitzchok needed wine for the four cups that are consumed during the Seder.

Alternatively, just as many mitzvos are done with a glass of wine, Yaakov reasoned that so too the blessings he would receive from his

father should be given with a glass of wine. As for where Yaakov got the wine from, the Daas Z'keinim writes that the angel Michoel brought it to him from Gan Eden (perhaps that was the aroma of Gan Eden that Yitzchok smelled when Yaakov entered the room – Rashi 27:27).

Rabbi Shraga Simmons - Happiness Hall of Fame



Aish.com author awarded for radiating the power of joy.

The Happiness Hall of Fame boasts among its inductees Deepak Chopra, Muhammad Ali, and a pantheon of authors, sports stars and inventors. Plus one rabbi: **Zelig Pliskin** of Aish HaTorah. How did an observant Jew from Baltimore become a leading expert on joy?

"Classical Jewish sources speak extensively about happiness," says Rabbi Pliskin, "starting with the Torah itself which instructs us to 'rejoice in all the goodness that G-d has given you' (Deut. 26:11)." When Pliskin was 12 years old, Johnny Unitas led his hometown Baltimore Colts to a win in the NFL Championship Game. "That was a huge thrill at the time and connected me with the power of joy." He realized, however, that it was a superficial joy.

One year later, the famous Ponevitcher Rav, **Rabbi Yosef Kahaneman**, attended Pliskin's Bar Mitzvah in Baltimore. Rabbi Kahaneman had built numerous schools in his native Lithuania – which were all destroyed in World War Two. "Despite the hardships he endured," Pliskin recalls, "his entire being radiated with overflowing love and joy. I remember the way he hugged my father, and this

became my lifelong role model." Joy releases spurts of positive chemicals in the brain. Pliskin applied himself diligently to the task of mastering happiness. "Happiness is a skill that can be learned," he says. "Maimonides wrote nine centuries ago that the way to develop any positive trait is to practice doing that trait over and over again.

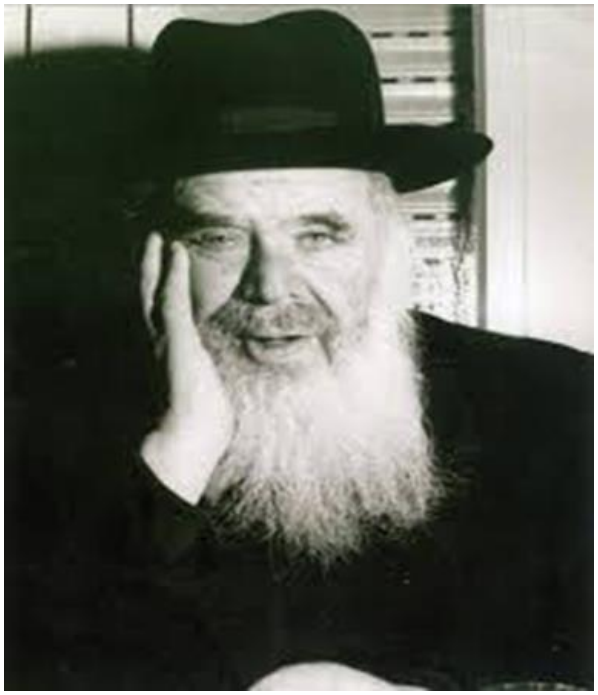
When it comes to happiness, the more a person does positive acts of kindness, the more joy becomes part of our nature." Pliskin cites research that joy sparks the production of four "pleasure chemicals": *Dopamine, Serotonin, Oxytocin and Endorphins*.

"When you speak and act joyfully, you get spurts of those positive chemicals in the brain," he says. Pliskin discovered that with mental discipline, he can frequently access positive states. "I assign code names to my most positive and meaningful experiences – then can access that joyful state anytime, anywhere."

Rabbi Pliskin's happiness career began in earnest in 1974, when Rabbi Weinberg started Aish HaTorah with the motto: ***"We'll teach you how to be happy."*** Rabbi Pliskin became one of Aish's first teachers. A few years later, he compiled his best "joy tools" in a practical guide, ***Gateway to Happiness***. The book became a classic for those seeking to increase their level of happiness, peace of mind and self-esteem – while decreasing negative emotions such as sadness, anger, worry, and anxiety. Gateway to Happiness is "the most comprehensive book on happiness I've ever read."

What is Rabbi Pliskin's number one tool for living in a constant state of joy? ***Act happy and you'll feel happy!*** "Happiness is a choice," he says, citing the adage of 18th century **Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lutzatto**: External movements arouse inner feelings. "Even if you don't feel happy, act happy," says Rabbi Pliskin. "You'll begin to feel happy!" He explains: "The secret is an 8-word mantra. ***Joyful thoughts. Joyful feelings. Joyful words. Joyful actions.*** By repeating these words enthusiastically, 10 times a day for 5 seconds,

you can constantly upgrade your attitude and become a master of happiness."



"**Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz** taught that we always have something to be joyful about," he says. "If a person's glass object would fall and break, and at that moment they receive the news of having won the lottery, would they be upset about the glass breaking? Of course not. So too, the joy of being alive should override anything we may find to complain about." "***Whenever I need a quick pick-me-up, I smile and wave to the mirror. It always smiles and waves back to me!***"

Rabbi Eli Mansour - Honesty is the Best Policy



The Torah in Parashat Toledot tells the story of the blessings which Yishak wished to grant to his older son, Esav, but were "stolen" by the younger twin, Yaakob.

Since his youth, Esav had succeeded in fooling his father into thinking he was pious and G-d-fearing, and this resulted in Yishak's desire to grant Esav the blessing. Ribka, however, understood Esav's true character, that he was sinful and corrupt, and so she had Yaakob disguise himself as Esav so he would receive the blessings in his brother's stead.

The question arises as to why the events needed to unfold in this manner. Why did G-d arrange it such that Yaakob – the son who was clearly worthy of Yishak's blessing – would have to receive the blessing by disguising himself as Esav? Why couldn't this have happened in a simple, straightforward manner?

The Chasam Sofer (Rav Moshe Sofer of Pressburg, 1762-1839) proposed a remarkable answer to this question. The Sages teach that even great Sadikim cannot receive Ru'ah Ha'kodesh – prophetic insight – in a state of despondency and depression.

Thus, for example, for the twenty-two years that Yaakob was separated from his beloved son, Yosef, he did not have access to Ru'ah Ha'kodesh. If Yishak had recognized Esav's true character, and realized how evil he was, this knowledge would have caused him such sorrow and angst that he would have lost his Ru'ah Ha'kodesh. And without Ru'ah Ha'kodesh, he would not have been able to bless either son.

In order to ensure that Yaakob would receive Yishak's blessing, G-d arranged that Yishak would remain unaware of who Esav really was, and this way he would be able to experience the joy and serenity needed to bestow his blessing. Yaakob was then able to disguise as Esav so that he would receive the blessing in his place.

The Hatam Sofer explained that this was Yishak's intent when, after realizing what had happened, he said to Esav, "Ba Ahicha Be'mirma Va'yikah Birchatecha" – "Your brother came with deceit and took your blessing" (27:35). Yishak was saying that Yaakob was able to receive the blessing "Be'mirma" – through Esav's deceit, through his having deceived his father throughout his life. If he had not lived a lie, and had not tried to conceal his true character, Yishak would have been unable to bless Yaakob.

It was specifically because Esav deceived Yishak that Yishak had the ability to grant a blessing to Yaakob. The Chasam Sofer added that this also explains the symbolic significance of Yaakob's holding

onto Esav's heel at the time of their birth, as the Torah describes earlier in the Parasha (25:26).

The word for "heel" – "Akeb" – is related to the verb "A.K.B.," which means "trickery." Yaakob "held on" to Esav's trickery in the sense that it was Esav's deceitful nature that enabled him to receive his father's blessing.

The lesson that emerges from the Hatam Sofer's analysis is that honesty is always the best policy. We never gain by lying. There are many times in business, social relations and other contexts where we are tempted to distort the truth, when it appears that we can help ourselves by dealing with people dishonestly. If there's anything we can learn from Esav, it's that to the contrary, we only hurt ourselves when we lie. Just as Esav made things worse for himself by deceiving his father, we, too, will always lose in the end when we speak dishonestly.

Migdal Ohr - Rabbi J. Gewirtz

When Eliezer asked Avraham what to do if the girl he found would not want to return with him, he used the word, "Oolai," meaning 'perhaps,' which can also mean, 'if only,' as in, I wish it would happen. In retelling the story, the word is spelled differently, as the word, "ailai," meaning 'to me,' revealing his subconscious desire to have Yitzchak marry his own daughter.

This week, when Rivka sent Yaakov to get the blessings intended for Esav, Yaakov used the word "Oolai,"to say, "Perhaps my father will wish to touch my skin and he will realize that I am not Esav."

In this case too, there is a certain amount of, 'if only.' While Yaakov understood the need to fool his father, as Rivka was given Divine guidance to do it this way, he was still not comfortable with it. He expressed his feelings in this way to say, "Though I understand it is

necessary, I almost wish my father would catch me so I would not have to lie to him."

In fact, he was very careful in what he said. When he spoke to Yitzchak it was in an ambiguous way to minimize the falsehoods. We learn from this that even if one is forced to do something unpleasant, such as giving criticism, he should not be pleased about it and should seek to minimize the pain he causes to the recipient.

Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin



The Torah states: **וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־ צַיִד בְּפִיו** "And Isaac loved Esau because he was a was a trapper with his mouth..." (Gen. 25:28). This means that Esau successfully deceived his father regarding his level of righteousness. **Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler** cited the **Arizal** (a famous kabbalist) that it is a mistake to think that Esau was a complete hypocrite and just tried to deceive his father. If Isaac made an error, there must have been good reason for such an error.

The problem with Esau was that he kept all his spirituality "in his mouth," without swallowing it. He spoke spiritual words, but did not become a spiritual person. Therefore, said Rav Dessler, anyone who speaks ethical and spiritual words without allowing them to penetrate his heart and soul is a colleague of the evil Esau. The essence of an elevated person is to be totally integrated: the Torah ideals that one talks about must be part of his very being.

There are many different levels along a continuum. Some people are unaware of how far they are from actually feeling what they say.

Such a person can say he loves everyone deeply, but a perceptive person can tell that although he believes that he feels that way, in actuality he is very far from it. It is not sufficient to just repeat words like a parrot. Whenever you learn a new idea, keep reviewing it until little by little it penetrates your soul and your words truly become part of you.

Afikomen

Rashi writes (27:9) that one of the two goats that Rivkah commanded Yaakov to bring served as Yitzchok's Korban Pesach. What was Rivkah's hidden intention in doing so?



Rav Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld explains that Rivkah worried that when Eisav would later come in with his food, Yitzchok would realize what had happened, and would then eat from Eisav's food and give him the blessings that he had given Yaakov in error. To prevent this from happening, Rivkah made sure that Yitzchok would eat the Korban Pesach, because the law is **אין מפטרין אחר הפסח אפיקומן**– one may not eat or drink anything the entire night after eating the Passover sacrifice (or the afikomen in present times).

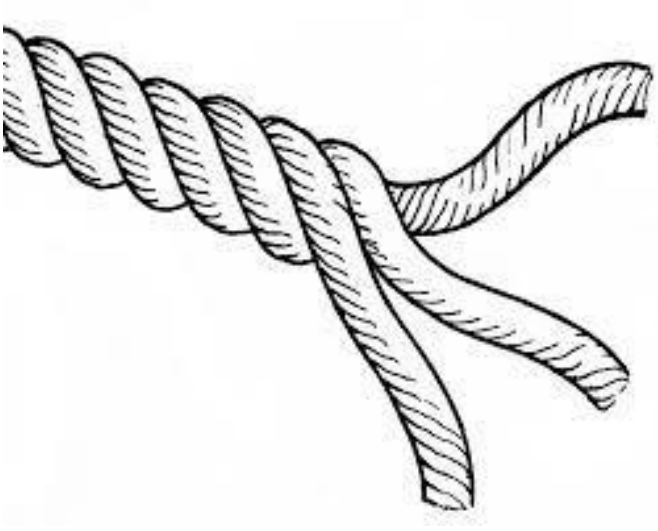
Rav Zonnenfeld points out that Yitzchok told Eisav (27:35) **בא אחיך במרמה** – your brother came with cleverness. The word **במרמה** – trickery – has the same numerical value (287) as the word afikomen.

Rav Ozer Alport - Parsha Points to Ponder



What is the significance that this week's parsha is named Toldos, and why is it specifically read at this time of the year?

Rav Moshe Wolfson explains that this week's parsha is called Toldos because it is the only parsha in the Torah in which all 3 of the Avos are living simultaneously, albeit for a mere three verses (25:26-28). Shlomo HaMelech teaches (Koheles 4:12) that a 3-ply rope is not easily severed. The Gemora in Bava Metzia (85a) teaches that if a man, his son, and his grandson are all Torah scholars, the Torah will never cease from their offspring. The simultaneous coexistence of our 3 forefathers formed such a strong foundation for the Jewish nation that they guaranteed a future for their Toldos – descendants.



This parsha is read in the beginning of the month of Kislev, as it represents our guarantee of victory over the attempt of the Greeks to make us forget the Torah. In fact, the verse immediately following the 3 verses in which all of the Avos are alive begins (25:29) **וַיָּזֶד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד** – Yaakov cooked a stew. The first letters of each word spell Yavan – Greece – to hint that although Avrohom had died, the indestructible 3-ply string had already been established to protect his descendants from the Greeks.

Soup To Nuts

Two different brothers. Two different attitudes. Two different worlds. Yaakov and Esav, two brothers whose demeanours and attitudes toward life were as different as their physical make-up. Esav was hairy, Yaakov was smooth. And while Yaakov sat in the tent and studied Esav hunted.

As different as they were, there was one similarity. Both brothers had name changes. The circumstances that led to the name changes were quite different for each brother. In two weeks, we will read that Yaakov had a fierce battle with no less a being then an angel. He was badly injured but he endured. And the angel changed his name. "No longer shall your name be Yaakov, declared the angel, "it shall be Yisrael, a word that interprets, "you fought with man and angels and you won" (Genesis 32:29). This week we read about Esav's name change. He enters his home (after Avraham's funeral) exhausted.



He sees his younger brother preparing a red lentil soup and shouts to him. "Give me some of that very red stuff!" And then the Torah testifies, "therefore his name was called, 'Edom Red' (Genesis 25:30). Red it's the name given to the blood-hungry wild man we know as Edom. It is quite disconcerting. Each brother had a name change. But Yaakov had to have his hip dislocated, he had to battle an angel. All Esav had to do was slurp some soup, and he acquired a demeaning name for eternity. Is that fair?

In the years during the Revolutionary War, the fledgling colonial court system was in chaos. A judge in Bedford County, Virginia, took

charge of law and order in his town by presiding over an unofficial court. According to all records, he was not only fair and reasonable meting fines and occasional whippings, but he was also merciful too. He did, however, deal one death sentence which, upon review in 1782 by the state government, was considered justified because of the looming danger during the war. But that one death sentence earned the judge a place of notoriety. The otherwise merciful judge would never have known that the word that defines the vicious and despotic act of mob execution would be named for him. Judge Charles Lynch may have thought twice if he knew that 5,000 people, spanning the 1800s through the modern era, were executed in a manner that was named for his one deed the lynch mob.

The Chofetz Chaim used to contrast acts of distinction and those of notoriety. In order for Yaakov's name to be changed to Yisrael, He had to struggle with Esav. He had to outsmart the cunning Lavan. And ultimately he had to battle and defeat an angel. To earn a notorious name, however, all one must do is one reckless action. It's a lesson for life.

Back in the 1980s, Raymond Donovan, Labour Secretary in the Reagan Administration was exonerated on charges of connections to organized crime. After months of hearings and hours of testimony, he was vindicated. Before leaving the committee hearings, he sarcastically asked the panel, "Which room do I go to get my good reputation back?"

The Torah tells us that with one slurp of the soup Esav got a new name. It was not his hunting. It was not his wildness or the flaming colour of his hair. It was his wild table manners and his animalistic quest for the red soup, in which he was willing to give up his birthright. It was that big gulp that earned him his reputation. And Esav went … from soup to nuts. ***(By R' Mordechai Kamenetzky)***

Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin



The Torah states: "And the servants of Yitzchak dug in the valley and found there a well of fresh water" (Genesis 16:19). Why does the Torah elaborate on the wells Yitzchak found?

The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, explains that this teaches us that we should not give up in frustration when we start something and run into difficulties. Do not despair.

When Yitzchak dug and did not find water, he kept digging in other places until he finally found what he was seeking. When others quarrelled with him and took over his wells, he still did not become discouraged. He continued his digging until he finally found a well with water that he was able to use in peace.

This, teaches the Chofetz Chaim, is a practical lesson for all areas of our lives. This applies to spiritual and material matters, to Torah studies and to business. Be persistent when things do not at first work out the way you wish. Especially when beginning to study Torah, do not give up if you find it difficult at first. People often fail because they give up too soon. There are three rules for success in life: 1) **Initiative** -- you have to try 2) **Perseverance** -- you have to keep trying 3) **The Almighty smiles upon your efforts**. Keep trying and you will succeed.

Rabbi Y Richtman- Decision, Decisions 25:21

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ ***And Isaac prayed to the L-rd opposite his wife because she was barren, and the L-rd accepted his prayer, and Rebecca his wife conceived.***



The Torah describes the way that Yitzchok davened for children with the word vaye'etar. Rashi explains that this word means to ask (someone) pressingly and persistently for something. The pasuk continues and says" vayei'aser lo Hashem" and Rashi explains this to mean that Hashem was prevailed upon and persuaded by Yaakov.

The Imrei Emes wondered why the tefilos of Yitzchok were not accepted like other tefilos, and why Hashem needed to be persuaded so much. The Gerrer Rebbe explained this with a mashal.

A child asks his father for a candy and the father says no. The child continues to ask and beg. Finally the father gives in out of pity even though it might not be the best thing for the child. This case is no different. Avraham was supposed to live for 180 years, but only lived for 175 years so that he wouldn't see the evil ways of Eisav. Therefore, for Hashem to answer the tefilos of Yitzchok now would mean that he would be willing to cut 5 years off of Avraham Avinu's life. This is the reason why Hashem needed to be persuaded by the tefilos of Yitzchok.

R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld provides a wonderful gematria that alludes to this idea in the pesukim. The words **וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ י-ה-ו-ה**

vayei'aser lo Hashem" equal 748, which is the same gematria as the words "**חמש שנים** chamesh shanim."

When **R' Aharon Kotler** heard this vort, with this gematria, he said "I am sure this was said with ruach hakodesh".

Who Gave the Name?

Rashi comments (25: 25-26) that Eisav was given his name by everyone that saw him. Anyone that saw him would say he came into the world full of hair, like a grown person. From this Rashi, it would seem that Eisav wasn't given his name by his father. How could this be, why wasn't Eisav given his name at his bris like every Jewish boy?



R'Chaim Kanievsky, shilta, answers that since Eisav was born with a red complexion, Yitzchok was nervous to perform a bris on him. Maybe his redness was a sign that his blood was not flowing properly. Giving him a bris could cause excessive bleeding which would be dangerous. Once Eisav got older, it became clear that this wasn't the case and Yitzchok wanted to give Eisav a bris. However, Eisav wouldn't let him. Therefore he was never given a proper name by his father at a bris and the name that everyone called him at his birth stayed with him for his entire life.

"Like wine, the Torah pleases the heart and improves with age." ~~ Midrash, Sifre Deuteronomy 48

Unsafe Company

In the beginning of this week's parsha Rashi brings a famous Chazal. That describes how Eisav would try to break out of the womb when Rivka walked by a house of idols. And how Yaakov tried to run out when she passed the Yeshivah of Shem V'ever There is a basic question that one should ask regarding this chazal. We understand why Eisav was trying to get out into the world, as there is no Idol worship in the mother's womb. However, what was Yaakov trying to do? Wasn't he learning the whole Torah with a malach.

R'Bunim from Peshischa says that we see from here that even if one can learn Torah from a malach, but he will have to be in the company of a rasha it's still better to get away.



There is another answer given to the above-mentioned question. **R' Yaakov Galinsky** answered that Yaakov wanted to get out of the womb, even though he was learning Torah with the Malach, because that Torah was without ameilus (toiling). The Torah of Yeshivas Shem V' Ever would need toil and commitment. He added a proof as to how we know that the Torah we learn before birth is without the proper application. He said that anything that you can lose with one flick under the nose couldn't be acquired with too much effort. With this idea, he answered another famous question, 'Why don't we stand up for an expecting mother, isn't the baby she carrying a huge talmid chacham'? He answered that Torah knowledge acquired without effort isn't something we stand up for.

"What If There is a G-d?" By Yossy Gordon



When **Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi**, known as the "Alter Rebbe" (1745- 1812), began teaching the new path of Chabad Chasidism, he attracted many different types of individuals. Some sincere and some not so sincere. The latter were attracted to the novel intellectual discipline introduced by Rebbe, but not so interested in taking the difficult steps necessary to internalize the lessons for the sake of self-improvement. One such young man was a businessman by the name of Shlomo Feigin. Though he was brilliant and enjoyed the intellectual challenge of the Alter Rebbe's teachings, sadly, his heart was not in it. It happened once that Shlomo needed to take a business trip to Leipzig. Prior to his departure, the Alter Rebbe summoned him. To Shlomo's surprise, the Alter Rebbe wanted to hear his travel itinerary.

When the Rebbe heard that he was passing through the city of Karlin, he asked him to please pay a visit to his colleague, the saintly **Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin**, and convey his regards. Shlomo promised to fulfil the Rebbe's request. Upon arrival at the home of Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin, Shlomo Feigin was shown to the waiting room, directly adjacent to Rabbi Shlomo's study. As he waited, he heard Rabbi Shlomo pacing in his study. Suddenly, the door to the study swung open and Rabbi Shlomo walked out and began to pace in the waiting room. Suddenly, Rabbi Shlomo loudly exclaimed: "Young man, young man, what will be if indeed there is a G-d in this world?" Rabbi Shlomo then returned to his room.

Shlomo Feigin, mesmerized by this strange scene, continued to wait. A few minutes went by. Rabbi Shlomo's pacing inside his office could again be heard in the waiting room. Again, the door swung open in a rush. Out came Rabbi Shlomo. Again came the pacing and exclamation: "Young man, young man, what will be if indeed there is a G-d in this world?!" When this scene repeated itself a third time, Shlomo Feigin realized that this must be the reason for the Alter Rebbe's request that he visit Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin. He was supposed to witness this scene. He left and resumed his journey to Leipzig.

Sometime later, Shlomo Feigin's spiritual wellbeing took a major turn for the worse. He eventually succumbed to the promise of grandeur and power and forsook his faith. Highly gifted, he rapidly climbed the ladder of success till he was appointed to a high position in the Czar's government.

More years passed. The Alter Rebbe passed on to his eternal rest. The government decided to build a highway that would traverse the entire breadth of the land. To the chagrin of the Chassidic community, the proposed road's route ran directly through the place where the Alter Rebbe's holy remains had been laid to rest. The Chassidim decided to use whatever influence they had to change the route.

Inquiries were made, and it turned out that the one in charge of the route was the apostate Jew Shlomo Feigin. The Chassidim were greatly concerned. Would a former colleague turned stranger, a man like Shlomo Feigin, be sympathetic to this cause?

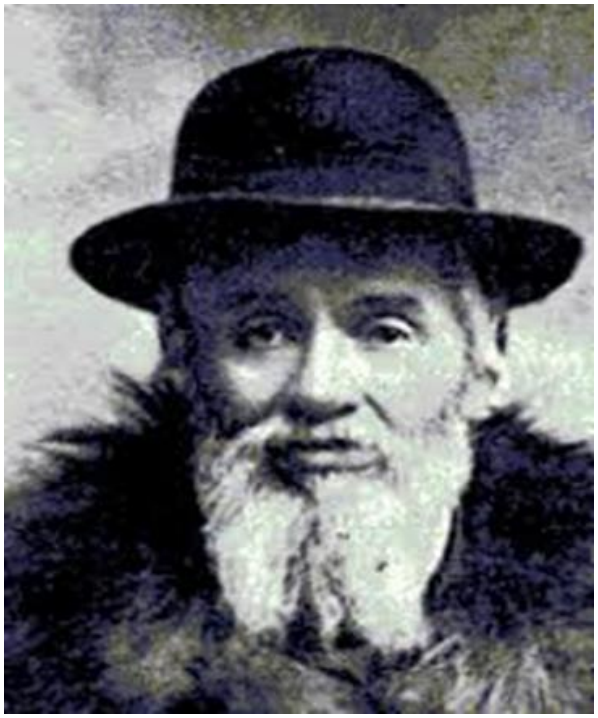
The old chassid Reb Moshe Vilenker, who years earlier had spent time together with Shlomo in the Alter Rebbe's court, was asked to intervene. An appointment was secured. The aged Reb Moshe sat down with Shlomo and explained the situation. Without hesitation, Shlomo promised to reroute the road. But he had one request of Reb

Moshe. Could they sit together that evening and schmooze [farbreng] like in times of old? Reb Moshe agreed.

During the course of their discussion, Shlomo confessed to something most personal: "You see all of my success, all of my wealth, all of my power? I cannot enjoy it. I constantly hear the words of Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin ringing in my head. 'Young man, young man, what will be if indeed there is a G-d in this world?!'"

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

Yaakov Avinu was born holding on to Esav's heel, and Rashi (25:26) explains that he was trying to be born first, to be the bechor. In that era, the bechor was the cohen, and Yaakov strived to attain that merit.



Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zt'l, asked: Yaakov saw that Esav was ahead him in the womb, and that it was impossible for him to be born first. Why did he even try? To answer this question, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai first gave an introduction, which teaches the essence of hishtadlus: Hishtadlus doesn't mean achieving. Hishtadlus means to try, and when one tries, Hashem completes the deed. Histhadlus doesn't mean achieving because a person can't do anything on his own.

As **Reb Mordechai of Lechovitz zt'l** said, "*Without Hashem's help, one cannot cross the doorway; with Hashem's help, one can cross the sea.*" This is true regarding both spiritual and material pursuits. One can make attempts, but success is solely in Hashem's hand. "Someone

who acquires this true perspective," the **Rebbe of Kotzk zt'l** said, "will never lose hope." Why should he lose hope, when Hashem is the true performer? Those who despair are those who think that they can do things on their own. When they recognize that their abilities are limited and insufficient, they become afraid and lose hope. If they would know that everything is from Hashem, they would also know that there's always hope, because Hashem can do anything.



We now understand why Yaakov Avinu tried to be born first. He knew that by his own abilities, it was impossible. Esav was in front of him. Yet Yaakov made histhadlus, because Hashem performs, and for Hashem, everything is possible. Yaakov Avinu's hishtadlus paid off. Thirteen years later, Esav sold the bechorah for a bowl of red lentil soup to Yaakov Avinu. We see from this the potential of histhadlus; wonders can happen, because for Hashem, everything is possible.

A somewhat similar idea is discussed on the words וַיִּתְרֹצֲצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ (25:22). Rashi on this passuk explains that when Rivka would pass the beis medresh of Shem and Ever, Yaakov Avinu would attempt to leave his mother's womb to go to the beis medresh.

The Divrei Yisrael of Modzitz zt'l asks, Esav was in front of Yaakov in the womb, blocking his way. It was impossible for Yaakov to leave. So why did he try? The Divrei Yisrael explains that hishtadlus is precious to Hashem, even when you don't succeed. As the Zohar (vol.1, 69:) states, "*Whoever desires and strives to know and to see [spirituality], although he is unable to fulfil his desire, everyone praises him immensely, because he is trying.*" This is the reason Yaakov Avinu tried to go to the beis medresh of Shem and Ever from the womb. It was impossible, that's true, but he wanted to, he tried, he made histhadlus, and that is what counts.

In parashas Lech Lecha, Hashem asked Avraham to count the stars, and Avraham began to count them. Hashem said "*so will your children be.*"

Reb Meir Shapiro zt'l explained that it is virtually impossible to count all the stars, but Avraham tried to count them. Hashem said, *your offspring will be that way too.* They will never say it's impossible. They will try and do whatever they could. And as the Divrei Yisrael taught, the attempt is very precious to Hashem. And as the **Rebbe of Kotzk** said, since success is in Hashem's hands, anything and everything is truly possible.

The Parrot that Learned to Say "Shema Yisroel"



Living on the outskirts of Bnei Brak, Daniel enjoys the advantages of the Orthodox community, and the wide-open space in the huge field behind his apartment building. The space is especially advantageous for his unusual pet – a large, multi-colored, talkative parrot. Living at the edge of town means that few people can be disturbed by the occasional loud outbursts of his parrot's squawking. Daniel taught his bird only words and phrases that his neighbours would appreciate hearing. With patient training, the parrot learned to say "Gut Shabbos" and "Shema Yisrael." When asked "How are you?" it responds with "Baruch Hashem"!

The joy that the bird brings to the neighbourhood children more than makes up for the occasional squawking that may disturb some of Daniel's neighbours. One day, Daniel went up to his solar roof

heater to check on a leak. His parrot was perched atop his shoulder, squawking like a good religious bird.

As he was tinkering with the pipes, a sudden gush of scalding water made him jump back. He was not burned, but the parrot was badly frightened and flew away, landing almost a mile away in an empty soccer field, dazed. Netanel, a gentle, nature loving person, found the parrot and brought it to his home to nurse back to health. Netanel's children were delighted with the parrot. When it began squawking "Shema Yisrael" Netanel couldn't believe his ears! Not being observant, he told his wife that he was embarrassed that this bird was reciting Shema every day, and he was not! Netanel thus felt impelled to attend shul every morning in order to recite the Shema. This was the beginning of his gradual return to observance. Netanel and his wife eventually attended an Arachim Seminar for young Israeli couples, which introduced them to Orthodox Judaism. One of the Arachim volunteers presenting workshops was Daniel.

During the break, Daniel mingled with the participants. He never stopped asking people about his missing parrot, as he was anxious to find it. Netanel overheard Daniel's inquiries and figured that his parrot belonged to Daniel. He was hesitant to return it – the parrot had brought joy to his family and was the catalyst to bring them to a life of Torah observance.

After consulting with a rabbi, Netanel returned the parrot to Daniel, explaining what had happened. Daniel was delighted to be reunited with his parrot, but even more pleased to learn how much his parrot had accomplished in its absence. What a great idea, thought Daniel, to have taught the parrot to say "Shema Yisrael"! (Einei Hashem)

"I am in constant fear lest I become too wise to remain pious." ~~ The Koretser Rabbi

Living Jewish -Chabad



Yaakov gave Esav bread and lentil soup (Gen. 25:34) Esav only asked for lentil soup, but Yaakov first gave him bread. Yaakov would not take advantage of Esav's hunger to receive the birthright, and Esav wouldn't be able to claim that he had sold it under duress. When Esav was no longer hungry, Yaakov asked him if he still wanted lentil soup in exchange for his birthright. (*Y'dei Moshe al Midrash Raba*)

Torah U' Tefilah- Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



Why was Yaakov born holding the ankle of Eisav (25:26)? Did he really think that by holding onto his ankle he could prevent him from being the first born? What was he trying to do? **Rav Moshe Mordechai of Lelov** explains that Yaakov's perspective was that it is his responsibility to put in the effort—even if logically he might not be able to accomplish, to the fullest extent. We have the obligation to try our best at things, and leave the rest up to Hashem. Parenthetically, we notice that in reality, Yaakov did ultimately merit the rights of the firstborn.

Kibud Av v'Eim

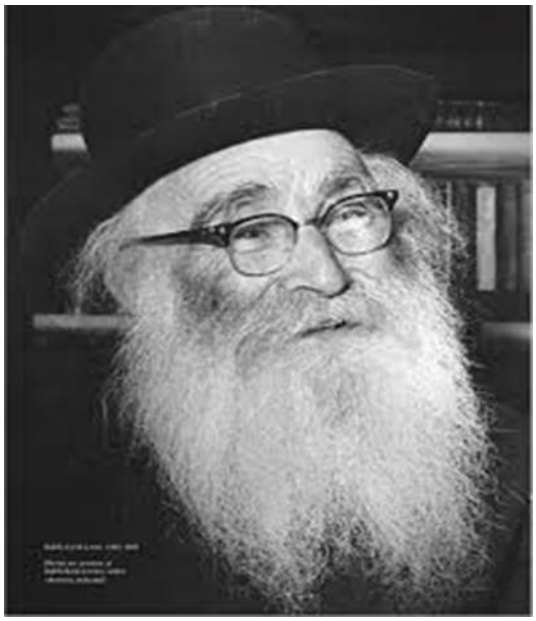


Esav is renowned for honouring Yitzchak, however, the **Yaaras Dvash** says that his honour was far from perfect, because he honoured Yitzchak solely with his deeds and with his words, but not in his thoughts. He didn't respect Yitzchak in his heart.

To prove this, consider the time Esav wanted to serve his father dog meat. As the Targum Yonoson [27:31] writes, "*Hashem prevented Esav from finding kosher game. He found a dog, killed it, and he made a good tasting meal from it, and brought it to his father. He said, 'Father, get up and eat from your son's game…'*" Although Esav was famous for his kibud av, it's obvious from this episode that he didn't carry in his heart true admiration for his father. If he would truly honour his father, he would never serve him a dog. Everything he did was external, and therefore, we have the potential to abolish his merits.

"Amalek's power comes from Esav's merits, because he would honour Yitzchak. As it states ***'Yitzchak loved Esav…'*** **וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו** (25:28). But it was all, from Esav's glib tongue, because **כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו** he didn't honour Yitzchak in his heart - only with his mouth…" And since his honour was solely in deeds, Rebbe Yohonoson Eibshitz teaches, we can cancel Esav's merits by serving Hashem sincerely, with our heart, with love, fear, and joy. When we serve Hashem in this manner, this will establish a precedent that the heart is primary, not deeds. Esav's kibud av, which was solely deeds, will be proven lacking, imperfect, and not valid.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



Abraham Axelrod, the deputy-mayor of Yerushalayim, once related, "I was once standing near **Rav Aryeh Levin** during a funeral at the Sanhedria cemetery. After the grave was filled, he said to me with a smile, '*I live in a very small home, and many times people have tried to persuade me to move to a larger and more comfortable place to live, but I have always refused.' He continued, 'Look here,' he said as he indicated the grave, 'after one's life on this earth is over, a person is brought from his home, however big and fancy it may be, to over here.*

For me, the move and transition from my home to here will not be hard, because there is not much difference in the amount of space a person gets over here and the amount of space in my room. I won't notice the change very much. But when someone has gotten used to living comfortably in a splendid home with much space, it will be very difficult for him at the end of his days to move from his nice home to this small bit of space!'"

Etz Chaim - Young Grouches Become Old Grouches

כה:ל - וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הַלְעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדֹם הָאָדֹם הַזֶּה

Eisav had a life-threatening illness called **בולמוס** (**bulimia)**, and therefore he needed to eat immediately. Eisav came in from the field extremely tired, and he saw the food that Yaakov was in the middle of cooking, and **עשו** said, **הלעיטני** – "open my mouth and pour a lot inside… **חז״ל** criticize **עשו** for talking this way.

The maggid of Yerushalayim, **Harav Shalom Shwadron** זצ״ל asks; Why do **חז״ל** criticize Eisav for saying **הלעיטני**, since we know that

someone that is carrying this sickness is in extremely great danger, and the **הלכה** is that we even give them to eat on **יום כיפור** as well, if need be we will feed them non-kosher food. So what did **חז״ל** see which revealed a negative trait about **עשיו**, when he said **הלעיטני**,"if he was close to death? What can you expect of a person in this state?

To understand the answer to this question, one has to know that the **טבע** of people is **הרגל נעשה טבע**,"which means that if someone constantly does something good, eventually it becomes a part of him, and it becomes "second nature". However, there is a negative side to **הרגל נעשה טבע** which is, that if a person doesn't train himself to do something in the proper way, at an earlier stage in life, it becomes extremely difficult to change that **הרגל** later on. Now, this does not mean one cannot change a bad habit at a later stage in life, as the gates of teshuva are never closed, it's only more difficult, because at that point it's changing ones **טבע**.



HaRav Yitzchok Berkowitz שליט״א says, that when one goes to visit an old age home he will see two types of couples; the ones who are sweet and respectful, and the 98-year-old couples who are still bickering with each other. Shouldn't they have grown up yet? Shouldn't age change the way they act? The answer is – No. If one doesn't "nip it in the bud," if people don't change themselves when they are at a younger age, age will do nothing for them, they will just go from being a young grouch to an old grouch.

Harav Shalom Shwadron answered that even if a person is in this life-threatening situation, if he would have worked on himself beforehand, he would not talk in an improper way even though he is under very dire circumstances. It can be compared to the way one

acts when he is drunk – a civilized person will not lose his morals, no matter how drunk he is. It's only with the people who can put on a good act and pretend as if they are good human beings that the true secrets come out when they drink. So, to end off, we learn from here, that "If we fail to train ourselves, then we are training ourselves to fail"…

Rabbi Scheinbaum writes a beautiful story.



The famous violinist, Izhak Perlman, was once in New York to give a concert. When he was a child, he was stricken with polio, which resulted in him having difficulty in getting around. His mobility was quite limited, as he had to wear braces on his legs and needed the support of crutches. When Izhak ascended the stage, it was a sight to behold him slowly crossing the stage to reach the chair he would sit on during his performance. The audience waited patiently for him to take his seat, and when he was ready, he signalled for the conductor to begin. He had only completed the first few bars of his solo, when suddenly, one of the strings of his violin snapped loudly.

While it was early in the concert and Izhak Perlman could have paused the concert to fix his violin, he did not. He waited momentarily and once again signalled for the conductor to continue from where they had left off. With only three strings left on his instrument, Izhak Perlman was able to redesign the score in such a manner that he was able to complete the concert with only three strings on his violin, playing with passion and artistry.

When he finally finished, the audience came to their feet and cheered him excitedly. They realized that they had witnessed a stroke of brilliance, an extraordinary demonstration of skill and genius. When the crowd quieted down, Izhak Perlman spoke to them and said, "You know, I could have changed the string on my violin, but it is the artist's task to make beautiful music with what he has left!"

Rabbi Scheinbaum teaches a lesson from this. We all lack something. However, instead of focusing on our deficiencies and on the things that we don't have, we should train ourselves to notice and appreciate all of the positive things that we do have in our lives. By doing this we would be much happier people!

Does clothing have an effect on a person?

וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בִּגְדֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנָהּ הַגָּדֹל֙ הַחֲמֻדֹ֣ת אֲשֶׁ֔ר אִתָּ֖הּ בַּבָּ֑יִת וַתַּלְבֵּ֞שׁ אֶת־יַעֲקֹ֧ב בְּנָ֛הּ הַקָּטֹֽן:27:15 "*And Rivka took the clothes of Eisav her older son and put them on Yaakov her younger son.*"



Rivka wanted her son Yaakov to receive the brachos instead of Eisav. So she persuaded Yaakov to approach his father pretending to be Eisav. Rivka then gave to Yaakov Eisav's clothes so that if Yitzchok (who was blind at the time) felt Yaakov he would think he was Eisav.

This was a very difficult task for Yaakov, the epitome of truth and honesty, to mislead his father and lie. For this reason, Rivka advised him to wear Eisav's garments. She knew that if you dress like Eisav you become Eisav. If this is true, then it wasn't entirely a lie when

Yaakov said, "I am Eisav, your eldest." From here we see the profound effect that clothing has on a person. Sometimes we don't understand what is wrong with certain styles of clothing, despite their being tzniyos and shatnez free. However, if the clothes are the style of Eisav (i.e. the kind of fashions that gentiles wear) they may cause us to begin to think and act like them.

Just like when we wear formal clothing, we tend to act more formal, and when we dress casual we act more casual. So too, if we wear clothing that are not refined, we will not act in an eidel way.



Rabbi Daniel Channen -Rosh Yeshiva Keter HaTorah

The woman of valour acts immediately: Rivka overheard Yitzchak tell Esav to prepare him delicacies "*so that my soul may bless you before I die.*" She immediately went to Yaakov and told him that she will prepare the delicacies that Yitzchak loved. "*Then bring it to your father and he shall eat, so that he may bless you before his death.*"

A person must weigh the consequences: Yaakov was afraid and he replied, "*Perhaps my father will feel me and I shall be seen as a mocker in his eyes; I will thus bring upon myself a curse rather than a blessing.*" *Rivka replies, "Your curse be on me…."*

Would you endanger your mother? The question one must ask at this point is why Yaakov agreed to proceed with this dangerous deception knowing it could put his mother in grave jeopardy? For example, if a mother says that she is willing to go to jail in place of her son, what son would allow this? If anything, now that Rivka is in danger it should be more of a reason for Yaakov to resist! As long as

there is any chance that Rivka will be harmed, Yaakov's natural reaction should be to protect her.

A mother will give her life for her children: **The Iban Ezra** explains that Rivka's pledge was the universal language of women. A mother gives her life for the sake of her children. The blessing and success of the children is the blessing and success of their mother, likewise the curse and failure of the children is the curse and failure of their mother. This is why Rivka says at the end of the parsha that if Yaakov takes a wife from bnai Chais, "*what is life to me?*" This is why Rachel Imainu says to Yaakov in next week's parsha, "*Give me children, otherwise I am dead.*"

Building a bayit ne'eman: The natural state of a woman is to put all her efforts into raising a family. Yaakov's failure to receive the ultimate blessing from Yitzchak would have been a fate equal to death for Rivka. It was the mesiras nefesh on the part of his mother, who willingly put her life on the line, which gave Yaakov the strength to risk his life for the blessing too. This would assure that future generations would uphold the Torah.

Hashem hears a mother's prayers above all: Furthermore, Hashem greatly cherishes the love that a mother has for her children. When Bnai Yisrael were led into exile the only entreaty that was accepted was that of Rachel Immainu.

The women of valour are of the front lines: Our very survival in galus depends on the chinuch of our children. Our women of valor often stay at home, giving up any notion of a career in order to raise children. Let his word serve as a reminder to thank our mothers, and our wives, for the selflessness shown in caring for us and our children; how much attention and care that is given on all levels at the expense of sleep and while on the brink of collapse. No child's need is too great and no mother's mesirus nefesh is ever exhausted. Motherhood has the greatest potential influence in human life.

Ultimate Justice



An Orthodox Jew from New Jersey was involved in a car accident in which he accidentally killed an old non-Jewish man. Although the courts found the Jewish man not guilty, he could not carry the pains of the guilt that he killed an old man. It gave him no peace and caused him to lose his appetite. He was unable to sleep for weeks. He decided to seek counsel from the internationally known sage, **Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky** of Bnei Brak. He wrote him a letter asking for a tikun - plan for soul-rectification, because he had accidentally killed a non-Jew.



The Rabbi wrote back to him. His response consisted of one word: "**Amalek**", the Jew was disappointed. He could not understand this answer and continued suffering with sleepless nights. The original Amalek was a grandson of Esau. He and his descendants hate the Jews and what we stand for so much that they constantly attack us. On the Shabbat preceding Purim, called "Zachor," we read the biblical passage (Deut 25:17-19) commanding

us to remember their evil and to obliterate them. Haman, the villain of the Book of Esther, was a descendant of Amalek. Hitler may have been another.

At some point he decided to move away from his town to begin a new life. Maybe then he could stop thinking about the incident. He began searching for a new location and found a house in a nearby town that appealed to him. The owners told him that they were eager to get rid of this house which they inherited from their dead father who had been killed in a car accident. Could it possibly be?

After a short investigation, the Jew discovered that the residence belonged to the old man whom he had accidentally killed! Soon after that, in the basement of the house he found materials belonging to the deceased non-Jewish man. He was shocked to find a photograph of the old man from when he was a young man, proudly wearing an SS uniform, standing next to evil Hitler, may his name be eternally blotted out. It turned out that this old man had been an SS officer in the Nazi army during the Holocaust years. After the war, he made his escape to the United States and hid his past. Other documents he had been preserving included a list of the names of all the Jews he personally murdered, May G-d Al-Mighty avenge their blood. When the Jew read the names of the martyrs that were murdered, he found both of his parent's names on the list!

The Al-mighty had indeed allotted to him to be the instrument to avenge his parents' blood! It was then that he understood Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky's one word answer.

You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, smarter than you think, and loved by Hashem more than you will ever know.

Rabbi Eytan Yehudah Dzikowski



25:21 **וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ:** *Isaac pleaded with the L-RD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the L-RD responded to his plea, and his wife Rebekah conceived.* • One of the reasons Rivkah was sterile was because Lavan, her brother, blessed her (Bereshit 24:60) and Hashem didn't want people to think that she gave birth because of his blessing.

וַיִּתְרֹצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ וַתֹּאמֶר אִם־כֵּן לָמָּה זֶּה אָנֹכִי וַתֵּלֶךְ לִדְרֹשׁ אֶת־ה' (Bereshit Rabbah 60:13) 25:22 *But the children struggled in her womb, and she said, "If so, why do I exist?" She went to inquire of the L-RD.* • Rivkah was originally destined to give birth to all 12 tribes. However, since she complained about the pain of her first pregnancy (with Yakov and Esav) the merit was taken away from her. This is alluded to using the word "ze" when she questions her difficult pregnancy. "ze" has a numerical value of 12. (Bereshit Rabbah, Tanchuma on Vayechi 15)

25:25 **וַיֵּצֵא הָרִאשׁוֹן אַדְמוֹנִי כֻּלּוֹ כְּאַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו** *The first one emerged red, like a hairy mantle all over, so they named him Esav.* • Originally, Esav was supposed to be called "Assuy" with the letter yud in his name. But Yaakov "took" it from him and it was added to his own name as "Yaakov" instead of just "Ekev". In the era of the Messiah, Esav's letter vav will also be taken from him by Eliyahu and will also be given to Yaakov. Esav's name will then become "Es" and Yaakov's name will then always be spelled in full, with the letter vav, as it is in Vayikra 26:42: **וזכרתי את בריתי יעקוב** . (Megaleh Amukot)

וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וְיָדוֹ אֹחֶזֶת בַּעֲקֵב עֵשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וְיִצְחָק בֶּן־שִׁשִּׁים שָׁנָה בְּלֶדֶת אֹתָם 25:26 *Then his brother emerged, holding on to the heel*

of Esau; so they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born. • It is taught that anyone who dreams of Yakov, beautifully dressed, will have years added to his life. (Meam Loez)

25:27 **וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ צַיִד אִישׁ שָׂדֶה וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים** *When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the outdoors; but Jacob was a mild man who stayed in camp* • We learn from here that Esav was not only skilled at hunting but was also an excellent warrior. He killed Nimrod. (Targum Yonathan)

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הַלְעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדֹם הָאָדֹם הַזֶּה כִּי עָיֵף אָנֹכִי עַל־כֵּן קָרָא־שְׁמוֹ אֱדוֹם 25:30 . *And Esau said to Jacob, "Give me some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am famished"—which is why he was named Edom.* • We learn from the repetition of the word Edom that Yaakov served Esav stew and red wine.

25:32 **וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת וְלָמָּה־זֶּה לִי בְכֹרָה** *And Esau said, "I am at the point of death, so of what use is my birthright to me?"* • When Esav was 15 years old he stole the cloak that Nimrod inherited from Adam. The cloak had pictures of all sorts of animals and birds which would attract them to him. This made hunting very easy. Esav was now worried that Nimrod would seek revenge for this and kill him. Hence, he felt that he was "at the point of death." Ultimately, Esav killed Nimrod when Nimrod was 215 years old and had ruled the entire civilized world for 185 years. (Meam Loez)

Rabbi Y Richtman- "Hashem" on Your Lips

One of the most famous pesukim in the Torah is in this week's parsha, when Yitzchok wonders out loud, "HaKol Kol Yaakov." This raises the question as to what Yaakov was thinking. Yaakov was no simple person. He knew the way in which Eisav spoke and it was understood that he was disguising himself as Eisav. It would seem likely that Yaakov would have rehearsed the way he was going to speak to his father in order not to blow his cover. So, would he say "that Hashem placed the animal in front of me"? Why would he

mention the name of Hashem, which is a word that wasn't in Eisav's vocabulary?

The Imrei Emes answers- Yaakov Avinu knew that his mention of Hashem would create suspicion. However, he reasoned, that he was prepared to dress like Eisav to avoid being caught, but to take credit for something without mentioning Hashem was something he could not do. Yaakov was ready to forfeit the brachos that his father was giving, rather than speak without recognizing the involvement of Hashem in every action.

Stories of Our Gedolim

Ephraim was in trouble. He was a foreigner in Russia learning in the yeshiva of the **Chofetz Chaim, Rav Yisroel Meir Kagan zt"l**. At the outbreak of WWI the Russian Government ordered all Germans to present themselves. Fearing that doing so would result in imprisonment, many, including Ephraim, ignored the order and hoped for the best. At the time a certain individual took up residence near the dorm of the yeshiva and began to become friendly with some of the German students.



Unbeknownst to the boys the man was a Russian spy and in hopes of gaining favour with the Government he surreptitiously stuck Russian military information into Ephraim's pocket and promptly proceeded to report him. It wasn't long before the authorities were notified that a spy was in their midst and Ephraim, though completely innocent, was arrested. He had been framed but the authorities were not interested in hearing his plea and being that his crime was so severe his place of internment was kept a secret.

The Chofetz Chaim was distraught over his talmid's predicament and after much effort and siyata dishmaya Ephraim was finally located (after about two years).

The Chofetz Chaim travelled a great distance to be present at the trial and paid an enormous sum of money to hire an excellent lawyer on Ephraim's behalf. The lawyer called upon the Chofetz Chaim to testify on behalf of Ephraim's character and integrity. In introduction to the Chofetz Chaim the lawyer told the following story:

There was once a man who asked the Chofetz Chaim to make change for him for a five ruble note. After counting out the five-single ruble notes the man quickly grabbed the money and ran without giving the Chofetz Chaim his five ruble note. Instead of screaming accusations and the like at the thief, the Chofetz Chaim called after him, "I forgive you, I forgive you!" The judge was sceptical about the validity of the story and asked the lawyer if he truly believed it himself. The lawyer replied that honestly, he too doubted the story happening. If so, why had he said it ?

"True, I might not believe it happened," answered the lawyer, "But are such stories going on about you and me? Clearly this man must be great as these things are being said of him!"

The Chofetz Chaim testified but the verdict was passed, and the boy was found guilty. Though the sentence was death, since he was a young boy it was reduced to 12 years of hard labour. One talmid related the news to the Chofetz Chaim but concerned he would be overly upset, told him that the sentence was 6 years. "They think they'll be in power in six years." Responded the Chofetz Chaim, "Who says they'll be in power in 6 weeks?!" And indeed, as the Chofetz Chaim had said a few weeks later the Czar was overthrown and all political prisoners, including Ephraim were released.

Who are we? - Written by J Caller

Immediately following the Torah's description of the personalities of Yaakov and Eisav that 'The lads grew up and Esav became one who knows trapping, a man of the field; but Yaakov was a wholesome man abiding in tents' (Bereishit, 25:27), the Torah writes: **וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב** *Yitzchak **loved** Eisav for game was in his mouth; but Rivka **loves** Yaakov'*.(25:28)

Why is Yitzchak's love of Eisav written in the past tense whereas Rivka's love of Yaakov is written in the present tense? And why does the Torah explicitly give the reason for Yitzchak's love of Eisav (i.e. because 'game was in his mouth') whereas it does not explicitly state why Rivka loves Yaakov!



The Chizkuni (who lived in Provence around 1250) explains beautifully. He writes that the Torah is teaching us that Yitzchak only loved Eisav whilst the game was in his mouth, whereas Rivka's love of Yaakov was constant. In contrast to Yitzchak's love of Eisav which was dependant on what Eisav did, Rivka's love of Yaakov was not dependent on anything, since it was a love of who Yaakov himself was (rather than what he did), it was unconditional, and therefore ever-present. Therefore, when describing Yitzchak's love of Eisav, it is written in the past tense and it specifies the reason, whereas when describing Rivka's love of Yaakov, it is written in the present tense and no reason is specified.

The Dubner Maggid (quoted by **Rabbi Frand**) takes this concept further. He writes that in a non-Jewish society, people are defined by what they do, however, according to Jewish values, people are defined by who they are. Eisav represented non-Jewish values, he defined himself and expected others to define him by what he did. The basis for the admiration and love of other people was what he had accomplished in the past. If he would stop being a hunter, then people's admiration for him would also stop. Therefore Yitzchak 'loved' eisav in the past tense 'for the game he put in his mouth', the things that he had done in the past. But Yaakov represented Jewish values. He was defined by what he was rather than what he did, and therefore Rivka's love for him was constant.

Indeed, Yaakov was defined by who he was. Yaakov was an 'ish tam' (Bereishit, 25:27). Rashi defines 'tam' as a person who is not skilled in deceiving others. Yaakov, was an 'ish tam', he was a master over the trait of being a tam. He was totally honest, though when it was appropriate to use cunning strategy in order to accomplish the appropriate result, he was able to do so (**Rabbi Pliskin**), most notably in taking the birthright.

This fundamental message of how to define ourselves is evident in Pirkei Avot 4:1. Ben Zoma says that the wise one is the one who learns from everyone, the strong one (the gibor) is the one that conquers his inclination, the rich one is the one who is happy with what he has, and the honoured one is the one who honours others. Why is not that the wise one is the one with the highest IQ? Why is it not that the strong one is the one who can lift 5000 tonnes? Why is it not that the rich one is the one who has made trillions of pounds?

The answer is that our values, Torah values, are different. The Torah is teaching us that what defines us is not what we do in comparison to what others do (e.g. I am really strong because I can lift 5000 tonnes, whereas everyone else in the world can only lift up to 4000 tonnes). What defines us is who we are. What defines us is

how we use the traits that we have been given. Every one of us can be wise – by recognising that we can constantly be learning from all those around us. Every one of us can be strong – by overcoming the inclinations that tempt us to sin. According to the Torah, our uniqueness is not determined by what we do in comparison to others, it is determined by how we channel the traits that G-d has given us.



Waiting for the right girl - by Rabbi Daniel Fine

The second pasuk of our sedra tells us וַיְהִי יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּקַחְתּוֹ אֶת־רִבְקָה that 'Yitzchak was 40 years when he married Rivkah…'

Why, asks the **Netziv**, is it important for us to know how old Yitzchak was when he got married? The Netziv answers that this is to praise Yitzchak. For Yitzchak did not just marry any girl when he realised he was getting old; he made sure he found the right one. Thus, when he realised that there were no appropriate girls in his area, Eliezer was sent to find a wife for Yitzchak from further afield. Indeed, this is why Yaakov did not marry until he was 80 years old – for he simply had not found the right girl for him.

The message is to make sure one does not settle for any old partner just because one feels that they will find no-one else. A marriage is about caring for each other and facilitating each other's maximisation of their potentials. If there's no-one appropriate, then do not sell yourself short. Indeed, the concept behind this stretches further than marriage; when you do something, make sure you do it properly!

Torah Tavlin- Story

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ 25:21

One of the well-known Maggidim in Eretz Yisroel was once invited to speak at a mesivta in Jerusalem to deliver a shmuess and words of chizuk. He began by telling over a story that he had heard first hand. In the city of Ofakim, a desert town twenty kilometres west of Be'er Sheva, there lived a Yungerman who was not blessed with children for many years. He and his wife lived in a community where many families had multiple children and it pained them that they could not partake of this wonderful blessing. Many years of treatments and visiting doctors in many parts of the world did not bring the desired results, and the couple resorted to all sorts of segulos and charms in their never-ending quest. When this too failed, the man became noticeably depressed. His condition was not lost on the Rav of Ofakim,



R' Shimshon Pinkus zt"l, and one day, the Rav came over and said to the man, "I believe there is one segulah that you have not tried. I would love to share it with you but right now I am a bit busy. If you come to my house tonight after midnight, I will show you the segulah." The Yungerman brightened and couldn't contain his excitement. He counted the hours until midnight and then hurriedly ran to the Rav's house where he knocked lightly on the door. In seconds, the door was opened, and Rav Shimshon ushered him outside and into his car. The man followed and they began to drive. "Rebbe, what is the segulah?" asked the man impatiently. "Wait," answered Rav Shimshon, "not yet." The two continued to drive east towards Be'er Sheva, and then further south in the

direction of Yerocham. Thirty to forty kilometers sped by and Rav Shimshon hadn't said a word. Suddenly, he pulled over to the side of the road, and pointed to the flat desert terrain. "Here. Get out over here." The anxious young man didn't know what to do. They were in the middle of the desert - in the middle of nowhere. "Here? What is here? There is nothing here! Where is the segulah? What am I supposed to do?" The young man was frightened and unsure what to do.

"Right here, right now, you will be alone in the desert. Just you and the Ribono shel Olam. Now is the time for you to break down and cry real tears. Daven to Hashem like you've never davened before - Hashem wants to hear your tefillos - and in the merit of this segulah, you will see a yeshua. I will come back for you in a half hour." With that, the yungerman got out of the car and Rav Shimshon sped off. All alone, in the pitch darkness, somewhere in the Negev desert, the man began to daven and soon he was totally caught up in his prayers. He begged and screamed and with no one around to inhibit him, he truly davened like never before. He begged and he cried and he asked Hashem to have mercy on him and his wife and give them a child.

Precisely thirty minutes later, Rav Shimshon drove up and rolled down his window. "No, you did not cry enough," said the Rav, to the astonished man. "This is not how to cry. Cry! Really cry! Beg and plead .... and cry from the depths of your heart and soul! Give it every last ounce of energy - use all of your remaining strength! Then....you will see salvation!" Rav Shimshon rolled his window back up and drove away a second time! The Yungerman walked back into the desert night and let it all out. He screamed at the top of his lungs and cried to the point of total exhaustion.

When Rav Shimshon pulled up thirty minutes later, he got out of the car and smiled. "Yes! This is what I meant by crying!" The man's face was bright red and he was soaked through and through from perspiration - and buckets and buckets of salty tears! "Now, you will

surely see yeshuas Hashem," concluded the Rav. Indeed, nine months later, almost to the day, the couple was blessed with a beautiful, healthy baby boy! The Maggid concluded his shmuess and as he was walking out of the yeshiva, an excited mesivta bochur came over and said, "Kvod HaRav.... I am the son who was born to that couple ...." How great is the power of a true tefillah!

Toldot and Shabbat - by Rabbi Shimshon Silkin



Esau – Esav – numerically equal to "Shalom" – peace. But Esav was the embodiment of war and bloodshed – red, murderous, evil? However, not from birth. Esav, all eventual depravity notwithstanding, born with enormous potential – to harness the physical world, channel its energy to a higher purpose. Tackle it, conquer it, make it count, make it mean something. Prepare the way for Yaakov to perform his best while Esav was performing his. Esav breaks his peace; absorbed in the culture, the environment he is supposed to control; Esav does not elevate to a higher place, thus Yaakov must also assume Esav's role, his birthright, his inheritance…

We can do better; Shabbat – the day of peace, the ideal Esav which means "Done" – all the work is done; the opportunity to tackle the physical week; harness it, channel it, bring it to a higher purpose to fulfil the words sung at our Friday night tables – how sweet is your peace… the inheritance of Yaakov…

Mr. Charlie Harary - Know Who You Are



In general, for all young, aspiring lawyers, it becomes a question of where to place your focus on when looking to land a job. Which firm should you attempt to can get into? If you apply to a firm way above your paygrade, you will never get in; yet if you apply somewhere below your standards, you may be selling yourself short.

I will never forget it. I was well into my year in school, and I had been doing quite well. I set my sights on getting into my dream firm, Davis Polk & Wardwell. I had my doubts if I would make it as far as landing a job with them, but I would give it a fair try. I spent the entire three days at the Double Tree hotel, until the very end. It was at that point that just about everyone had gone, except me and a small handful of others.

I stood in the main massive room looking at the huge board on the wall. All the interviews currently going on and those with openings were flashing. To both my shock and excitement, the last interview of the day was with Davis Polk & Wardwell, and there I noticed the board light up with the word "open."

My heart fluttered. "Should I do it?" I thought to myself. A few minutes later, there I was heading down to Davis Polk & Wardwell. "Here goes nothing," I said to myself. I walked into the suite, though I almost immediately realized that this would be the worst interview ever. The interviewer they sent in was a partner they had just brought in from China. He spoke no English, and I spoke no Chinese. This would make for a great interview.

"What's your name?" he asked me as soon as I stepped foot inside. Not having heard him correctly due to his Chinese accent, I asked

him to repeat the question. Great way to start off an interview. "What's your name?" he repeated. "N-a-m-e." Now I understood. "Charles Harary," I answered. He then continued. "Why do you want to be a lawyer?" Unfortunately, all I heard was, "Do you want to be a lawyer?" The conversation thus sounded like, "Why do you want to be lawyer?" "Yes." I was doing great answering his questions.

At this point, I realized that there was a significant language barrier. He then put down his paper and remained silent for twenty minutes. For twenty minutes it was unbearable. He was studying my resume intently with as much eye for detail as he could.

After twenty minutes of painful silence, he looked up at me with a surprised look on his face. "Talmud?" he said. I immediately did a double take. "Talmud? Did he just say Talmud?" I quickly began thinking if any other words rhymed with Talmud. "You know Talmud?" he asked. All I could think is that he imagined I was some advanced Talmud expert. I wasn't sure where he was going with this. "Yes," I replied. "I just got to America," he said. "My first week here, I was taken throughout all the different departments, one of them being the tax department. I went in to meet a Jewish man, who had a beautiful bookcase situated behind him and filled with all the tax codes. In the corner of the bookshelf, I noticed something with a different binding. "What is that?" I asked. "That's a Talmud!" he said. "If you think the tax codes are hard; this is ten times harder."

The Chinese interviewer now looked at me with an incredulous stare. "You must be really smart!" I didn't want to brag, though I let him in on a little secret. "I have been studying the Talmud since fifth grade!" "It's an honour to meet you!" he exclaimed. At this point, I felt as if I was redeeming myself from the initial mix-up I had when introducing myself. I walked out feeling great. The next stage was the firm taking me out to lunch for a final interview.

There I was seated across from a woman my age and a man who was a good ten years my senior at Prime Grill in New York City. The

woman was sweet and gentle; the man, on the other hand, was rough, tough and intimidating. While the woman and I engaged in some light conversation, the gentleman didn't utter a word to me.

Halfway through the meal, though, he finally opened his mouth. "So I see you are Jewish," he says. "Here we go again," I thought to myself. I remembered how my initial introduction with their Chinese representative went, and I only hoped that this wouldn't turn out the same way. "Yes, I am," I said. "Well, it is an honour to meet you," he replied. I was shocked to hear that.

"Before I went to law school," he said, "I was a U.S. Marine. And we Marines respect nobody but Israeli commandos." As he said that, I wondered if he thought I was an Israeli commando. Sure, I was an Israeli commando repelling off the Mediterranean with a Talmud in my hands. But he had a point to make. "If I may ask," I said, now getting more comfortable with myself, "why is it that the U.S. Marines respect no one else aside from the Israeli army?" That was a loaded question, which he went on to elaborately answer.

"I grew up breathing red, white and blue. My grandfather, uncle and father served this country. I too was a great Marine who fought for this country. I was free and believed in justice and freedom, liberty and equality. I was then selected to join an exercise program with the Israeli commandos for two weeks in Israel. I spent two weeks there, after which we all went to this hill called Masada. It was there that the main commando sat us atop the hill in a semi-circle and said the following words which I will never forget.

"Do you know why we are here? It is because many years ago we had a fort here, and it was destroyed. The Jews escaped, but you know what they ultimately wanted? They just wanted to be Jewish, but the Romans wouldn't have it. They surrounded the mountaintop, and the Jews looked to the left and looked to the right, and there was no one to help them. "Do you know why we are here today?" concluded the Israeli commando. "Because Masada doesn't fall again. We are

done asking others for help. We will never leave our country again." The U.S. Marine then added his own few words.

"I always wondered about you Jewish people. As I sat in Israel with a number of Israeli soldiers, I couldn't stop thinking to myself, 'Why are we learning from them? Why are we learning about their strategies and tactics of war?' And then I realized. It is because you know who you are and what you are fighting for. You are not fighting for merely an ideal; you are fighting for your mother's backyard. If you lose a border, you lose a country. And when you know who you are and what you are fighting for, you can accomplish anything."

There is not a day that goes by when I don't hear that voice. ***"If you know who you are and you know what you are fighting for, you can accomplish anything."***

Rabbi Fischel Schachter - Worrying about Marriage

אל תירא כי אתך אנכי ***"Do not fear, for I am with you" 26:24***



When I was nineteen years old learning in the Yeshiva *Torah V'Daas*, there was at one point three different boys expected to get married within a short time of each other. However, much to the chagrin of everyone, two of the marriages never came to fruition. In one instance, the kallah dropped the *shidduch;* in the other case, the boy went for a routine doctor exam only to be told that something suspicious was discovered. That as well caused enough worry to call off the wedding. Now there only remained one

more boy scheduled to be married. His name was Shlomi, and he was my *chavrusa.*

After hearing how these two other boys experienced such a heart-breaking reality of their future marriages disintegrating, he was extremely worried. "I am certain I will not get married," he said to me. "The Gemara (*Shabbos* 106a) says that if one person amidst a group dies, everyone in the group should worry. Here, two boys had their weddings called off. The same is bound to happen to me." Trying to calm him down, I said, "Shlomi, tell me what you are worried about." And so, hesitantly, he began.

"The wedding is scheduled to be in Connecticut. What if on the way to the wedding I will get a flat tire?" "That is what you're worried about?" I exclaimed. "Don't worry; we'll drive behind you." What if you get a flat tire," he continued to say. "We'll make sure to have a pickup truck full of tires." Still burdened with fears of the unexpected, he said, "What if there is a storm? "So we'll get umbrellas." "What if they close the highways? What if there is a terrorist attack?" I didn't know how long the list was going to be, but he continued on. "What if my kallah drops the shidduch?" "Listen Shlomi," I said interrupting him, "I hate to tell you this, but if your kallah hears what you are worried about, she may have good reason to call off the wedding." I knew Shlomi was always a sensible boy, but here he was going off the deep end.

Sitting there trying to help Shlomi, I wasn't getting too far. As we continued to attempt to work matters out, a man walked into the room. Fortunately, he was a mental health professional. Walking over to him, I said, "If you don't mind helping, Shlomi is really worried about his wedding. I do not know what to do." "Don't worry," the man replied, "it's completely normal. It is the pre-trauma period before married life. Just tell him to come over to me."

As Shlomi headed over to the man and began speaking to him, somehow I was privy to sit in on the private session. "Take a piece

of paper and fold it in half," he said to Shlomi. "On one side of the page write the word 'probability,' and on the other side write 'non-probability.' Now, what are you worried about?" he asked. "I am embarrassed to tell you," Shlomi shyly muttered. "Don't be ashamed; just go ahead."

"Well, I am worried about getting a flat tire. "Okay, Shlomi, what are the chances of getting a flat tire?" "2%" he answered. "Fine," the man considered. "Let's say 2%. Now write on the other side of the paper that there is 98% non-probability that you will not get a flat tire." "Well," continued Shlomi, "I am also worried about a terrorist attack." "Okay, how likely is that to happen?" "1%," answered Shlomi. "So write 99% non-probability on the other side." With each of the concerns raised, it was always more than a ninety percent non-probability chance.

Concluding the talk with Shlomi, the man said, "Whenever you are worried, look at the paper and calculate what the statistics are." After this conversation, it seemed that Shlomi felt better. As Shlomi went home that night, however, he began to fret again. What happened? His list of every possible consideration of what could go wrong grew and grew until he had a nice long list. It was close to an encyclopaedia.

But that wasn't it. He started adding up the statistics as follows: 2% chance of a flat tire plus 1% chance of a terrorist attack plus 3% of a storm plus 1% that I may not be well plus 1% that the kallah will not be well. At the end of the count, there was a sum total of close to a three hundred percent chance that he was not getting married. I didn't know how to help him any longer. But finally, one day while we were in yeshiva, that all changed.

As I was talking to Shlomi about his laundry list of worries, a man entered the room. He was selling raffle tickets for a menorah. It was then that the idea occurred to me. I am going to buy him a raffle ticket. And so I did. I then went to Shlomi and said, "Shlomi, you

know what? I bought you a raffle ticket for a menorah." He looked at me strangely. "What do you mean a raffle ticket for a menorah?" "You should call your future father-in-law," I told Shlomi," and tell him that if he plans on buying you a menorah for Chanukah he shouldn't, because you are going to win this raffle." "Are you out of your mind?" Shlomi shouted. "I never win these things!" "Look," I said trying to calm him down. "What are the chances of you winning this menorah? It is the same as all these other worries you have. If you are so sure that these unfortunate incidents are going to happen, how come you are unsure if you are going to win the menorah?" After saying that, Shlomi calmed down a bit. I finally felt that I had done well. And indeed, for the next two weeks, Shlomi was at peace.

But then the fateful day arrived. As I walked into the yeshiva one day, Shlomi was not there. That wasn't good news because he was known for his punctuality. It was then that I was notified that a phone call awaited me. "It's Shlomi's father," the boys told me. Uneasy, I slowly approached the payphone hanging on the wall. With shaky hands, I picked up the phone. "Hello?" "Hi, it's Shlomi's father. She called. It's not good; come over to the house." When I heard those words, my heart sank. His kallah must have broken off the shidduch. As I hung up the phone, all that could be heard amongst the boys standing nearby was, "She called, she called…"

Walking to the house, my knees were shaking and I felt terrible. I opened the door and headed upstairs to Shlomi's room. The room was dark and I knew that I was in for the worst news. Turning to Shlomi, I quietly asked, "When did she call?" Shlomi said, "I don't know; about an hour ago." "What did she say?" As I asked this question, Shlomi immediately picked up his head in bewilderment. "What do you mean 'What did she say?' She said that she works as a secretary in a school and she found out that I just won a menorah! Do you know what this means?"

It then hit me. "She called" had nothing to do with breaking the *shidduch*, but rather Shlomi's kallah congratulating him on

winning the menorah. Yet Shlomi could not deal with the unexpected results of him winning. If he could oddly enough win the lottery, the chances of something wrong occurring for his wedding were that much more real.

When I finally understood this, I wasn't sure if I should cry or laugh. "What do we learn from this?" Shlomi said with a crack in his voice. "What do we learn from this?" I sighed in exasperation. "You know what we learn from this? Next time you don't ask me for advice." Yet, despite this incident, it was not long before matters improved.

After discussing the issue with the Mashgiach of the yeshiva and being reassured that Hashem ultimately runs the world, Shlomi finally came to terms with handling his upcoming marriage. And *baruch Hashem*, without the flat tires, terrorist attacks and turbulent storms, Shlomi finally happily married.

In life, we tend to worry and worry and worry some more. But sometimes we would be much better off readjusting our perspective and instead of considering everything that could go wrong, placing our trust in Hashem. While we may be led to believe that matters will go awry and the worst is inevitable, those statistics only say so much. When we are informed that we in fact won the menorah, our response should be to say to ourselves, ***"I know Hashem, <u>You</u> are running the show. You created the world, and You determine who wins the lottery."***

The Toldos Yaakov Yosef zt'l (Toldos 1) says that יעקב comes from the word עקב, heel, and it means Yaakov's focus is on the end, on Olam HaBa.

עשו means "to do," to act impulsively, without considering the consequences of his actions.

Rabbi Yigal Haimoff - A Hearing Aid for Whom?



ורבקה שמעת בדבר יצחק And Rivkah was listening as Yitzchak spoke… *(27:5)*

A man struggling with his *shalom bayit* once approached his Rav for advice. After hearing of the numerous issues which were troubling the couple, the Rav said to the husband, "Just do as I say and you will see improvements in your marriage." And with that, he went on to suggest that the husband go to the store and surprise his wife by buying her a gift. Agreeing to the idea, the man proceeded to walk to the store as per the instructions received.



As he continued walking, he began thinking what gift his wife would appreciate most. Finally, it occurred to him. "We are having a communication problem," he said to himself. "When we speak, we do not understand each other. Maybe it is because my wife is having a hearing issue. I think it would be nice if I purchase her a hearing aid." Liking his own idea, he soon located the nearest store carrying such amenities and walked inside.

Approaching the owner, he mentioned that he was looking to buy a hearing aid. Assuming that the man wished to make the purchase for himself, the owner asked if he could have a look at the man's ear to determine what kind of hearing aid would best suit him.

"No, no," said the man, "it is not for me; it is for my wife." Puzzled, the owner looked at the man. "If that is the case, I think it would be best if your wife comes in herself. I need to take a look at her own ear."

"I cannot do that," replied the husband. "You see, I want to buy my wife a hearing aid as a surprise present." The owner came up with a different idea. "Okay," said the owner, "I'll tell you what we can do. When you go home, stand a distance away from your wife and call her name out. If she hears you and responds, then you know her hearing is fine. If, however, she doesn't respond, then walk a little bit closer and call her name out again. Keep on doing this until she answers you, and then tell me how far away you were from her. This will help me gauge how good her hearing is and accordingly provide you with a suitable hearing aid."

Complying with the owner's orders, the husband returned home intent on going through with the plan. Quietly entering through the front door, the husband tiptoed to the living room, from where he spotted his wife standing in the kitchen. "Malka! How are you?" he called out. Silence. "Malka! How are you?" he called out again. No response. She must not have heard him. And so, he took a few steps closer.

"Malka!" Yet again, no answer. "Something must be wrong," thought the husband. "This is really unlike my wife." Taking several steps further, he now stood just a few feet away from his wife. "Malka!" Nothing. By now, the husband figured that something serious had happened to his wife. Walking all the way up to her, he leaned over and said loudly into her ear, "Malka! How are you?" Malka turned around. Facing her husband, she said, "Are you deaf? I already answered you four times!"

Sometimes we think that the problem we are facing is someone else's fault and doing. "I am not the one to blame!" we say to ourselves. But then, sometimes rather quickly, we realize that just the opposite

was the case. No one is perfect, including ourselves. But that is fine, because we are not meant to be perfect. What is asked of us, though, is the honest assessment of ourselves and others. When we do so, we will soon see that others appreciate us for exactly who we are and the way we are.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Number 6



If we analyse the number 6, we will notice it represents Bracha.* When the women gave birth in Mitzrayim, it was 6 at a time.* Rus was destined to have six descendants- Dovid, Moshiach, Daniel, Chananya, Mishael and Azarya- descend from her who would each be blessed with six blessings.* It is the 6th year that is one of blessing for the 6th, 7th and 8th years.* What is the 6th request we have in Shemona Esrei? **ברך עלינו** * This idea is hinted to in the letter **ו**- since it has a numerical value of 6- as it means 'and'- to increase. Indeed, we are taught it is the cause **מוסיף על הראשונים**; it connects to what was said previously. Moreover, it means a hook- that which connects- as in **ווי העמודים**

The 6th of the **אושפיזין** is Yosef and he is the one who gave Bracha to the land of Mitzrayim. It says **יסף ה'...ברוכים** In addition to the above, the Pasuk states Yosef wore **בגדי שש (6)**

What is the 6th Parsha of the Torah? Toldos. Consequently, this Parsha is saturated with Bracha. Every Aliya in this Parsha begins with a **ו, 6**. Each Aliya also has terms of Bracha contained in it. This is especially true with the sixth Aliyah of this Parsha which contains many terms of Bracha. We are taught in this Parsha **ויצחק בן שנה ששים** – unit of 6. The name of the Parsha is **תולדת**; children- to extend beyond ourselves- Bracha. Furthermore, it was twins- not

just one child. Moreover, both were male and the **Baal Haturim** points out that **זכר** has the same numerical value as **ברכה** -227.

Parshas Toldos heralds in the month of Kislev- a month in which we follow in accordance with Beis Hillel in Hilchos Chanuka- **מוסיף והולך**

Slightly Roasted



Esav's famous words **הלעיטני נא מן האדם**... ; ***pour into me the red stuff***, seem to contradict the person he was since **נא** ; please, is proper manners? Furthermore, Rashi tells us Yaakov is the one who uses this term as in **קום נא** whereas Esav speaks in a rougher language as in **יקום אבי**, Yet here we see Esav speaking with the word **נא** ?

The word **נא** can also mean slightly roasted as in **אל תאכלו ממנו נא** So since Esav was hungry, he wanted it although it wasn't fully cooked. This also explains why the lentils were red- although lentils are brown after cooking- since it was before it was completely cooked. For this reason his nation is named **אדום**; red as this characteristic is one that they embody.

The power of Tefila

Our Tefios have tremendous power. **The Maharsha** writes that Tefila can bring about even the miraculous. Let us take a look at the astonishing words of **R' Bachaye**. ***He writes that the power of Tefila is so great that it can change nature, save one from danger and remove a decree.***

In the times of the **Baal Shem Tov** there was once a drought. It got to the point that it caused them to recite special Tefilos coupled with fasting. Upon seeing a simple Jew davening with intense Kavana along with tears by **ועצר את השמים** ; He will restrain the heaven so there will be no rain (in Shema), the Baal Shem Tov asked him what his intent was by those words? The response: *Hashem should squeeze out waters from the heavens and then there won't be any water there (***ועצר את השמים** *) because it will then be here.* It was because of this Jew who didn't know much, that the Jews then were answered, as rain descended from the heavens.

The Shulchan Aruch states the Halacha is that if one said **מוריד הגשם** in the summertime he needs to repeat Shemona Esrei. Amazingly, the Taz (1586-1667) tells us this is because rain is bad in the summer time and through one's Tefila, he can cause rain to come to the world. Wow, the power of Tefila!



It was in 1830, at the age of 65, that **R' Avraham Dov of Avrush** (1765-1840), author of the Bas Ayin, settled in Tzefas. Although he waited many years for the opportunity to bask in the spiritual light of Eretz Yisrael, once there he found life too difficult to bear as the hardships were all too apparent. He then decided to return back to Avrush, where he had been the Rebbe since 1785. At this time the rainy season in Eretz Yisrael was approaching.

One day, as he was walking to shul for Mincha, he heard noises coming from the surrounding rooftops. Upon inquiring, he was told that in Tzefas, they performed household chores on their flat roofs in addition to using the roofs for storing food and supplies. The noise you hear is caused by the women scurrying about, removing everything from the roofs so that it doesn't get ruined by rain.

Looking up at the blue sky, he muttered it certainly doesn't look like rain is coming. The reply: tonight will be the 7th day in Cheshvan, when we begin saying **ותן טל ומטר לברכה** . As a result, rain will surely come. The unquestioning faith of the people there affected him so deeply that he decided to stay in the Holy Land.



In the days of **R' Naftali Ropshitzer** there was a terrible decree against women in which many died. There was a man who didn't know much who was davening Mincha on Erev Yom Kippur. In the Bracha of **ברך עלינו** in Shemona Esrei, instead of saying **וברך שנתנו כשנים הטובות** ; *bless our year like the best years*, he said **וברך נשותנו כנשים הטובות** *bless our women…* followed by concluding the Bracha with **מברך הנשים** ; *blesses the women*, and not **מברך השנים**; *blesses the years*. It was because of this the decree was removed, said R' Naftali, although he recited the wrong words, since it was uttered with tears and passion. In explaining why Sarah laughed when she was told she will have a son, **the Sforno** comments that she thought that the words of the Malach were from the Bracha of a Navi and not from Hashem. It is therefore impossible to return to youth from old age from such a Bracha since that is like **תחית המתים** . This can only be done through Hashem or a Tefila that finds favour with Hashem.

A boy who grew up secular in Tampa, Florida. However, he always felt attached to Judaism as he would frequent shuls and the like. He later became religious and eventually authored Sefarim that are used by many. His father later wrote the following letter to him:

"never in my wildest dreams did I think I would ever have an orthodox son. But I realized when mother was sick with German measles in her pregnancy with you, I prayed to G-d that if she and the child would be fine, I would dedicate the child's life to Him. I forgot about that prayer but obviously He didn't."

R' Akiva Eiger was once asked why his Tefila for a certain sick person wasn't answered. His reply: *maybe you gave me the wrong name, since obviously the Tefila would be answered.*

Changing Nature



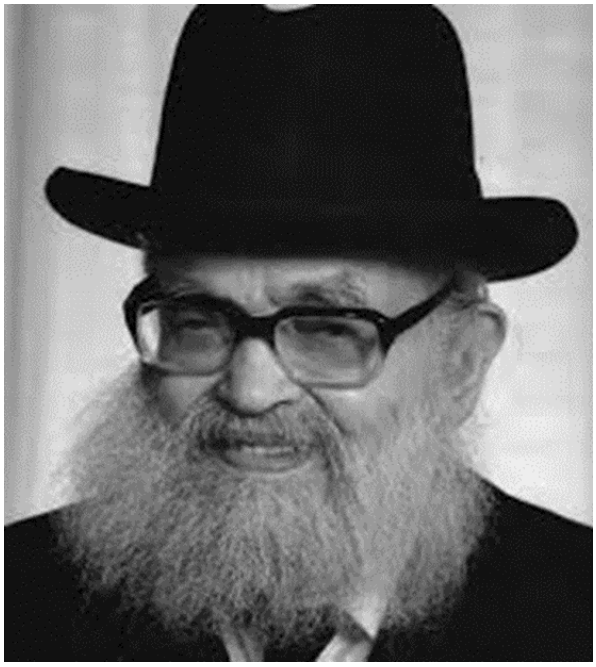
We know that Sarah wasn't just childless rather she lacked the basic reproductive organs to bear children. Why was this so, as this now required a miracle for her to have children?

Sarah was expected to believe that she would have children even though she knew she had no chance of becoming pregnant naturally! Through Tefila, a woman can change her physical nature. Tefila has the power to overcome all-natural laws and to bring about real miracles.

After 12 years of hoping, a barren couple in Eretz Yisrael was told by doctors they would never bear children. That is when they decided to adopt a child. When the child was 5, his class had a Siddur party as they now knew how to read. At home, the parents noticed their child was extremely happy, in a way they had never seen before. The child explained, "I always wanted a brother. Now that I will be davening with a Siddur, I will daven that you have another child so I can have a brother." Not wanting to break the child's

heart, as the father knew it was medically impossible, he encouraged his son to daven. Exactly, nine months to the day of the Siddur party, a baby boy was born to them. Tefila can break all barriers.

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport

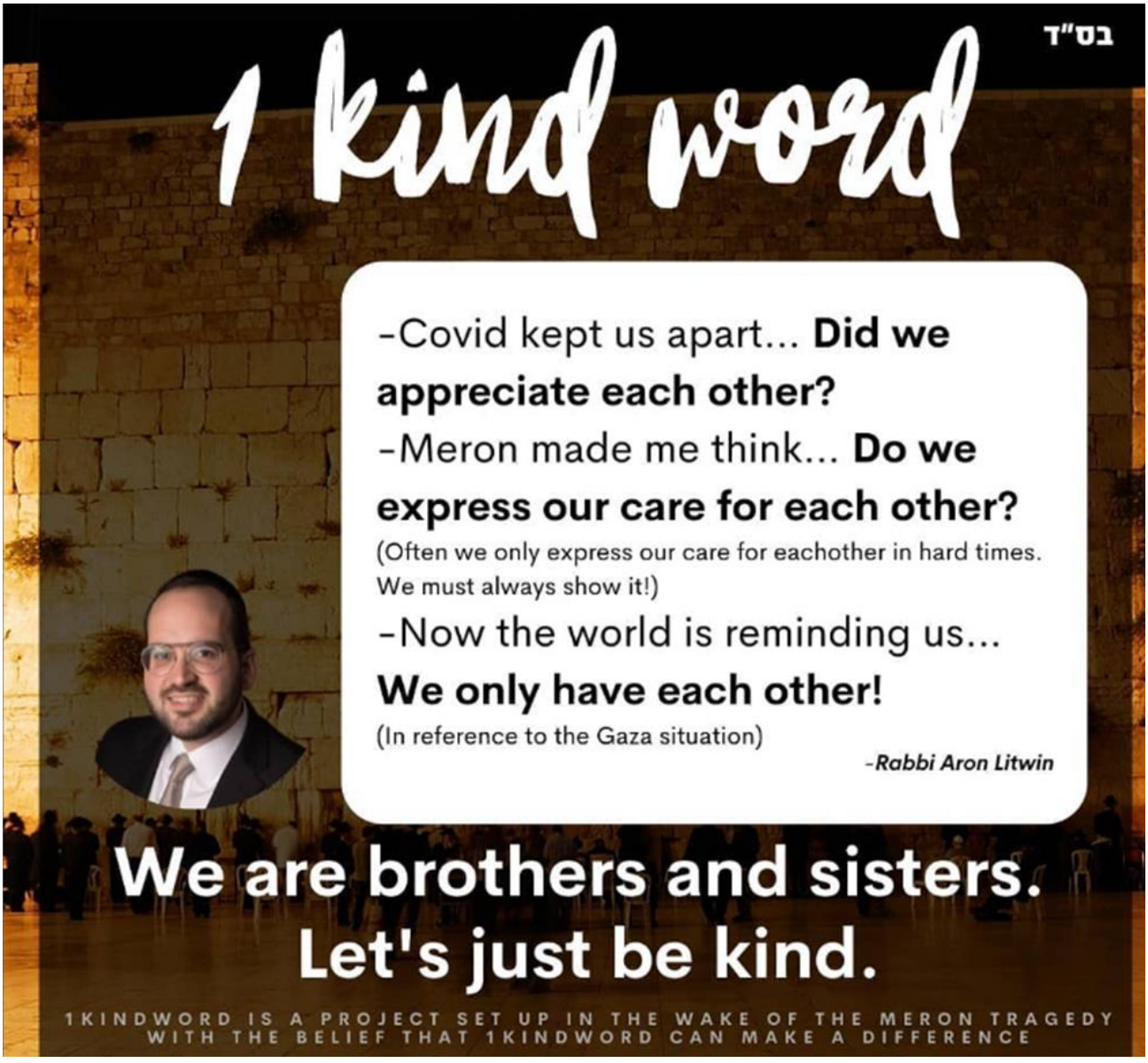


Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky was once travelling with his son and granddaughter on an airplane. Seated next to him was the non-religious head of the Histadrut, the General Federation of Labor in Israel. During the course of the flight, he was astonished to notice Rav Yaakov's son and granddaughter constantly coming to check on him to see if there was anything they could do to make his flight more comfortable. The man couldn't help but sadly contrast the behaviour of Rav Yaakov's family with that of his own, who barely made time to visit or talk to him, and he asked Rav Yaakov to explain the secret of how he created such close and reverential family bonds. Rav Yaakov responded that the warm relationships he enjoyed with his children and grandchildren had nothing to do with any superior methodology, but with the underlying philosophical differences between him and his seatmate.

Rav Yaakov explained that Orthodox Jews believe in a concept of yeridas ha'doros – declining spiritual generations – as each successive generation is further removed from the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. As such, we emphasize the paramount important of mesorah, and young children inherently respect and care for their parents and elders. Our children and grandchildren view us as a critical link in their connection to the Torah, and as such, they naturally want to interact with us and help care for us.

Turning to his neighbour, Rav Yaakov concluded, "You, on the other hand, believe in and promulgate the theory of evolution, which teaches that each successive generation is more sophisticated and evolved than the previous one. Instead of looking at you as being closer to Moshe Rabbeinu, your family views you as being closer to a monkey. Is it any wonder that they don't make much time for you!?"

The dichotomy that Rav Yaakov so keenly expressed can help us appreciate the difference between Yaakov and Eisav. Although Yaakov and Eisav were twins, they had little in common. Their goals and values couldn't have been further apart.



Unique Light

Rashi writes (27:33) that when Eisav entered the room to receive his father's blessings, Yitzhak began to tremble in fear because he saw Gehinnom open beneath Eisav, and this stood in sharp contrast to the fragrant aroma of Gan Eden which accompanied Yaakov when he entered the room (Rashi 27:27). As Eisav's wickedness had been concealed from his father until now, what suddenly changed which caused Yitzhak to recognize the truth and see Gehinnom open underneath him?



Rav Meir Shapiro (Imrei Daas) writes that each mitzvah that a person does creates a spiritual light, and each of the 613 mitzvot has its own unique light. Although Yaakov was certainly much more righteous than Eisav, there was one mitzvah that Eisav performed with more dedication than Yaakov: honouring his parents. As a result, whenever Yitzhak interacted with his sons, he noticed that Yaakov had many more spiritual lights than Eisav since he excelled in his performance of 612 of the mitzvot, but he was also aware that Eisav possessed one unique light that Yaakov was missing. This caused Yitzhak to conclude that although Yaakov may have been more righteous, there was also at least one mitzvah in which Eisav was superior to him, and this blinded Yitzhak to recognizing Eisav's true colours.

This all changed when Yaakov risked being cursed by his father in order to fulfil his mother's instructions. This self-sacrifice for the

mitzvah of honouring his mother created a spiritual light equal to that which had always accompanied Eisav. When Eisav entered the room, Yitzhak noticed that he no longer had any unique spiritual light, which enabled him to finally recognize the truth and see Gehinnom open beneath him.

Primary and Secondary

Having correct priorities is necessary in all that we do. We must observe that which we do and ask ourselves why we do it. We should busy ourselves in matters of primary importance- that of eternity- and not the fleeting pleasures of the world.



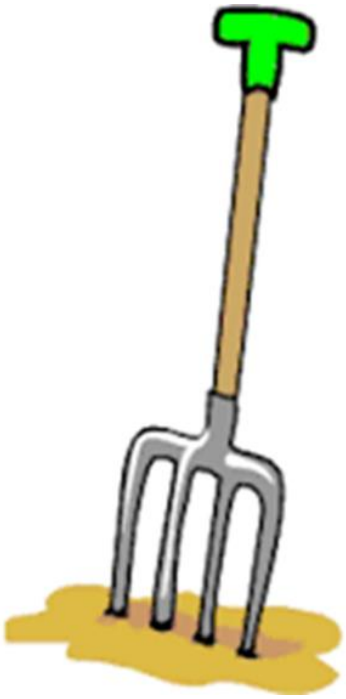
Old photo of Telshe Yeshiva, Telšiai, Lithuania

R' Elchonon Wasserman once went to visit a wealthy person during rainy weather. When he arrived at the home, he noticed that his boots had collected mud. Seeing the impressive white carpet that decorated the front entrance, he went to the back entrance on his own accord. When the owner of the house saw this, he became upset and remarked that he raised his children that all of their wealth is

secondary to **כבוד התורה**; honour of Torah. By coming through the back, it may have shown that the white carpet is more important. R' Elchonon exited and then re-entered the home once again, this time through the front entrance. The two daughters of this wealthy man each married men who eventually became the Roshai Hayeshiva of Telz. This was the result of having proper priorities.

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־אָבִיו הַבְּרָכָה אַחַת הִוא־לְךָ אָבִי בָּרְכֵנִי גַם־אָנִי אָבִי וַיִּשָּׂא עֵשָׂו קֹלוֹ וַיֵּבְךְּ 27:38



The Gemara in **יבמות** explains why tefilla is sometimes referred to as "**עתר**" an agricultural tool, a type of pitchfork. The same way an **עתר**, a pitchfork, moves grain from place to place, so too the tefillos of tzadikim have the power to transform the attribute of "**רוגז**" (anger of Hashem) to that of "**רחמים**" (mercy). **The Ben Yehoyada** explains this Chazal. The gematria of "**רחם**" is 248. The gematria of **רוגז** is 216. The difference is 32 (**לב**).

The difference in the power of a tefilla to alter Hashem's intent lies in the power of sincerity. With a true, meaningful and heartfelt supplication, Hashem showers us with His infinite mercy.

At the end of the parsha, after Yaakov received the berachos, much to the chagrin of Esav, Esav bemoaned his fate and asked Yitzchok, "*Don't you have any beracha left for me?*" To which Yitzchok replied in the negative.

The posuk continues **וַיִּשָּׂא עֵשָׂו קֹלוֹ וַיֵּבְךְּ** - ***Esav let out with a cry***. Suddenly Yitzchok gives Esav a beracha. But just a moment earlier, he had no beracha to give! What changed? The answer is that with

those tears of sincerity a new supply of berachos was attained. As the Zaida zt"l would quote from the **Kotzker**: - ***"The gates of tears are never closed"***. If so, asks the Kotzker, why are there gates? He would answer because they must be real - not crocodile tears - to be allowed past those open gates!

Therefore halacha directs us to look for a baal tefilla for Yamim Noraim, who is over 30, and married with children. At such an age, surely his heart can feel someone else's pain, and be able to produce real heartfelt tears. We must daven. But we must daven with our "Lev" not just our mouths. And we will iy"H be zoche with the Lev to be able to turn Hashem's anger into rachamim. Amein

Chacham Rabbi Avraham Saba zt"l (Tzror Hamaor quoted b'Sefer Pla'aos Eidosecha) would say: **וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בִּגְדֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנָהּ הַגָּדֹל הַחֲמֻדֹת אֲשֶׁר אִתָּהּ בַּבָּיִת וַתַּלְבֵּשׁ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב בְּנָהּ הַקָּטָן**: 27:15

The posuk mentions Esav as '*the big son*' and Yaakov as '*the small son*,' to teach us that a miracle occurred and when Rivka placed Esav's large clothing on Yaakov, they shrunk to fit him perfectly, even though he had a smaller build.

The question is: why was this miracle necessary at all if Yitzchok was blind and couldn't tell if the clothing fit or not? The answer is that it wasn't for Yitzchok but for Yaakov. According to the Medrash, Yaakov was quite upset and even crying that he was part of this (perceived) deception. The purpose of the miracle that the clothing fit him was to show him that it was agreed, Min Hashamayim that he must take the blessings!"

"I grew up among wise men and learned that nothing is better than silence." ~~ Sayings of the Fathers 1:17

Payback





The Meshech Chochma tells us that even where your father or mother abandoned you and didn't raise you, you must still honour them. Honouring parents was told to us in the desert where we received the **מן** from heaven, water from the well, meat from the **שליו** as well as having our clothing pressed from the **ענני כבוד**; clouds of glory. So, even if our parents weren't involved with us, we still must honour them.

Similarly, even if our parents didn't teach us the proper path we must still honour them as in the generation when this Mitzva was given, they heard it from Hashem and didn't need their parent's direction…. So, honouring our parents is not contingent on them doing anything for us. In explaining why the reward for honouring parents is **אריכות ימים** ; lengthened days, **R' Bachaye** writes from **R' Saadya Gaon** that this is because at times children take care of their parents when they are older and it is a burden on the children. One shouldn't feel it is so time consuming because he gets this time back due to **אריכות ימים**.

A hint to this is found by Esav- the one who excelled in honouring his parents- as **ויבא לאביו** 27:31 ***"Esav brought delicacies to his father"***, is a palindrome, as when we read it backwards it also spells **ויבא לאביו** . What you give in honouring parents, you get back.

Being Tired Is Not a Jewish Concept, by Rav Yissochor Frand



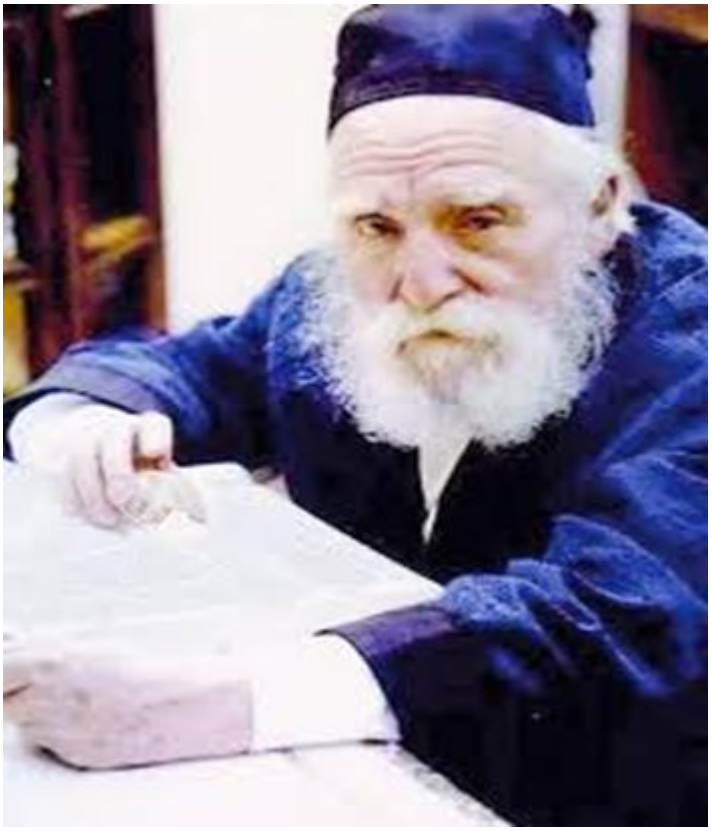
The Torah says, **וַיָּבֹא עֵשָׂו מִן הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיֵף** ***"And Esav returned from the field and he was tired"*** *[Bereshis 25:29].* **Rav Nissan Alpert** notes that this is the first time in the entire Torah that we find the word "a-yef", that someone was tired. If we examine the life of Avraham Avinu, our forefather Avraham, we certainly find cause for him to be tired, but the Torah never says that he was. Avraham lived a long, hard and arduous life. He had to leave his birthplace, give everything up, and travel to Canaan. In Canaan he was confronted by famine, so he had to travel on to Egypt. After returning to Canaan, he helped set up his nephew Lot and became involved in what was literally the First World War, in order to save Lot. He had children late in life; he was confronted with the trauma of Akeidas Yitzchak. Avraham had a hard, long, tiring life.

Nonetheless, the Torah never describes Avraham as tired. Avraham never starts to contemplate retirement. Eisav is the first person by whom we find the word "a-yef" written. What is this telling us?

Rav Alpert suggests that being tired from life is not a Jewish concept. If a person's life is involved in spirituality – in Torah and in Mitzvos – then there is a blessing: "*Those whose hope is HaShem will have renewed strength; they will grow wings like eagles. They will run and not grow tired, they will walk and not grow weary" [Isaiah 40:31].* One does not become tired from doing Avodas HaShem .

Avodas HaShem is in fact rejuvenating. At times it may be frustrating, and one may think that he is running out of strength, but the blessing is that he will not, in fact, run out.

It is a different matter when one is an Eisav and when one's primary role in life is being out in the field 'hunting'. Our Sages say that on the very day that Eisav came back complaining that he was tired, he had transgressed 5 horrible sins, including the 3 cardinal sins. Therefore it is no wonder that he came back claiming that he was tired. If a person's life is devoid of spirituality, when a person has no purpose in his life, then it is very easy to become worn out. But those who trust in G-d will not become tired nor grow weary.



Rav Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) lived into his nineties. When Rav Moshe's condition weakened and he was taken to the hospital before he passed away, when he was literally on his death bed, he commented, ***"Ich hob mer nisht kin koach."*** [I have no more strength.] That was the end of his life. At that point his spiritual goal and his life's work were finished. When one's life work is finished, then there is no more strength. But up until that time, although he was 92 and had been sick, "those whose hope is HaShem have renewed strength."

Often our great Torah personalities, despite being very elderly, have the strength to remain on their feet and talk for hours. From where do they get that stamina? This is the idea expressed by Rav Alpert – being tired is not a Jewish concept.

R' Chaim Yossel Kofman zt"l (Machsheves Halev) would say: **וַיָּזֵד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד וַיָּבֹא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיֵף**- Yaakov was not cooking soup because he was hungry.



It was a sad day because Avraham Avinu was niftar. Chazal tell us that Avraham' passing was untimely. He was destined to live five years longer, but Hashem did not want him to witness his grandson Esav's wicked ways. Imagine how much more Avraham could have achieved in those five years! Yet Hashem thought to spare him that pain and anguish. The minhag is that mourners eat lentils which are round to remind us of the cycle of life. But to Esav, the lentil soup was nothing more than a quick fix; he wished to grab a bite and go on his merry way to cause more harm and sin. Here we see the passing of a great Tzaddik, Avraham Avinu, whilst his own grandson Esav is busy going about his daily routine in order to satisfy his base desires."

וַיִּשְׁלַח יִצְחָק אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיֵּלֶךְ פַּדֶּנָה אֲרָם אֶל־לָבָן בֶּן־בְּתוּאֵל הָאֲרַמִּי אֲחִי רִבְקָה אֵם יַעֲקֹב וְעֵשָׂו: 28:5 Rashi- איני יודע מה מלמדנו

The Torah tells us that Yitzchok sent Yaakov to live with Lavan, who was the "brother of Rivka, mother of Yaakov and Esav." The difficulty in this posuk is obvious. Why does the Torah find it necessary to repeat that which we already know, namely that Rivka is the mother of Yaakov and Esav? Strangely, Rashi comments here: "*I don't know what this teaches us.*" Such a remark is even more perplexing than the posuk itself. Why did Rashi feel compelled to share with us his confusion? Rashi does not comment on every posuk

in the Torah, and as the adage goes, if you have nothing to say, then don't say anything.

The Sifsei Chachamim explains that instead of remaining silent, Rashi seizes the opportunity to teach. He writes, "I don't know what this teaches us," meaning that I haven't arrived at the base understanding of the Torah's intention in this posuk and until I have established a clear pshat, I cannot address allusions or develop homiletics. They will all be meaningless because I have not established the basic truth of the Torah to use as a frame of reference. Once I have confirmed the true pshat, I can apply the same rigorous standards to the other methods of Torah exegesis.



In 1917, **Sarah Schenirer a"h**, a young G-d-fearing seamstress from Poland, became the head of a worldwide movement known as Bais Yaakov, with thousands of pupils in hundreds of institutions. She was a charismatic figure and the girls called her "Sarah Imeinu" - our Mother (Matriarch) Sarah. She turned the socially unacceptable idea of girls learning in a Jewish school into a way of life, providing a model of how to successfully balance tradition and innovation.

A Bais Yaakov teacher in a small town once invited Sarah Schenirer to attend the girls' final examination. Frau Schenirer never turned down an opportunity to participate in a special event at an out-of-town school. In the case of this important test, she knew how much joy her presence would bring to the children and what tremendous encouragement it would provide for the teacher, who, as she knew,

had worked so hard to prepare her pupils. The parents, too, would shep nachas from their young daughters. Above all, the teacher wanted Frau Schenirer to enjoy the children's intelligent answers, for that would make her proud of her Bais Yaakov girls. Indeed, it was a real joy to hear the adorable little girls answering the questions with such confidence. The children relaxed after their successful performance. Beaming mothers hugged their daughters. The greatest satisfaction and happiness, however, were those visible on the face of Frau Schenirer as she observed the teacher questioning and the children answering properly. Her joy and nachas knew no limit.

Then the children began singing and dancing. It was a moment of pure joy. A moment later, Frau Schenirer and their teacher joined in. All burst into a lively rendition of Sarah Schenirer's favourite song, "Vetaher Libeinu." This completed, Frau Schenirer heartily thanked the children for their successful performance and presented them with her own question. "Tell me, girls," she asked with a charming smile. "You just sang a song with the beautiful words of 'Vetaher Libeinu.' 'Purify our hearts.' So tell me: what virtue, what middah, will best help you to purify your own hearts?" The girls eagerly responded to her question. "Yiras Shamayim," came the first answer. "Chessed," was another. "Be nice to your friends." "Respect your parents and teachers." "Love your teachers, friends, and neighbours." The class was lively and excited. All except one girl who said nothing.

Frau Schenirer turned to her. "What do you think?" There was silence. "I ... I don't know," the girl answered in a whisper, squirming and embarrassed to be in the spotlight. Sarah Schenirer smiled her brightest smile. "You are quite right, my dear," she said, kissing and hugging the young child. "It is you who have told us the greatest truth. It is a human being's noblest virtue to say, 'I don't know.' After learning, acquiring, searching, reading all the worthy seforim, listening to great scholars, drawing from the well of exalted minds,

absorbing the wisdom of our Gaonim, trying to emulate them, striving to follow their ways ... if after all that one can say 'I don't know' as humbly, as innocently as you just did, that's the highest madreigah that one can use to attain a pure heart!"

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld- *Rosh Yeshiva Beis Dovid*



The Ramban asks, how could Yaakov avinu marry two sisters? **Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky** says, what type of question is this? What is the Ramban concerned about? Yaakov avinu promised to marry them. So once a person promises, that's what you do. You keep your word. But how could he do that? The Torah does not allow a man to marry two women, and we know that Yaakov kept the whole Torah? However, he kept it only L'Chumrah, but even so he wouldn't go back on his promise. So why should Rachel lose out because of the Chumras that he took upon himself ?

Says Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky, this is what the Ramban is asking- Why does Hashkocho Pratis come out that he should marry two sisters in the first place?, We learn from here an incredible Yesod - The koach of the mouth-the power of speech. Even though Yaakov would forgo a Chumra for this. - ***he promised*** !

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zt"l, only started putting on Rabbeinu Tam Tefilin later in life when he was 90 years old. One of his grandchildren asked, "Zaide, I don't understand, you are a Litvak, not Chadishe, why are you putting on Rabeinu Tam Tefilin? He answered, "You are right, but once somebody said to me when I was young, that the **Chofetz Chaim zt"l** wore Rabbeinu Tam Tefilin, why don't you? So, I said that "The Chofetz Chaim only put on Rabbeinu Tam later in life when he was 90 years old,"When I turn 90, I will

also put them on. Indeed, when Rav Yaakov turned 90, (50 years later) he suddenly began to wear Rabbeinu Tam- A word is a word!

When the **Chofetz Chaim** wrote his seforim, he was very Makpid to make sure that every page was there, was printed correctly and wasn't selling someone a faulty sefer. So he used to meticulously go through every sefer prior to selling it. He said to his daughter one day please help me to check some seforim today. His daughter said, "I'm just going out to the park now with some friends, can I do it when I return". The Chofetz Chaim said, " I would really appreciate the help right now". "But I really want to go to the park, I will tell you what, when I return, I will do 100 sefarim". And off she went.

When she came back, there were exactly 100 sefarim sitting on the table wating for her to check them. The Chofetz Chaim understood that every word that comes out of our mouth is holy. As it says **כְּכָל־ לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה** - A person must always keep his word.

The Torah shows very clearly how sacred a person's words are. As it says in parshas **מַטּוֹת** - **אִישׁ כִּי־יִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַה' אוֹ־הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבֻעָה לֶאְסֹר אֵסָר עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ** ***If a man makes a vow to the L-rd or makes an oath to prohibit himself, he shall not violate his word*** *30:3* .Rashi says **לא יעשה דבריו חולין** *Don't make your words meaningless.* ***כְּכָל־הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה according to whatever came out of his mouth, he shall do****. 30:3*

This is an incredibly simple but important idea. It is so easy to say things, lie, exaggerate, to make things up. We must be aware that the Torah regards our speech as one of the most important things that we have. Unkelos tells us in Parshas Beraishis, that, which separates a human being from an animal, is the power of speech. But when we use our speech in the wrong way, we are no longer a human being, we become an animal. Treat your words with Kedusha with seriousness. We learn from Yaakov in this week's sedra that every word that we utter should be kept… Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Torah Tavlin



R' Avraham Mordechai Alter zt"l (Imrei Emes) would say: **וַיַּחְפְּרוּ עַבְדֵי־יִצְחָק בַּנָּחַל וַיִּמְצְאוּ־שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים** 26:19 - The posuk focuses on the wells that Yitzchok dug and the Pelishitim stuffed up. A well represents our purpose here on this world. When one digs, he reaches in deep and pulls out the dirt, rocks and grime, in order to unearth the pure, crystal water.

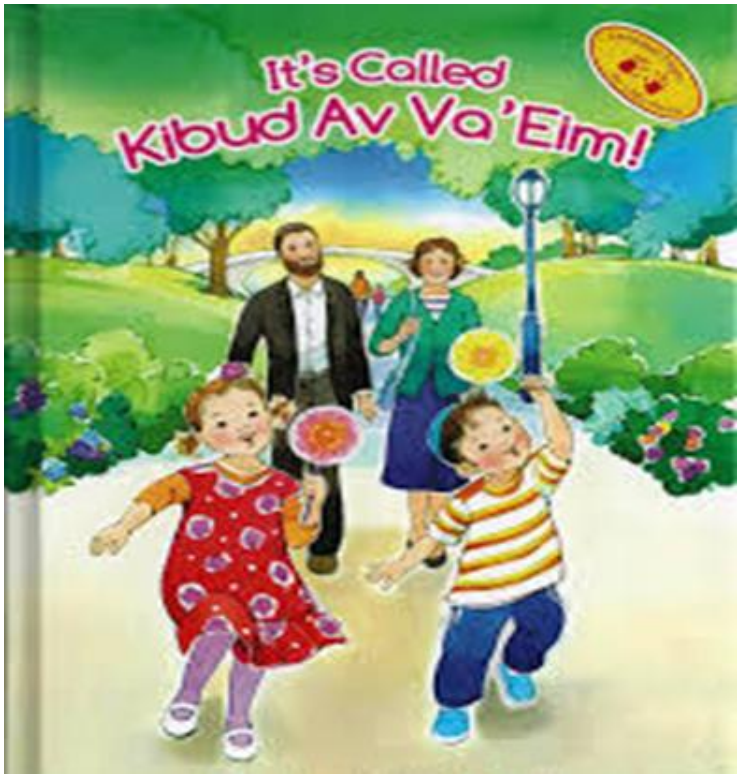
Similarly, a Jew must reach inside himself and remove the dirt, the grime that clogs up his true self, which is the pure water - and water represents Torah.

The Sefas Emes adds that the more we dig, the more we will uncover. Every Jew contains that purity within. It's just a question of how much he digs!"

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב 25:28

The posuk tells us that after the twins' bar mitzvah, Yaakov and Esav grew up and took opposite paths in their lives. Esav became a hunter and gained his father's love by devotedly serving him food, as it says, **וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו** . Yaakov, on the other hand, became a huge masmid, learning Torah in the tent at every possible moment, garnering his mother's love, as it says, **וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב** . Any young child can see the difference between **וַיֶּאֱהַב** and **אֹהֶבֶת** - one is past tense, and the other is present tense. Why is there a difference here?



The Medrash tells us that whenever Rivka heard Yaakov's **קול תורה** - the sound of his Torah learning, her love for him increased more and more. She saw in her son a boy wholly devoted to Torah and avodas Hashem, as the Medrash tells us, she saw Yaakov eventually becoming the **בחיר שבאבות** - the greatest of all the forefathers. Therefore, her love for him grew stronger and stronger - **אֹהֶבֶת** - in present tense, to denote the constantly increasing level of respect and love Rivka maintained for Yaakov. Yitzchok's love for Esav, however, is written in past tense - **וַיֶּאֱהַב** - and Rashi tells us it is because he was **ציד בפיו** - due to the food that Esav brought him daily. My machshava here is that the way to bring happiness, love and nachas to one's parents, is by learning Torah and serving Hashem to the best of one's ability, which is also a great fulfilment of the mitzva of Kibud Av v'aim, for which, as we know, the reward is **אריכת ימים ושנים** - a long life.

Many children believe that they honour their parents by buying them gifts, impressing them with big, fancy houses, expensive cars or lavish vacations. The truth is that real Kibud Av v'Aim is the kind that Yaakov Avinu gave to his parents: Honouring them through Torah and mitzvos which gives parents nachas, zechusim and love in this world and in the next as well. The great koach, moach and love that a mother puts into her children will always remain in the minds of our children and grandchildren in helping them reach their true potential in life.



R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

וַיֶּחֱרַד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְּדֹלָה עַד־מְאֹד 27:33

Chazal tell us that Yitzchok Avinu trembled twice in his lifetime. The first time was when he lay bound at the Akeida, prepared to give his life as a sacrifice to Hashem, and the second was when Esav brought the food that he requested and he realized that he had given away the special berachos to Yaakov.

The meforshim posit, which of these two tremblings were greater? They reply that the second trembling was greater than the trembling at the Akeidah. Why? Because what really transpired was that Yitzchok Avinu realized, the moment Esav entered, the tremendous spiritual gap between his two sons, Yaakov and Esav. The thought of losing a son spiritually had a greater impact on him than the fear of his own death at the Akeida.

What a profound lesson this should serve for us all. This message should be made abundantly clear to our children in their formative years, that their spiritual welfare is the most central concern in our lives; more important than our own mortal life. Of course, parents only want the best for their children but are they willing to sacrifice their own "sweat and blood" so their children will succeed?

When children hear such a declaration from their parents, then the child establishes a firm foundation on which to grow and eventually build his own future generations. In contrast, when parents vacillate between the life they should lead, and the way they actually act, our children receive those mixed messages and grow up very confused.

We can now understand why Yitzchok Avinu trembled when Esav arrived and perhaps, if today's parents tremble when their children

are young and impressionable, like our forefather Yitzchok did, they could avoid much anxiety later in life. May we be rewarded for our "tremblings" and may our bakashos be granted by the **רבש"ע** for all the good things in life.

וַיָּשָׁב יִצְחָק וַיַּחְפֹּר אֶת־בְּאֵרֹת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיְסַתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים



A local villager once travelled to the Polish town of Zidichov, to see the Tzaddik, **R' Tzvi Hirsch Eichenstein zt"l**, with an urgent request. He was not a wealthy man but an opportunity to lease a small inn near the city of Helmutz just presented itself and the local Poritz was awaiting his decision. What would make this deal truly profitable, he told the Rebbe, was if he could dig a well of water behind the inn and use it for his guests, as well as to sell water to the local populace. As of now, if anyone needed water in the area, they had to travel into town. The question was where to dig and if he would find water. R' Tzvi Hirsch listened carefully and then told the man, "You should be matzliach in all that you do. Lease the inn and dig a well in the back yard. But don't dig all the way down. After a few meters, come back here and I will tell you what to do."

The chasid did as he was told. He haggled with the Poritz until they settled on a good price and he began to dig his well. But after a few meters, he halted the dig and returned to Zidichov. This time, the Rebbe took out a piece of paper and told the man to write the following words on it: **וַיָּבֹאוּ עַבְדֵי יִצְחָק וַיַּגִּדוּ לוֹ עַל־אֹדוֹת הַבְּאֵר אֲשֶׁר חָפָרוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ מָצָאנוּ מָיִם**- ***"And Yitzchok's servants came and told him***

about the well that they had dug, and they said to him, 'We have found water. 26:32

The Rebbe instructed the man to dig down a bit more and then place the slip of paper inside the pit. The chasid returned to the inn and placed the paper inside the well and instantly, water began to spring forth and fill up the well. Word spread, and soon the inn was full of customers. Anyone who was traveling in the area stayed at the Jewish inn and the locals purchased their fill enjoying the fresh and plentiful supply of water. The villager turned a huge profit and became a very prosperous man.

This did not sit well with the gentile innkeepers in the area and a jealous streak burned within them. One man ran to the Poritz and reported that the Jew was extorting the locals and becoming rich at everyone else's expense. He offered to pay the Poritz a larger sum of money to take over the inn and the greedy man immediately accepted the offer. The Jewish innkeeper was duly informed that his lease was being terminated, and he must move out.

The chasid quickly ran to Zidichov to ask the Rebbe what to do. R' Tzvi Hirsch told him: "Take another piece of paper, and write on it, **וְכָל־הַבְּאֵרֹת אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ עַבְדֵי אָבִיו בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו סִתְמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיְמַלְאוּם עָפָר**:- ***'And all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Avraham his father, the Pelishtim stopped them up and filled them with earth.***26:15 . Then, throw the paper into the bottom of the well." The man did it and lo and behold, the water stopped filling the well.

By the time he was ordered to leave the inn, there was no more water in the well. The gentile took over the inn but it was clear that all of his customers had left. As long as the Jew was there, water filled the well; the moment he was gone, so was the water. The man could not bring himself to face the Poritz, but since he had no customers, he was unable to pay the rent. Soon he had no choice but to tell the

Poritz about the miraculous well that only gave water when the Jew was running the inn.

The Poritz was intrigued and called the Jew to his estate. He told him, "You know what? I've changed my mind. I should not have broken our contract and I wish you to return to oversee the inn. What do you say? Will you come back?" The Jew looked at him and said, "What good is this inn if the well has no water? How will I ever pay you the rent that is due?" The Poritz agreed to lower the rent, but the Jew insisted, "I cannot give you an answer until I speak to my Rebbe!"

The next day, he travelled once again to Zidichov to update the Rebbe on the unusual turn of events. This time, R' Tzvi Hirsch told him, "Very good, you should not have to pay the full amount of rent. This is what you must do. Throw a third piece of paper into the well which says on it: **וַיַּחְפֹּר בְּאֵר אַחֶרֶת וְלֹא רָבוּ עָלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ רְחֹבוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי עַתָּה הִרְחִיב ה' לָנוּ וּפָרִינוּ בָּאָרֶץ**:- '***And he dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he named it Rechovos, and he said,* '***For now, Hashem has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land.***'" The chasid did it and the water returned. Soon, he was once again running a thriving business, which continued to support his family, his children and grandchildren for many years.



Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

"It is amazing how an old, frail body like mine can carry such a heavy bundle of pride, that should naturally break one's back. –

Throw off the bundle, and your spine will straighten!" – Harav Yehoshua of Ostrova

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

The posuk tells us that Hashem answered the tefillah of Yitzchok - וַיֶּעְתַּ֥ר יִצְחָ֖ק 25:21. Rashi explains the reason: **שאין דומה תפלת צדיק בן צדיק לתפלת צדיק בן רשע**. Rivka was the daughter of Lavan Ha'arami (trickster) and therefore, her tefillos were secondary to Yitzchok's. Isn't it ironic that after the difficult life Rivka endured in her father's home, becoming a Tzadekes and Ba'alas Teshuva on her own, her tefillos were not answered before Yitzchok's, who grew up in the home of the Gadol Hador?

The Seforim Hakedoshim tell us that when a child davens and is in need of a yeshua, his father and grandfather are surely davening along with him. As a result, when Yitzchok was davening for a child, he wasn't davening alone - he had his father, Avraham Avinu, davening along with him that he and Rivka should bear a child. Hashem answered Yitzchok's tefillah, since two people, Avraham and Yitzchok, who were both moser nefesh for the Ribono shel Olam, were davening together for a yeshuah. Rivka was certainly on a high spiritual level, but her tefillos were not accompanied by anyone else's prayers.

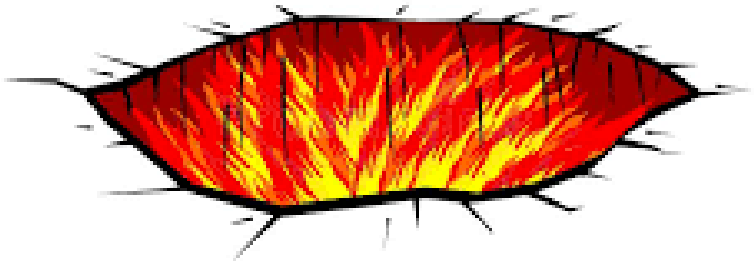
We see from here that due to Avraham's tefillah, Yitzchok was able to have a child. Thus, the word **הוליד** rather than the more common **ילד** is fitting here, for instead of saying "Avraham gave birth to Yitzchok," the posuk denotes that Avraham **הוליד את יצחק** - he made it possible for Yitzchok to have a child later on.

How amazing is it to recognize that when we daven to Hashem for refuos and yeshuos, not only are we praying, but our zaidas and elter-zaidas (great-grandfathers) already in the next world are melitzei yosher and accompanying our tefillos as well! May Hashem answer all our tefillos.

27:33 וַיֶּחֱרַ֤ד יִצְחָק֙ חֲרָדָ֣ה גְדֹלָ֔ה עַד־מְאֹ֑ד

In the mikveh in Shaarei Chessed, there are two pools of water. One contains cool water for those who prefer it that way, while the other is filled with burning hot water. One Friday, **R' Yosef Shimsholovitz ZT"L**, one of the little known tzaddikim of Shaarei Chessed (it was revealed that each day when he would walk from his home in Shaarei Chessed to the old city of Jerusalem, he would review the entire Masechta Kesubos by heart!), was seen standing in the mikveh dressing area, teeth chattering and shaking from head to toe.

Another concerned patron asked if he was alright, but he was so overcome with chills and shivering that he was unable to reply. Finally, R' Yosef seemed to calm down from his shivering, but as he took a few steps in the direction of the water, he once again began trembling uncontrollably. Again, people tried to help him and find out what was wrong.



"It's nothing," said R' Yosef, through chattering teeth, "It's just ... that someone before me stuck his foot into the hot pool of water and cried out, 'Oy! It's burning like Gehinnom.' And then I remembered .... Gehinnom!!"

When Esav walked into his father's room to receive his blessings, Yitzchok was overcome with "a great trembling" - a terrible fear that caused him to react this way. Chazal tell us that he saw Gehinnom open up beneath Esav, and the vision of such a horrible fate that awaited his son caused him to tremble uncontrollably. Such fear of Heaven is something we must strive to aspire to so that we can do our best to avoid such an ignominious fate.

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

Rashi quotes Pirkei D'Rav Eliezer that the incident of Yaakov receiving the **בכורה** occurred on Chag HaPesach and the two goats he brought to his father were used for the Korban Pesach and Korban Chagiga. Although Yitzchok only asked Esav to bring food that he liked, Rivkah made sure that Yaakov arrived before his brother with the delicious sacrifices that she prepared. Upon finishing the two korbanos, Yitzchok blessed Yaakov with the beracha of **ויתן לך אלקים מטל השמים**. The remez is in the word **מטל** and perhaps, for this reason, we "bentch Tal" **ברכת הטל** on the first day of Pesach. Right after Yaakov walked out, Esav arrived with his food and asked his father for the beracha he was promised. Yitzchok replied: **בא אחיך במרמה ויקח ברכתך**- ***"Your brother came with trickery and took your blessing."***



Although most people interpret the word **במרמה** literally to mean "with trickery," **Targum Onkelos and Yonason Ben Uziel** both translate **במרמה** as **בחכמה** - *with wisdom*. It was the wisdom of Rivkah and Yaakov that enabled him to receive the berachos. What was this wisdom?

Since it was the night of Pesach, and Yaakov brought his father the Korban Pesach, the halacha of **אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן** should apply. Since Yitzchok already ate the Afikoman, in the form of Yaakov's food, he was prohibited from eating Esav's offering and thus, he could only bentch Yaakov - not Esav! How smart was that? Furthermore, the word **במרמה** has a gematria of 287, which is exactly the gematria of the word **אפיקומן**. This is pure chochma - chochmas HaTorah. However, one question still remains: If, as we just said, Yitzchok could not bless Esav since he had already finished

eating, why do we find that he did bless him afterwards – **הנה משמני הארץ יהיה מושבח** - even without the food?

My machshava here is that Esav began to cry – **וישא עשיו קולו ויבך** - and Yitzchok Avinu could not look away from his child's pain. This is a lesson to each and every one of us: we must remember that when our child cries, we must feel his pain and answer him - no matter what!

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ





Reb Yosef Buxbaum z"l related: "I was once walking past the home of the **Tchebiner Rav, R' Dov Beirish Weidenfeld zt"l**, and I saw the Tzaddik of Yerushalayim, **R' Aryeh Levine zt"l** standing on the side of the house and crying his eyes out. I walked over to him and I asked him what happened? Is there anything I can do to help you?" R' Aryeh looked at him and said, "Right at this moment in my house, one of my daughters is going through heavy labour. She is having a very hard time. Now, if we were zoche, I could go to the Makom HaMikdash and pour out my heart before the Creator, and he would surely answer my prayers. However, today, due to our sins, we have no way to get to that place. Thus, I said to myself, for sure the house where the Tchebiner Rav lives - where he serves the Ribono

shel Olam and he learns Torah night and day - for sure that is a very holy place, a place where all prayers are answered, and therefore I hurried here to daven for my daughter."

Reb Yosef was amazed when he heard these words. He told them over to **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l**, who responded, "Well, of course. Every time I pass by the Tchebiner Rav's home I raise my eyes to Heaven and I too say a small tefillah."

Torah Tavlin



Chacham Yaakov Chaim Sofer ZT"L (Kaf HaChaim) would say: "When greatness comes to a man all at once, without progression, in one fell swoop; he finds himself above others – in regard to money, honour, or power – such greatness will not endure, either because of jealousy or other reasons. Thus, 'The man became great, and kept becoming greater until he was very great,' means that the greatness of Yitzchok Avinu endured because it did not come all at once, but rather progressively, one step after another and thus it was permanent."

25:28 וַיֶּאֱהַ֥ב יִצְחָ֛ק אֶת־עֵשָׂ֖ו כִּי־צַ֣יִד בְּפִ֑יו וְרִבְקָ֖ה אֹהֶ֥בֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹֽב

In this week's parsha we read the enigmatic episode of Yaakov dressing up as his brother Esav, in order to receive his father's blessing. It is, however, difficult to understand why Yitzchok did not recognize which son was worthy of his blessings.

Although, Esav was צַ֣יִד בְּפִ֑יו- deceiving his father by asking him questions on religion and pretending to be righteous, nevertheless,

why did Rivkah not try to explain to her husband that Yaakov was more righteous?

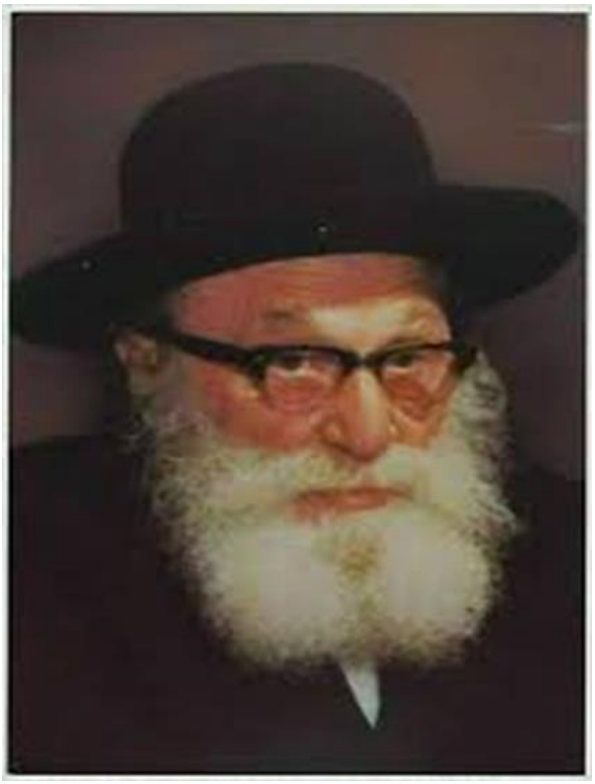
R' Tzadok S. Suchard Shlit'a (Darchei Maysharim) writes that Rivkah wanted to prevent her evil son from influencing or harming her righteous son. Her mother-in-law had experienced a similar problem with two boys in her home, Yitzchok and Yishmael, so why didn't Rivkah solve the problem in the way that Sarah did - by appealing to her husband to send the evil son away from home?



Because, as the posuk states, "Rivkah was the mother of Yaakov and Esav." Whereas only Yitzchok was Sarah's son, Rivkah was the mother of both Yaakov and Esav. She was concerned with keeping Esav under her guidance and influence. For this reason, Rivkah as a mother, did not expose Esav for who he really was to Yitzchok earlier, as she cared for him and wished to see him repent. Now, however, that he was older, she couldn't very well discuss it with Yitzchok, since he would wonder why he wasn't informed earlier and why Esav did not deserve his blessing.

R' Sholom Schwadron ZT"L tells the story of a mother who was told that her son had hurt himself. The mother ran to the scene shouting, "My Chaim! My Chaim!" Her friend, rushed along with her to console her, saying he couldn't be badly hurt. When they reached the child, the crying mother turned to her friend and said, "It's not my Chaim - it's your Yankel," at which point, the other woman began to scream, since it was her own child. Both Yaakov and Esav were Rivkah's children, and as mother she was concerned for both.

וַיִּתְרֹצֲצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ וַתֹּאמֶר אִם־כֵּן לָמָּה זֶּה אָנֹכִי 25:22



On a visit to the burgeoning yeshivah community of Lakewood, N.J., in 1956, the future Gerrer Rebbe, **R' Simcha Bunim Alter ZT"L**, spoke of the glorious future of Torah in the small, out-of-town suburb and its impact on the Jewish world. As he walked down one of the larger blocks, R' Simcha Bunim, followed by a modest contingent of chassidim and Bnei Torah told over a dvar Torah he heard in the name of his grandfather, the **Sefas Emes**.

"The Medrash tells us that when Rivkah was expecting twins, she could feel them struggling inside of her. When she walked passed Batei Knessios and Batei Medrashos , Yaakov pushed to get out and when she walked past places of idol-worship, Esav kicked and struggled to burst free. The question is, were there numerous synagogues and study houses in those days? In fact, there was only one - the Yeshivah of Shem and Aver, to which Rivkah herself went for Divine inspiration and advice. Why does the Medrash indicate that she walked past many such houses if there was only one?"

The group continued walking down the dusty Lakewood street as the **Lev Simcha** explained. "My Zaida gave an answer which I feel is appropriate to this city as well. He said, that although at the time there was only one house of Torah study, Yaakov in his purity and sanctity, was able to feel the places in the future that would produce kedusha and holiness. As Rivkah would walk down the street, he could inherently feel a spiritual jolt whenever she walked past a site that would eventually host a synagogue or Beis Medrash and he struggled to get out when he felt the kedusha in that spot.

This city,too, will host many future sites of Torah U'kedusha." One of those people present noted that the very street that the Lev Simcha was walking down as he told over this vort from the Sefas Emes, is the same street where many years later, the current Gerrer Shtiebel in Lakewood opened!

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק 25:19

The obvious question on this posuk is, if we are discussing the children of Yitzchok, why does the Torah need to tell us that Avraham was Yitzchok's father? Shouldn't the Torah mention the children, rather than the father, of Yitzchok?



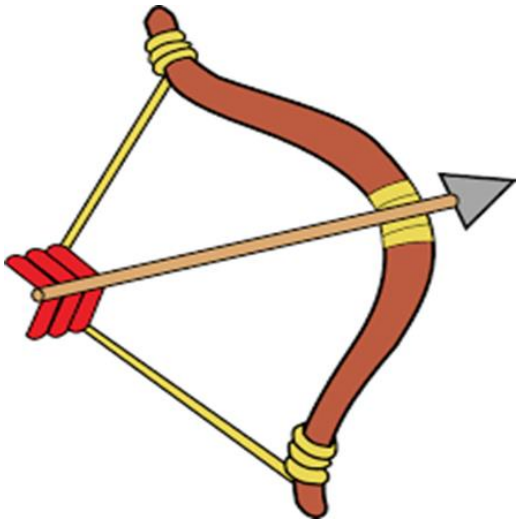
R' Gamliel Rabinowitz Shlit'a explains so beautifully that in order to be a successful parent, one must look back at the path his father paved, respect it and emulate it. He even puts it into the category of a segulah! If you want to have good children who follow in your path, then show your children how you, too, follow in the path your parents paved for you. Of course, every individual is unique and adds his own dimension to his chinuch, but a parent who demonstrates how he follows and respects the path of his ancestors, will enable his children to feel pride in their mesorah, and desire to further it. Although Yitzchok was a completely different personality and nature than his father Avraham, he still tried in every way possible to emulate Avraham Avinu. The middah of Avraham is Chessed and Yitzchok is known for Pachad, literally translated as "fear." What exactly was he afraid of?



Rabbi Frand Shlit'a quotes in the name of **R' Matisyahu Solomon Shlit'a** that Yitzchok was petrified of deviating from the mesorah he received from his father, even a miniscule amount! We see this from the fact that the Torah goes into great length about Yitzchok reopening the wells that Avraham had dug and renaming them the same names his father had.

There aren't too many stories about Yitzchok, but the Torah mentions the wells, says **Rabbeinu Bachaye ZT"L**, in order to teach us that to properly continue the chain of our mesorah, a Jew must respect, uphold and follow the path his father blazed before him.

וְעַתָּה֙ שָׂא־נָ֣א כֵלֶ֔יךָ תֶּלְיְךָ֖ וְקַשְׁתֶּ֑ךָ וְצֵ֥א הַשָּׂדֶ֖ה וְצוּדָ֥ה לִ֖י צָֽיִד 27:3



Chacham Rabbeinu Chaim Vital ZT"L would say:

"Yitzchok spoke to Esav, his older son, asking him to take his bow and arrow, go out to the wild countryside and hunt for him. Why did he send Esav to hunt with such light weapons? Was he not going to the habitat of lions, bears and leopards? Yitzchok was telling his son that when he goes out to hunt for the sake of a mitzvah, he does not need extra protection or even the clothing of Adam Harishon (Medrash), which caused all the wild beasts to submit to him. Mitzvah messengers are not hurt! You will enjoy Divine assistance so that you will not be harmed or hurt!"

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings- It's for the Good

It states (*Tehillim* 23), **ינחני במעגלי צדק**, which means Hashem leads me on good paths and He always performs kindness with me. **ינחני** is a palindrome and can be read backward and forwards.

This hints that even when matters seem backward and wrong, it is all for the good. *Yesurim* are for our benefit, but one needs to learn how to accept the *yesurim* with love and joy. Here is a mashal to explain this point:



The car is a wonderful invention; it helps people get quickly to where they need to go. But before driving a car, one has to know the rules of driving a car, and one has to know *how* to drive a car. If he doesn't know these matters, driving a car could be perilous. Similarly, *yesurim* helps us come closer to Hashem, and the path to Dveykus BaHashem is hastened considerably. However, one needs to know how to accept the *yesurim* with love and joy, believing everything is for the good. Only then will *yesurim* be beneficial.



There was a drummer who fell asleep on the job. The head of the band smacked him. The drummer immediately awoke and drummed along with the merry song the band was playing. A tzaddik witnessed this, and he said, "*a patch gechapt un freilech geklapt* – he was slapped, but he drums joyously."

The lesson: Even when you go through hard times, pick yourself up, and remain happy. And to be happy, you must believe that it is all for your good.

Here is a story on this topic that I heard it from the *baal maaseh*: This person had the *machlah* (cancer), and his immune system was compromised due to the treatments.

When the corona epidemic broke out (around Purim time), his doctor warned him to be cautious that he doesn't catch the disease because his body is too weak to fight it off. He was cautious – as much as possible. He kept away from people, he washed his hands often, and he wore a mask. Unfortunately, he still contracted the virus. As the doctor predicted, it wasn't easy for his body to fight off the disease. He needed a respirator, and for a few days, his life was hanging on a thread. But, *baruch Hashem*, gradually, the virus left his body. Then the miracle occurred: The antibodies that fought off the virus also attacked the cancer. ***He was healed from both diseases!***



This story is not meant to encourage those who are ill with cancer to try to catch the virus. That is something for doctors to determine – not us. We tell this story to bring across the point that when something negative happens, it is actually positive. When the person in this story caught the virus, which he tried so hard to avoid, he and his family thought it was terrible. However, the problem ended up being the critical cure that he needed. Similarly, whenever we go through challenging moments in life, we must know that it is all for the good.

"Teachers and schoolchildren are society's most beautiful ornaments." ~~ Song of Songs (Shir HaShirim) R.

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיֹּאכַל וַיֵּשְׁתְּ וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּבֶז עֵשָׂו אֶת־הַבְּכֹרָה 25:34





When we read about Esav and how he behaved on the day of Avraham Avinu's death, we are truly disgusted by his gluttonous behavior, and his total all-consuming emphasis on eating a good meal, while completely scorning the spiritual and important things in life. And yet how many of us can say that we don't often act the same way? How many of us look forward to Shabbos only because we can eat lots of delicious food and get a nice long "shluff"?

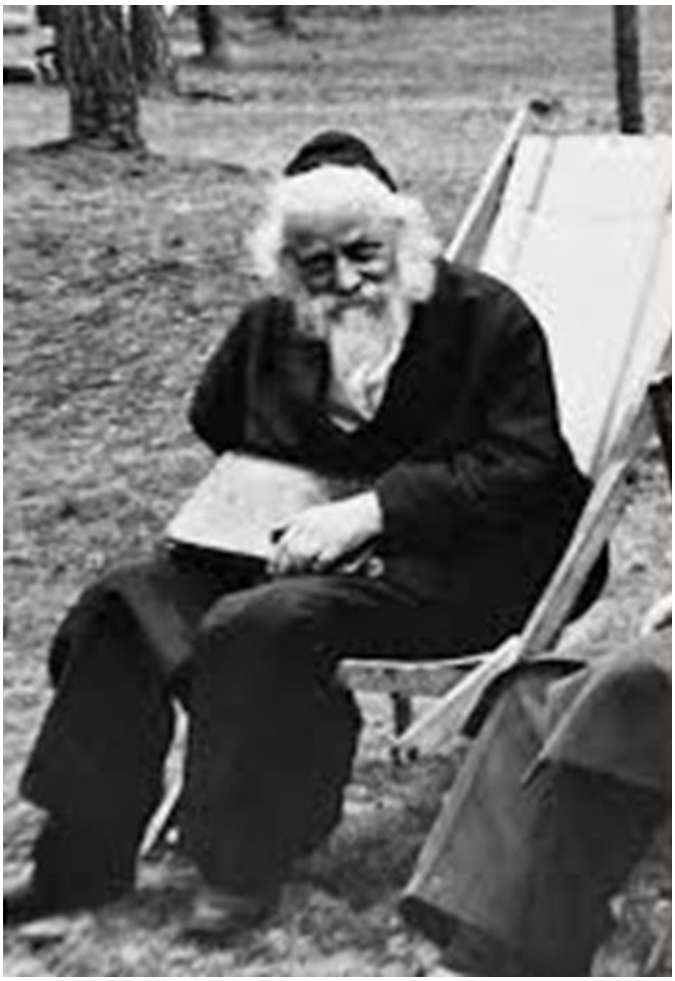
How many of us make spirituality our first priority and all the other stuff - like how we dress, what we eat, how much money we spend - secondary? If we are to profane our sanctity, make our kodesh into CHOL, our Kodshim into CHULIN, then we are not much different than Esav. We, as Yidden who are held to a higher standard, must raise ourselves above the physical, above the secular mindset of the world! We are not here to eat, drink and enjoy the material pleasures of life like Esav, but rather to truly enjoy life by infusing the CHOL with kodesh. Let us not mimic the actions of our uncle Esav or even make the same mistake as Noach, who was given an incredible opportunity to rebuild the world after the mabul. Instead of focusing on the spiritual nature of growth, however, Noach acted purely in a physical manner. He planted a vineyard, drank the wine, and disgraced himself by getting drunk. We, too, must repair the

damage and rebuild what was destroyed by focusing on our spirituality and truly infusing holiness into the CHOL.

וַיִּגַּשׁ וַיִּשַּׁק־לוֹ 27:27



The Malbi"m writes that a kiss is no small matter between two people. It forges a relationship which unites their souls not just physically, but spiritually as well. When Yitzchok was prepared to bless his first-born son, he requested that he kiss him, in order to properly bestow upon him the blessings.



One man will never forget the indelible impression that a kiss planted on his forehead left him, and it indeed remained with him for the rest of his life.

One cold and frosty winter, the stove in the home of the Kaminetzer Rosh Yeshiva, **R' Boruch Ber Lebowitz ZT"L**, inexplicably broke down and no amount of coaxing could get it to relight. The Lebowitz home quickly turned into an icebox and a messenger was dispatched to the local Jewish repairman who was urged to come over right away. The man grabbed his tools and immediately went to work. In the early afternoon, when the Rosh Yeshiva came into his house, he

felt the chill and noticed the man working diligently on his furnace. Not giving him much thought, he continued walking right past him offering a cursory hello in the local language (Lithuanian) to the beleaguered worker.

It was only after a few minutes, that R' Boruch Ber was informed that the man working on their stove was in fact Jewish, and he recoiled in shock and embarrassment. Running back into the other room, he began apologizing profusely to the startled worker, begging him for forgiveness over the fact that he spoke to him in Lithuanian, and mistaking him for a non-Jew.

The furnace repairman was a simple man who greatly respected the Rosh Yeshiva and was frankly embarrassed at the scene that was unfolding in front of him. He immediately gave his forgiveness, repeating it over and over to R' Boruch Ber's constant and continuous apologies, explaining that he wasn't even hurt or upset at the Rov's misunderstanding.

R' Boruch Ber, however, wouldn't hear of it. "You obviously don't understand what it is I am apologizing for, and thus, you are quick to give your forgiveness. Listen to me and I will explain to you my misdeed." Over the course of the next hour, R' Boruch Ber sat with the man and explained to him the great many differences between a Jew and a non-Jew. He spoke in soothing tones, using words and examples that the simple man would readily understand. He carefully delineated how each and every Jew retains a special neshama - soul, and unlike the nations of the world, the Jewish people are Hashem's "Chosen Nation."

It was after a full hour's time, that R' Boruch Ber was finally convinced that the man now understood the depth of his words and the special privilege that he maintains by being a member of Klal Yisroel. R' Boruch Ber stood up and said in an unequivocal voice, "Now, Reb Yid, you are able to forgive me properly," and once again, the Rosh Yeshiva asked for forgiveness. The simple repairman

pronounced his forgiveness and was ready to go back to his work. But R' Boruch Ber was still not finished with him.

Before he turned away, R' Boruch Ber reached over and kissed him warmly on his forehead, imbuing this gesture with his love and warmth for his fellow Jew, and the simple repairman never forgot that kiss and the everlasting imprint it left on his recharged Jewish soul.



It was a cold, dark, wintery night in the Janowska Death camp. Suddenly, a shout pierced the air: "You are all to evacuate the barracks immediately and report to the vacant lot. Anyone remaining inside will be shot on the spot!" Pandemonium broke out in the barracks. People pushed their way to the doors while screaming the names of friends and relatives. In a panic-stricken stampede, the prisoners ran in the direction of a big, open field.

In the middle were two huge pits. Suddenly, the inmates realized where they were rushing that dark night deep in the Polish countryside, in a nightmare known as Janowska. Once more, the cold, healthy, German voice roared into the night: "Each of you who values his life and wants to cling to it must jump over one of the pits and land on the other side. Those who miss will get what they rightfully deserve." Imitating the sound of a machine gun, the voice trailed off into the night followed by wild, course laughter.

It was clear to the inmates that they would all end up in the pits. At the best of times it would have been near impossible to jump over them, all the more so that cold night. The prisoners standing at the edge of the pits were skeletons, feverish from disease and starvation, exhausted from slave labour and sleepless nights. Though the challenge that had been given them was a matter of life and death, they knew that for the S.S. and the Ukrainian guards it was merely another devilish game.



Among the thousands of Jews on that field in Janowska was the **Bluzhover Rebbe, R' Yisroel Spira ZT"L**. He was standing with a friend, a non-religious, freethinking Jew from a large Polish town whom the rabbi had met in the camp. A deep friendship had developed between the two and they looked out for each other. "Rabbi, all our efforts to jump over the pits are in vain," said the friend to the rabbi. "We only entertain the Germans. Let's sit down in the pits and wait for the bullets to end our wretched existence." "My friend," said the Bluzhover Rebbe, as they walked in the direction of the pits, "man must obey the will of G-d. If it was decreed from Heaven that we be commanded to jump, then jump we must. If we fail and fall into the pits, we will reach the World of Truth one second later. So, my friend, we must jump."

The Rebbe and his friend were nearing the edge of the pits, which were rapidly filling up with bodies. As they reached the pit, R' Yisroel closed his eyes and commanded in a powerful whisper, "We are jumping!" When they opened their eyes, they found themselves standing on the other side of the pit! "We made it, we are alive!" the friend repeated over again, "Rabbi, for your sake, I am alive; indeed, there must be a G-d in heaven. Tell me, how did you do it?"

The Bluzhover paused. "I was holding on to my ancestral merit, clinging to the coattails of my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather, of blessed memory," said the Rebbe as his eyes searched the black skies above. "But tell me, my friend, how is it that you reached the other side of the pit?" "I was holding on to you!" replied the Rebbe's newly religious friend.

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ 25:21



A few years after **R' Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz ZT"L (Chazon Ish)** died, two religious Jews were riding in the back seat of a taxi heading from Bnei Brak to Jerusalem. The men were lamenting the void which the passing of the Chazon Ish had left. Overhearing their conversation, the driver, who sported an open khaki shirt, Bermuda shorts and no yarmulka, turned around to look at his passengers and exclaimed, "You say the Chazon Ish is gone! You don't know what you are talking about!" The driver went on to relate an amazing story. A number of years back, the cab driver's daughter had been experiencing a long, difficult labour. Doctors were hovering over her for hours but could do nothing to relieve her agony. There were no signs that birth was imminent. The cab driver was in the hospital's waiting room, anxious to hear that his grandchild had been born and that all was well.

An old nurse, aware of the situation and seeing the man's anxiety, went over to him and said, "Why don't you go to the Chazon Ish?" The man did not know what the nurse was talking about. "The Chazon Ish," she repeated. "He is a great rabbi and Tzaddik. His blessings have helped many people. He lives in Bnei Brak. Any child in the street will direct you to his home."

Hesitant at first, the man eventually got into his cab and drove to Bnei Brak. It was late at night when he knocked at the Chazon Ish's door. R' Avraham Yeshaya answered the knock and in his congenial

way, asked how he could be of help. Quietly, he listened until the man finished his tale. Then, he smiled pleasantly and said, "Go back to the hospital. The baby was just born." Warmly, he shook his visitor's hand, wished him Mazel Tov and bade him good night.

The cab driver's heart leaped with excitement, but he found it hard to believe that what he had just heard was true. He dashed back to the hospital. Sure enough, the baby had already been born. Mother and child were doing fine. Two years later, the man's daughter was again undergoing a difficult labour. This time he did not wait for the nurse's advice. He headed for Bnei Brak. But this time, things were different. A secularist who was totally out of touch with the religious world, the cab driver was unaware that the man they called the "Chazon Ish" was no longer alive. The man who answered his knock stared at the cab driver incredulously. Could there really be people in Eretz Yisroel who did not know that the Gadol Hador, was no longer in their midst?

The driver was stunned and crushed. He was counting on the Tzaddik's blessing. Desperately, he cried out, "It's an emergency. What should I do?" He was told to go to the grave of the Chazon Ish and pray. Sceptical, he was assured that many people had received salvation after praying at the gravesite. Directions to the cemetery were given and the cab driver headed there at breakneck speed. Weeping uncontrollably, at the gravestone he cried out, "Rebbi, you saved my daughter once before. Please save her again."

The man was sure that there, in the cemetery, he heard the faint voice of the Chazon Ish saying once again, "Mazel Tov, the child has been born." He returned to the hospital. Indeed, the child had been born and all was well. "Trust me," said the cab driver to his awestruck passengers, "As far as I'm concerned, the Chazon Ish is still alive!"

וַיִּקְרָא לָהֶן שֵׁמוֹת כַּשֵּׁמֹת אֲשֶׁר־קָרָא לָהֶן אָבִיו 26:18



For over thirty-five years during the mid-to-late 19th-century, **R' Marcus (Meir) Lehmann ZT"L** was the rabbi of Mainz, Germany, and a champion of Orthodox Judaism in that country. A fine scholar and writer, he was also very involved in community affairs and enjoyed a close personal relationship with the German royal house and the Kaiser himself.

Once, a terrible decree was issued by the German senate, and the rabbis of Germany called upon him to join their delegation in petitioning the king to annul this evil decree. They arranged to meet R' Lehmann at the train station in Mainz and from there to proceed together to meet the Kaiser, with whom they had already set up an appointment. R' Lehmann prepared to join the rabbinic delegation and was about to leave for the train station when there was a knock at his door. The Rebbetzin answered the door and told the visitor that the rabbi could not see anyone now as he was about to depart on a very urgent mission. The man, however, insisted that it was a matter of life and death, pikuach nefesh. R' Lehmann heard the commotion and invited the man in thinking that it would take only a few minutes.

The man entered the rabbi's study and began to relate a long story. His eldest son had been blessed with a son. Unable to contact the local rabbi, he had taken it upon himself to act as sandak. However, soon after the bris the child died. Now, his younger son was blessed with a son, and again the local rabbi was unable to attend the bris.

"I have come to ask you, R' Lehmann, should I again assume the role of sandak? Would this not pose a danger to the newborn infant?" R'

Lehmann asked him, "And if you are not the sandak, is there anyone else you can honour? Why take chances?"

All this time, he was looking at the clock on the wall to see if he had enough time to reach the station before the train pulled out. But the man would not let go. He had another urgent question to ask the rabbi. "What name should I give the baby?"

R' Lehmann became agitated. "This is your urgent question?" he asked, already irked by the impudence of his visitor. "I don't know, call him Zevulun, Dan, Yosef, Chaim, Gad, Naftali Ber! Call him whatever you want. But please, I must go now." And with that, he rushed out of the house to the train station. But he was too late and when he arrived at the station, he found that the train had already departed, and the other rabbis were in the station despondently waiting for him. They were devastated, for they knew that there was no chance now to make their appointment with the Kaiser.

As they sat stunned in the station, a railway employee came running in and told them that there had been an accident and the train that had just left had fallen off a cliff around the bend. All the passengers had perished. The rabbis were shocked and offered praise to Hashem for having spared their lives. R' Lehmann was convinced that the man who had come to his door was none other than Eliyahu Hanavi.

However, several years later, the same man once again appeared at R' Lehmann's door. This time, he had come to invite the rabbi to the Bar Mitzvah of his grandson, the boy he had had so many questions about thirteen years earlier. Of course, R' Lehmann happily agreed to attend and on Shabbos, he arrived at the synagogue just as the shamash was calling the Bar Mitzvah boy to the Torah for his aliyah. In a loud voice, he called out: "Yaamod, Habachur HaBar Mitzvah, Zevulun, Dan, Yosef, Chaim, Gad, Naftali Ber ben Moshe." When the congregants heard this long list of names being read, they began to laugh with derision.

R' Lehmann was also surprised at the boy's unusual designation and asked the proud grandfather, "Why does the boy have so many names?" The man looked confused. "But rabbi, these are the names that you told me to name the child." R' Lehman now understood that the man was by no means Eliyahu Hanavi but just a simple Jew who had been sent by Heavenly design to intervene and save his life and the lives of the other rabbis thirteen years ago.



Peninim on the Torah – וכל החיים יודוך סלה - *The totality of life shall praise You. Selah*

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, interprets *v'chol ha'chaim* as the totality of life, which is not only the literal translation, but, more importantly, the practical one. Obviously, only one who is alive can (of his own free will/choice) praise Hashem. The act of *hoda'ah*, thanking/praising, is a function of life. Therefore, to say that all the "living" praise Hashem, is a given. By adding the prefix *hay,ha'chaim*, the meaning changes from living to life, thus rendering the meaning to be the totality of life: the good and (what appears to be) the bad; health; sickness; wealth; poverty; joy; sadness.

The entire gamut of life's experiences all merge together to praise Hashem. Every living person, in whatever situation he finds himself, with whatever challenges he faces, physical and emotional, all come together to praise the Almighty.

When people who are in the midst of a grief-invoking experience still express their praise to Hashem, they fulfil the *Rabbinic* dictum, "A person is obligated to bless Hashem for the (what appears to be) bad as he does for the good." We are to express this love of Hashem under all circumstances, good or bad, since everything that comes from Hashem is inherently good – even if we, with our limited cognition and perception, can neither understand nor see it.



Contagious Disease

In **ת"ש**, Reb Pinchas Weinstock *z'l* escaped together with his parents and siblings from the Nazis. To support themselves during their escape, they took along chickens to eat the eggs, and they would do odd jobs along the way, whenever possible. The father would bake and sell bagels. They passed many cities and countries during their escape, and four years later, they found refuge in France. The Weinstock family rejoiced. They thought they were safe from the Nazis. But then, Reb Pinchas caught the contagious and deadly typhus. The family was devastated. After everything they went through to save their lives, Reb Pinchas may die from the disease.

Reb Pinchas declared, "Ribono Shel Olam. For four years I was running away from the Nazis, trying to save my life. If You desire that I die and return my soul to You, so be it. I accept Your decree with love." Reb Pinchas was in the hospital, in a quarantine ward. For months he was delirious and didn't know what was happening outside his closed ward. He didn't know that the Germans attacked France and that the lives of the Yidden in France were in danger.

When Reb Pinchas recovered, he sought out his family, but he discovered that they were all deported to Auschwitz. He was the sole survivor of his family. The disease, which everyone thought was a terrible problem, proved to be his ticket for life.

He lived until he was a hundred years old, and he has children and grandchildren, all going in the ways of the Torah. He would often repeat this story, telling his family that even when we think things are bad, they are really all for the best.

Never leave that till tomorrow which you can do today.

וַיָּשָׁב יִצְחָק וַיַּחְפֹּר אֶת־בְּאֵרֹת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיְסַתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקְרָא לָהֶן שֵׁמוֹת כַּשֵּׁמֹת אֲשֶׁר־קָרָא לָהֶן אָבִיו 26:18



The entire episode of the **בְּאֵרֹת**- Wells, is mystifying. The Torah elaborates in great detail how the servants of Yitzchok and Avimelech clashed over the wells which were dug in the times of Avrohom Avinu. Some were alternately dug, filled in with earth and then re-dug. Then, new wells were dug, and new quarrels broke out with Yitzchok ceding control to the local tribesmen. In the end, there is no great honour here for Yitzchok so why is the entire affair mentioned?

Rabbeinu Saadia Gaon ZT"L learns from here a great lesson - a Mussar Haskel - which we must perpetuate. Yitzchok Avinu inherited from his father the wells of fresh water which gave life to so many people. In his lifetime, Avrohom had given them individual names for people to recognize them. When Yitzchok gained control of these wells, he made it clear that he had no intention of changing these names since his father, in his spiritually exalted level, had given them spiritually relevant names.



Yitzchok's intention was to perpetuate his father's every action, especially when his father had given specific orders. We, too, must strive to perpetuate the ways of our fathers before us and never waver in continuing the lessons and guidance that they have taught.

The Jewish People honour, admire, and most importantly learn from the actions of our ancestors, since their spiritual abilities far exceed ours and by following their examples, we learn to grow and become examples for our children. For this very reason, Hashem did not change Yitzchok's name, like he changed Avrohom and Yaakov's. Since Yitzchok refused to change the names of the wells that his father issued, thereby commemorating and perpetuating the ways of his father, Hashem did not change his name so that he remains today a source of inspiration to his descendants.

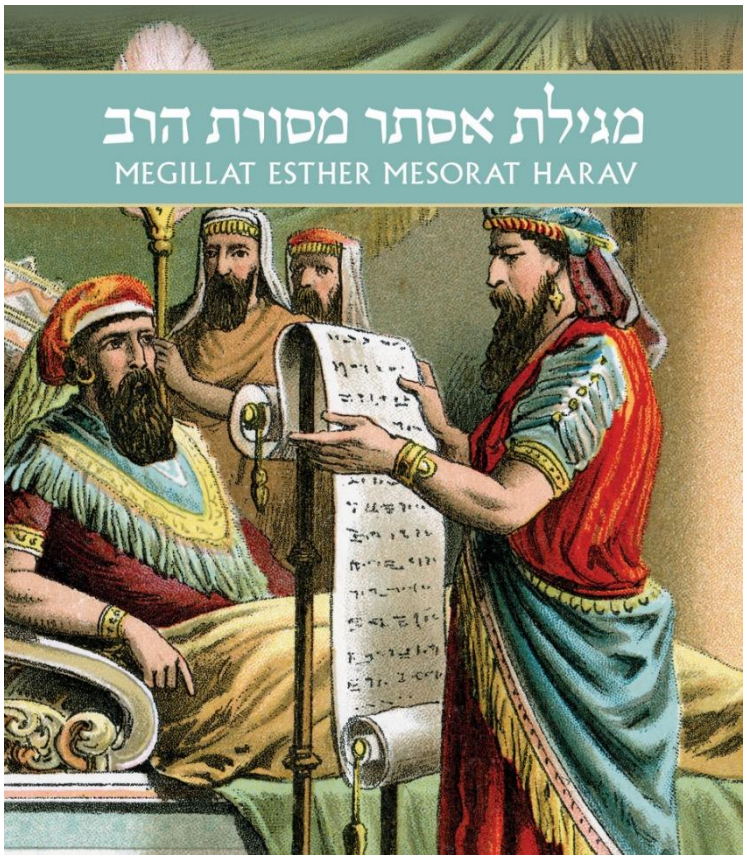
דרכי נעם – Darchai Noam –

דְּרָכֶיהָ דַרְכֵי־נֹעַם וְכָל־נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שָׁלוֹם "Its ways are ways of pleasantness" Mishlei 3:17

In his week's Parsha of Toldot, we read about the rivalry between Yaakov and Eisav and Yaakov's deception in order to receive the brachot. At the beginning of the Parasha, Yaakov is busy cooking lentils for his father Yitzchak because that is a traditional food served to mourners . Eisav returned home, starving and exhausted from a day of committing murder and other horrific sins. He asked Yaakov for some of the lentils. Yaakov used this as an opportunity to buy the birthright from his less-deserving brother, trading the birthright for the bowl of stew.

The Torah describes Eisav's action as follows: "*…and he ate and he drank and he got up and he left and Eisav* **ויבז** *- he belittled the birthright" (Breishit 25:34* .The word **ויבז** means to belittle or disparage. Some commentators have suggested that on some level Eisav recognised that he had just lost something very precious, and

this made him feel very uncomfortable. Therefore, he actively belittled the birthright because that would make him feel less uncomfortable about what he did.



As we discussed, the word **ויבז** appears only twice in the entire Tanach. The second time is in Megillat Esther, in relation to the wicked Haman who was one of Eisav's descendants. Haman had just been promoted by King Achashverosh and everyone was bowing down to him except Mordechai. This made Haman angry: "And [Haman] belittled- **ויבז** (the idea of laying his hands on Mordechai alone for they had disclosed to [Haman] Mordechai's nationality, and Haman sought to destroy all of the Jews who were throughout Achashverosh's entire kingdom, Mordechai's people." (Esther 3:6)

Haman was acting in the same manner as Eisav. He was very angry at Mordechai. However, to kill Mordechai alone would be beneath his dignity because it would show that Haman cared about what one individual Jew did and thought. So instead of denting his pride and dealing with Mordechai directly, he devised a plot to wipe out Mordechai's entire people! (As you do.) He was acting irrationally to keep his pride and self-image intact.

Remarkably, we see another parallel between our Parasha and Megillat Esther. There is another phrase that appears only twice in the Tanach – once in our Parasha and once in Megillat Esther. - In our Parasha, this phrase appears in the next instalment of the Yaakov/Eisav rivalry. When Yaakov successfully receives the

brachot from Yitzchak, he slips out of the door just as Eisav was entering, ostensibly to receive the very brachot that were just given to Yaakov. When Eisav finds out what happened he lets out a very loud and bitter cry **ויצעקו צעקה גדלה ומרה** - Many years later, a descendant of Yaakov (i.e. Mordechai) lets out a very loud and bitter cry due to the actions of a descendant of Eisav (i.e. Haman) **ויצעקו צעקה גדלה ומרה.**

The Midrash explains that because Yaakov caused Eisav to cry out, Mordechai ended up having to cry out as well. The battle between Yaakov and Eisav is being played out again many years later between their descendants. This Midrash seems problematic. We assume that Yaakov was in the right in this story. Eisav was the wicked one – the one who was undeserving of the brachot. Why did Yaakov (or his descendants) deserve to be punished?

The Netziv explains that even though Yaakov was acting correctly, he was using deception. Under the circumstances, Yaakov had no choice but to rely on this ploy. Sometimes the end justifies the means. However, one needs to be extremely careful. The Netziv writes that if we are forced to do something that would otherwise be inappropriate, but with pure intentions, we must be careful not to gain any personal benefit.

When Eisav cried out, Yaakov felt a tinge of satisfaction. Therefore, middah k'neged middah, he was punished many years later through his descendants. This Netziv teaches us how careful we need to be when employing a negative middah such as deception even when doing what we believe is right and what the Torah wants. We must examine our motivations very closely to make sure they are pure. If we are genuinely in the right, it is easy to overlook our own personal biases and not be completely honest with ourselves. It requires hard work and a lot of quiet contemplation to work out our underlying prejudices and motivations.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה



וַיֵּצֵא הָרִאשׁוֹן אַדְמוֹנִי כֻּלּוֹ כְּאַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו 25:25

וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וְיָדוֹ אֹחֶזֶת בַּעְקֵב עֵשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב 25:26 .

When we are told about Yaakov and Eisov being born and the names that they are given, the first Posuk is loshon rabim and the second posuk is loshon yochid. Rashi points out that Esav was born fully formed with lots of hair.**מלא שער כטלית של צמר המלאה שער : כלו כאדרת שער** .

הכל קראו לו כן, לפי שהיה נעשה ונגמר בשערו :<u>ויקראו</u> שמו עשו . So *everybody*, (loshon rabim) said **עָשׂוּי**- he is born complete.

The Ben Ish Chai asks, what is the difference of how Esov got his name and how Yaakov got his name? Esov got his name by virtue of the fact that he was created in that way**-עָשׂוּי** - *he was born complete*. He did no action to receive this name. Yaakov Avinu, however, with his B'chira and actions did something that caused him to have his name. No one else called him Yaakov, he, himself defined what his name would be. (loshon Yochid) By being pro-active, he caused his name to be called Yaakov.

The Reason he is called **יעקב** is because he was holding on to the heel**-עקב** of Esov. So why is he called **יעקב** and not **עקב**? Because **וְיָדוֹ אֹחֶזֶת בַּעְקֵב עֵשָׂו**. The word **יָדוֹ** is an acronym of the letter Yud spelt out - **יוד**. Therefore the **י** was added to the **עקב** to make **יעקב**. By being pro-active and doing Maasim Tovim, we define who we are.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

לֶךְ־נָא אֶל־הַצֹּאן וְקַח־לִי מִשָּׁם שְׁנֵי גְדָיֵי עִזִּים טֹבִים וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אֹתָם מַטְעַמִּים לְאָבִיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר אָהֵב: 27:9. ***Go now to the flock, and take for me from there two choice kids, and I will make them tasty foods for your father, as he likes.***

Rivka sends Yaakov to go to the flock, and get goats to prepare a meal for Yitzchok. **The Ben Ish Chai** asks, there appears to be a double unnecessary loshon here? It is obvious that if you are taking two goats, then you are going to the flock. So why are the words **לֶךְ־נָא אֶל־הַצֹּאן** necessary?



There is the famous Mishna in Pirkei Avos (5:20) that says, **יְהוּדָה בֶן תֵּימָא אוֹמֵר, הֱוֵי עַז כַּנָּמֵר, וְקַל כַּנֶּשֶׁר, וְרָץ כַּצְּבִי, וְגִבּוֹר כָּאֲרִי** *Judah ben Tema said: Be **strong** as a leopard, and **swift** as an eagle, and **fleet** as a gazelle, and **brave** as a lion, to do the will of your Father who is in heaven.*





All these Middos emanate from Z'rizus. Rivka said to her son, You need to surround yourself in the Middo of Z'rizus, because Esov is

about to come and receive the Brochos.(which are really destined for you).

So לֶךְ־נָא אֶל־הַצֹּאן – These are the Roshei Teivos of צְבִי- אֲרִי- נָשֶׁר ~ רָץ כַּצְבִי- גִּבּוֹר כָּאֲרִי- וְקַל כַּנָּשֶׁר .

וידו אחזת בעקב עשו ויקרא שמו יעקב (כה כו)



The Rema MiPano explains the connection between Yaakov, whose middah was emes, and answering amen, which is also one of the mitzvos that people are lax about:

יעקוב written with the vav is numerically equivalent to amen v'amen [a phrase used a few times in Tehillim], while **יעקב** without the vav is numerically equivalent to twice amen.

The Noam Elimelech says a tefillah emitted from the depths of one's heart is even greater than the tefillos of a tzaddik who davens for him.

Vechol Maaminim - הקול קול יעקב והידים ידי עשו (כז כב)

Harav Yehonasan Eibeshitz explains: Eisav drew all his strength from the fact that he was scrupulous about the mitzvah of honouring his father. But the Torah testifies that he only did this as lip service, as it says (ibid 25:28): "And Yitzchak loved Eisav ki tzayid befiv" – in his mouth but not in his heart. It behoves us to learn from this that if we daven properly, with the right kavanah in our hearts, then our merits will overpower the merit of Eisav who honoured his father with his mouth but not with his heart. By doing so, we will be

spared from his descendants who seek to annihilate us. But if we say our tefillah only as lip service, without kavanah of the heart, how will we be able to overpower the merit of Eisav if we are doing the same thing?!

That is what this passuk alludes to: When "the voice is the voice of Yaakov" – a 'voice' without kavanah, then "the hands are the hands of Eisav." But when the kavanah of the heart is added, then the hands of Eisav cannot control Am Yisrael.

A Phone Call From Momma ...



Relieved to get a break in her day, Esty jumped to answer the telephone. "Darling, how are you? This is Momma." "Oh, Momma, I'm having a bad day. The baby's upset and the dishwasher broke. I haven't gone shopping yet, and I banged my shin so hard I'm hobbling around. The house is a mess and on top of all that, the Silversteins are coming for dinner. I don't how I'm gonna do it." "Darling, Momma's got this. Sit down and do absolutely nothing for 30 minutes except relax. I'll do your shopping, clean up the house and cook dinner. I have a wonderful repairman for the dishwasher, and I'll take the baby for a stroll. So stop crying, Momma's taking care of everything. In fact, I'll even call Moshe at the office and tell him to come home early and help out."

"Moshe? Who's Moshe?" "Why, Moshe's your husband… Is this 564-7721?" "No, it's 564-7712." "Oh, I'm so sorry! I have the wrong number." Short pause. ***"Does this mean you're not coming over?"***

Harav Yehudah Zev Segal, Zt"l, the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah - *By E. Pruim*

Over a quarter of a century has passed since the world was shaken by the passing of the great tzaddik ***Harav Yehudah Zev Segal, zt"l.*** *Harav Segal was known universally as the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, after the town where he lived almost all his life, but the warmth of his radiance was felt all over the globe.*



The Manchester Rosh Yeshivah was recognized as an outstanding personality by Gedolei Hador during his years as a bachur in yeshivah, though his renown spread only later in his life. He instituted the daily learning of the Sefer Chofetz Chaim, and he had the satisfaction of seeing his idea become popular. When the Rosh Yeshivah visited America in his old age, many people came to seek his advice and his blessings.

The Rosh Yeshivah was accompanied for many years of his life by a select group of devoted talmidim who would tend to all his needs. ***Reb Mordechai Bunem Brandeis, z"l****, both a close talmid and very devoted gabbai, served the Rosh Yeshivah loyally until Harav Segal's last moments. Reb Mordechai Bunem passed away eight years ago. On the occasion of the yahrtzeit of their great Rebbi, Mrs. Brandeis and the Brandeis family agreed to share some of their treasured memories.*

How did your husband originally become close to the Rosh Yeshivah?

Reb Mordechai Bunem was orphaned from his father when he was only 4 years old. As a teenager, he followed his older brother to

Manchester and joined the Manchester Yeshiva. Upon hearing that this *bachur* was a *yasom* from a very young age, Rav Segal promised him, "I will be your father!" This closeness continued through his yeshivah years. After our *chasunah,* Reb Mordechai Bunem had the merit of serving the *Rosh Yeshivah* in his home and accompanying him on most of his travels.

How did the Rosh Yeshivah show his appreciation?

When the *Rosh Yeshivah* was once hospitalized, Reb Mordechai Bunem remained with him for the duration of his stay. Rav Segal came to thank me and asked how he could repay our kindness to him. I was at a loss as to what to answer, but he suggested that he would visit our home on Sukkos and make *Kiddush* with us in our *sukkah*.

This became a treasured custom for our family. Each year, the *heilige Rosh Yeshivah* would grace our *sukkah* together with his son-in-law **Harav Meir Zvi Ehrentreu, *zt"l,*** and we all savoured the atmosphere of the *tzaddikim* in our home. Even after the *Rosh Yeshivah* was *niftar*, Harav Ehrentreu, *Rosh Kollel* of the Manchester Yeshiva Kollel at the time, continued to come every year.

On Rosh Hashanah, the *Rosh Yeshivah* would pass our house to give me a *brachah,* and every Erev Yom Kippur he would *bentch* our children. On several occasions, Reb Mordechai Bunem wanted to honour the *Rosh Yeshivah* with *sandaka'us*, but each time, he refused, saying that my husband should first give the honor to senior members of his own family. When the opportunity arose again to be *mechabed* the *Rosh Yeshivah*, **Harav Shalom Schwadron, *zt"l***, was visiting Manchester, and the *Rosh Yeshivah* insisted that Rav Shalom be given the honour. My husband agreed only after the *Rosh Yeshivah* gave his *brachah* that we would have another son for whom he would be *sandak*.

The words of the *tzaddik* were fulfilled and my husband then asked for an additional *brachah* that we should be blessed with daughters, which was also, *baruch Hashem,* fulfilled.

What influence did the Rosh Yeshivah have on your family?

Just as the *Rosh Yeshivah* had promised to be a father to Reb Mordechai Bunem, he gave his advice and support and encouragement when we were bringing up our children as a true grandfather would. Once, one of my sons had been a bit too familiar at home. Reb Mordechai Bunem took him to the *Rosh Yeshivah*, who told the child to learn *hilchos kibbud av va'eim* three times. Incidentally, this was one of the ideas he told all boys to learn when coming for a *brachah* before they became bar mitzvah.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* always tried to comfort others and make them happy. He agreed to allow other people to take pictures of him, smiling and preparing himself for the photograph, merely to give them pleasure. He spent much precious time answering many calls from around the world.

We once had a fire in our house that caused much destruction. The flames charred many *sefarim* and almost burned the ceiling into a child's bedroom above. Harav Segal came around to see the damage for himself and cryptically commented, "*Zet zich ois epess hot du gedarft passieren* (it seems that something was destined to happen here)." Instead, "*shafach chamaso al eitzim va'avanim* — be thankful that Hashem has chosen to pour out His anger on mere inanimate objects!"

What memories do you have of the Rosh Yeshivah performing mitzvos?

Each action of the *Rosh Yeshivah* was carefully weighed before he actually did anything. Before carrying out even the smallest *mitzvah,* he would always declare out loud, "*Hineni muchan umezuman…*" so that the good deed should be performed with the correct and absolute *kavanah*. The *Rosh Yeshivah* once came to our house on a Thursday evening. Upon entering, he commented on the sweet aroma of the challos baking in the oven. He asked to see them,

entered the kitchen and personally engraved a letter *shin* on the unbaked challos, saying, "*L'chavod Shabbos Kodesh*!"

My husband treasured a particular *shofar* given to him for his bar mitzvah. One year, in the yeshivah, the *Rosh Yeshivah* was struggling to blow *tekios* with the *shofar* he usually used. Reb Mordechai Bunem passed him his own *shofar,* which blew easily and without any trouble. From then on, the *Rosh Yeshivah* would use only that *shofar,* which was a great honour for Reb Mordechai Bunem. This *shofar* has been used ever since by his son-in-law Rabbi Moshe Kupetz.



The *Rosh Yeshivah* made himself accessible at all times to any person who wanted to speak with him. Each day he spent much time in his room in the yeshivah learning alone. If anyone called or wanted to ask him a question, he would answer immediately.

A yungerman who later became a respected Rav recalled the deep impression the *Rosh Yeshivah* made on him when he first went to the yeshivah's *beis medrash* on Simchas Torah night. Rav Segal was full of *simchah shel mitzvah*, inspiring the entire assembly. Afterwards, the Rosh Yeshivah invited him to his house for the Yom Tov *seudah*. After becoming a *talmid* in the yeshivah, he would never make any major decision without first consulting Rav Segal, as so many other *talmidim* did.

Sometimes, the *Rosh Yeshivah* would ask *bachurim* if they needed to mail the letters they wrote home. He readily agreed to take them himself and post them on his way home in the evening in order to

perform the *mitzvah* of *chessed*. As he dropped them into the mailbox, he would declare that he was about to perform the *mitzvah* of *v'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha*. He repeated this for each letter.

Interestingly, before delivering each *mussar drashah* in the *beis medrash*, he could be heard whispering to himself, "*Hareini muchan umezuman l'kayem mitzvas v'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha*."

One evening after *Maariv*, Rav Segal asked a *bachur* to order a taxi and accompany him to the local Jewish hospital. They spent half an hour touring the wards and visiting the patients. As they were returning, the *bachur* asked Rav Segal if there was a special reason he had decided to visit that day. He replied that he had experienced a very difficult day. That evening, he felt he did not have the proper perspective of his troubles, so he had decided to visit the hospital. There he would see those who were far less fortunate than he was and come to appreciate that, comparatively, his own troubles were insignificant.

The learning of the *Rosh Yeshivah* and his *cheshkas haTorah* were legendary. His grandson recalls that the light in the *Rosh Yeshivah's* bedroom would often stay on for hours after he had retired to sleep. His daughter was concerned for his health and would go upstairs to check. Out of deference to her concerns, his light would go off when he heard her approaching.

Although over 25 years have passed since the passing of Harav Yehudah Zev Segal, his influence is still strongly felt by all those who consider themselves privileged to be called his *talmidim*. The yeshivah he led with such distinction for nearly 50 years is now home to the Manchester Yeshiva Kollel, where high-calibre *avreichim* dedicate their lives to learning Torah. The Kollel was founded by the *Rosh Yeshivah* during his lifetime with a vision for the future of *Klal Yisrael*.

The Manchester Yeshiva Kollel, led by Harav Yisroel Ehrentreu, a grandson of Harav Segal, maintains the fire and enthusiasm the *Rosh Yeshivah* implanted within the walls of the yeshivah.The image of the *tzaddik* still burns brightly in the memories of his *talmidim* each day. *Zecher tzaddik livrachah.*

Playing the Ball Wherever the Monkey Drops it By Daniel Keren



Rabbi Joey Haber is the Dean of religious studies at Magen David Yeshiva High School in Brooklyn and is also the rabbi of the Magen David Synagogue. In the summer when many in his community move to Deal, NJ he serves as rabbi of Tiferet Torah and Ahava in the Jersey Shore town.

In the video, Rabbi Haber noted that there seem to be a lot of people with long faces, almost suffering from hysteria [because of the outcome of the recent Presidential elections.] He offered as a hope for the future the following true story. 200 years ago the British built the first golf course outside of Great Britain that would later be called the "Royal Calcutta" in Calcutta, India. It was and remains to this day one of the most beautiful golf courses in the world with stunning fairways and greens and tee shots.

There was just one problem the organizers hadn't taken into account. There were native monkeys in the area. Whenever a golfer would hit the ball, a monkey would be attracted by the white object and jump and grab it and take it somewhere else nearby and release it. They didn't know what to do.



First they put up fences and still the monkeys climbed over and grabbed the ball and dropped it elsewhere. Then they tried chopping down the trees but that didn't stop the monkeys. They also tried removing the monkeys from the area, but they kept coming back and interfering with the balls. The Golf Club's New Rule Finally they came up with a solution. The golf club issued a new rule that you played the ball wherever the monkey puts it. That means if the monkey puts the ball there, that is where you play the ball or if the monkey puts the ball in a different spot that is where you play the ball.

Rabbi Haber said that that is really the rule of life. We don't decide what the future will be. [The monkey in the Royal Calcutta is really just a shaliach or agent of the Borei HaOlam (the Creator of the World)] Hashem gave us this president and then He gave us that president and then He gave us another president. It doesn't matter who the president is. We must understand that wherever You Hashem place the ball that is where we play it. We don't get upset! We don't get hysterical or worked up! We may be thoughtful. We can be concerned. But we don't lose hope, realizing that everything is in Hashem's hands.

בראשית כה,ל: וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הַלְעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדֹם הָאָדֹם הַזֶּה

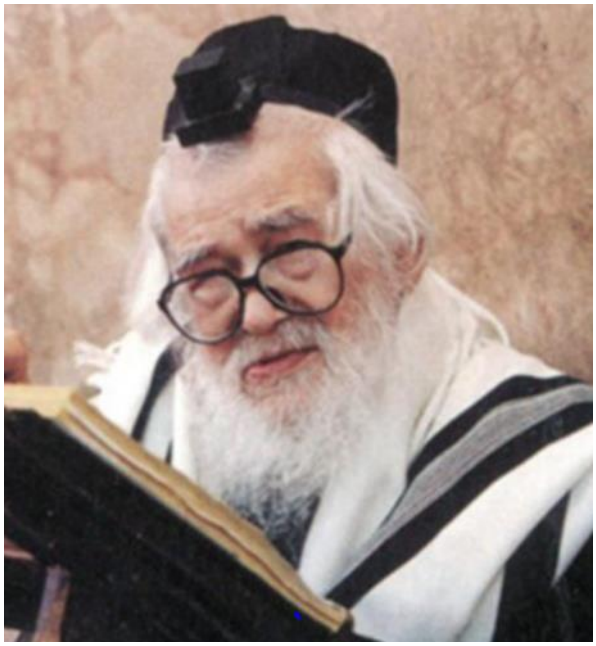


The Baal HaTurim writes that the phrase **הַלְעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדֹם** - The first letters of these three words spell **המן**. This is an allusion to the halacha that one should drink wine and eat seeds at the Purim meal. (**Rambam** says that "adashim" are considered seeds) This allusion about Haman also teaches that just as Yaacov acquired Esav's birthright for bread and lentils, so too Mordechai acquired Haman as a slave for a piece of bread (see Agaddas Esther 5:9).

In the time of Ezra when they were rebuilding the wall of Yershalayim, the enemies claimed the Jews did not have permission. They agreed to select one member of each group to go to the King to clarify the issue. The Jews selected Mordachai and the enemies selected Haman. On the way the righteous Mordechai ate his bread little by little; however, Haman ate carelessly and ran out of bread. Haman pestered Mordechai for some of his bread. Finally, Mordechai gave him bread if Haman would sell himself to Mordechai as a slave. Haman agreed. Since they did not have a parchment on which to write the agreement, Haman signed the agreement on Mordechai's shoe.

Not only does Hashem know your final destination, He knows the best way to get you there.

The Mentor's Request to the Bachur to Quit Smoking



In the Yeshivot of pre-war Europe, young bachurim were often paired up with older bachurim who would serve as their chavrusos and mentors. When a fourteen-year-old orphaned bachur arrived in the yeshivah of Slutzk in 1920, he was assigned to an older bachur named **R' Laizer Shach**, later to become the famed Rosh Yeshivah of Ponevezh. The young bachur, too, would later become one of the gedolei Yisrael. In those days, most people were still unaware of the dangers of smoking, and, like many bachurim, this boy smoked.

One day, R' Laizer Shach approached his young charge and said gently, "From now on, I never want to see you smoking again."

"Why not?" asked the young bachur, surprised. "Everyone smokes."

"I can't explain my reason to you right now," replied R' Laizer, "But I beg you to please listen to me."

Implicitly trusting his beloved mentor, the bachur complied and quit smoking immediately.

Many years passed and the two gedolim eventually made their way to Eretz Yisrael. When they finally met up with each other, the younger chavrusa reminded his former mentor of how he had forbidden him from smoking. "Now can you tell me why you were so insistent that I stop smoking?" he asked. "For years I've been wondering about it."

Rav Shach smiled warmly and explained, "In those days, Communism was a powerful force to be reckoned with, as many bachurim were captivated by its ideals and led astray from the path of the Torah. I

knew that the Communists were actively targeting brilliant bachurim like yourself, and the finest and the best were being swept up in Communist fervor. I was worried that perhaps they would succeed in convincing you too to join their ranks. I insisted that you stop smoking, so that if you were to chas veshalom be drawn into their clutches and become a mehalel Shabbat, at least you wouldn't smoke on Shabbat. I was ensuring that even if they succeeded in influencing you, the desecration of Shabbat would be minimized because of the fact that you were not a smoker."

Even as a young man, Rav Shach had the outlook and foresight of a gadol beYisrael, taking into consideration all the possibilities that the future might bring, as he made every effort to minimize the transgression of the Torah.



The Value of 80 Years Of a Difficult Life By Shloimy Weber

Rabbi Avraham Hakohen of Kalisk, the Rabbi of Tiveriah, was revered by all. Distinguished-looking and awe inspiring, the wisdom of age reflected in his elderly eyes. An old Jew once tottered up to Rabbi Avraham with a complaint. "I am tired of living," he grumbled. "I am so old and feeble. I feel as if life has nothing more to offer me. Of what use are the rest of my days? Eighty years is enough! Who needs more?" Rabbi Avraham was dismayed and horrified at this pronouncement. He rebuked the old man harshly, saying, "*It is worth living another eighty years, if only to have the privilege of doing just one more Mitzvah!*"

Parshah Pearls - Eisov's Precious Clothes

"And Rifkah took the precious clothes that Eisov had deposited with her ..." (27:15).



According to the **Da'as Zekeinim mi'Ba'alei Tosfos**, these were hunting clothes with pictures of all animals painted on them. Whoever wore them had access to all the beasts, since they were all attracted to them. And it was these clothes that Eisov coveted from Nimrod, who had received them in turn, from Odom. The day that Avrohom died and Eisov came running to Ya'akov, was the day that he had killed Nimrod to take his hunting clothes – he was fleeing from Nimrod's men who had given chase, to avenge their master's murder.

It is most interesting that these clothes played a major role in Ya'akov obtaining the birthright in the first place, as we just explained, and they did so again in his obtaining the b'rochos. Intriguing is the fact that Eisov went off to hunt minus his hunting clothes, presenting Rifkah with the opportunity to take action.

How did Odom obtain the clothes? **The P'ninim mi'Shulchan ha'Gro**, quoting the **Or ha'Tzvi**, relates that these clothes were the clothes that Hashem made for Odom from the skin of the snake. Since the snake had originally been king of all the animals, it had a picture of each and every animal embossed on its skin. Whenever they saw their own picture on these clothes, all the animals would bow down to the snake in utter humiliation. After the snake sinned, Hashem stripped off his skin and used it to make Odom and Chavah shirts.

Torah Tavlin

וְעַתָּה בְנִי שְׁמַע בְּקֹלִי לַאֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֹתָךְ 27:8



Former Vice-President Al Gore tells a story about one-time New Jersey Senator, Bill Bradley. Senator Bradley once attended a gala dinner at which he was featured as the guest speaker. Right before he was called up to the podium, the waiter came around and set down a side dish of potatoes and placed a pat of butter upon them. The Senator politely asked for an extra portion of butter. "I'm sorry sir," the very unyielding server replied tersely, "I was instructed to give only one pat per guest."

With an expression of disbelief, Senator Bradley looked up at the formal attendant. "Excuse me," he said. "Do you know who I am? I am the New Jersey Senator, Bill Bradley." The Senator cleared his throat and then added, "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 in the Senate, and I am in charge of Taxation and IRS Oversight. And right now, for your information," added Senator Bradley with an air of importance, "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, matching the senator's tone. "***I am the one in charge of the butter."***

Both Esav and Yaakov knew that the one "in charge" at home was Rivka, their mother. Esav would leave his valuable clothing in her home because he didn't trust his wives with them. He only trusted

his mother. And Yaakov did as he was told by his mother. When she informed him that his father was to give a special blessing to his brother and she insisted that Yaakov get it instead, Yaakov listened to her. Some may think they "run the show" whether at home or away, but we all need to know who is really in charge!

If the Man Who Found This is a Liar and a Thief…



A poor Jew finds a money clip with $700 in it. At his shul, he reads a notice saying that a wealthy congregant lost his money clip and is offering a $100 reward for it. He spots the owner and gives him the clip.

The rich man counts the money and says, "I see you already took your reward." The poor man answers, "What, this clip had $800 in it when I lost it." They begin arguing and eventually come before the rabbi. Both state their case. The rich man concludes by saying, "Rabbi, I trust you believe me." The rabbi says, "Of course," and the rich man smiles. The poor man is crushed.

Then the rabbi hands the clip to the poor man.

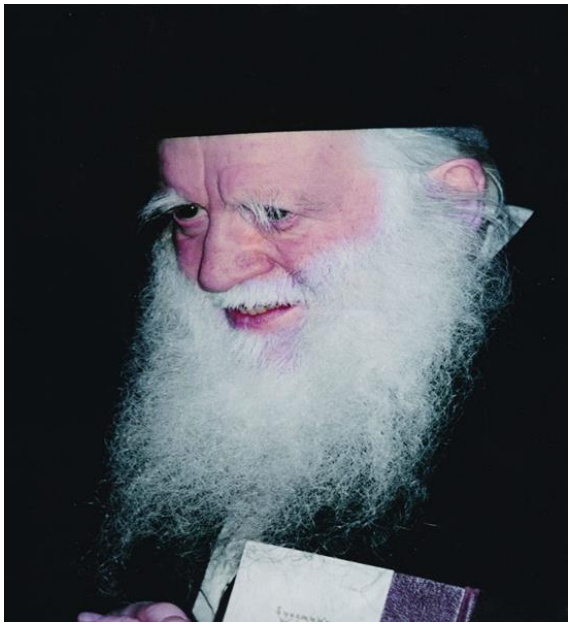
"What are you doing?!" yells the rich man. The rabbi answers, "You are, of course, an honest man, and you say the clip you lost had $800 in it. Therefore, I'm sure it did. But if the man who found this clip is a liar and a thief, he wouldn't have returned it at all. Which means that this clip must belong to somebody else. "If that man steps forward, he'll get the money. Until then, it belongs to the man who found it."

"What about my money?" the rich man asks. "Well, we'll just have to wait until somebody finds a clip with $800 in it…"

Yitzchok – The Great Man

וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק בָּאָרֶץ הַהִוא וַיִּמְצָא בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִוא מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ ה׳ - ***And Yitzchok sowed in that land, and he found in that year a hundred-fold, and Hashem blessed him.*** *26:12*

וַיִּגְדַּל הָאִישׁ וַיֵּלֶךְ הָלוֹךְ וְגָדֵל עַד כִּי־גָדַל מְאֹד 26:13 ***And the man became great, and he grew constantly greater until he had grown very great.***



The **Manchester Rosh HaYeshiva Harav Yehudah Zev Segal, Zt"l** asks why in the Pasuk is Yitzchok called **הָאִישׁ** - ***the man,*** and not by his real name **יִצְחָק**?

He answers that Hashem blessed Yitzchok with great riches. Even so, this did not affect him in any way. The money and wealth did not go to his head. He remained the same person- **the same man**. Hence the Pasuk calls him **הָאִישׁ**. ***(As heard from Rabbi Yosof Brandeiss- Rosh Yeshiva Le'zeirim)***



Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

ויצא הראשון אדמוני כלו כאדרת שער ויקראו שמו עשו ואחרי כן יצא אחיו וידו אחזת בעקב עשו ויקרא שמו יעקב (25:25-26)

After Eisav emerged from Rivkah's womb, Yaakov came out after him holding on to Eisav's **עקב** (heel), and as a result, he was called **יעקב**.

Seemingly, if this incident was the basis for choosing Yaakov's name, it would have been more appropriate to call him **עקב**. Why is there a letter **י** appended to the front of his name?

The Megaleh Amukos notes that the name Eisav (**עשו**) is related to the word **עשוי** (made), as Rashi writes that he was born complete with hair, like an older child. If so, shouldn't he have been called **עשוי**?

The Megaleh Amukos explains that when Yaakov grabbed Eisav's heel, he seized the **י** that should have been placed at the end of Eisav's name and attached it to the beginning of his name, transforming **עשוי** into **עשו** and **עקב** into **יעקב**.



Although this interpretation sounds like a linguistic play on letters, **Rav Yisroel Reisman** explains that it contains a much deeper lesson. In Hebrew grammar, adding the letter **י** to the beginning of a verb changes it from the past tense to the future tense, as in **אמר** (he said) and **יאמר** (he will say). In this sense, the letter **י** symbolizes the future.



Similarly, **Rav Gedaliah Schorr** notes that the song that the Jewish people sang after Kriyas Yam Suf begins (Shemos 15:1) **אז ישיר משה**, which literally means, "Moshe will sing." This was Moshe's way of hinting to the freed slaves that the Exodus from Egypt was not an end but a beginning.

A fundamental difference between a person who believes in Hashem and an atheist is that the former

believes in a World to Come where his actions will have consequences. Accordingly, when he makes decisions, he thinks not only about the present, but also about the future.

In contrast, the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 111) teaches that Eisav denied the existence of any life after death while he was still in his mother's womb, as his sole interest was to enjoy the present with no concern for the future. Yaakov alluded to this critical difference in their respective worldviews by taking the י - the letter that represents the future – from Eisav's name and adding it to his own, connoting his focus on the World to Come and his willingness to sacrifice ephemeral pleasures for eternal benefits.

Rav Reisman explains that this can be interpreted to mean that if we remember the י at the head of Yaakov's name, we can withstand the yetzer hara's temptations, but when we ignore the future י and live for the present, we are reduced to **עקב** and will succumb to the serpent.

The society around us passionately adheres to Eisav's ideology of living for the moment and only worrying about the present, with no compunctions about idly wasting hours on trivialities.

As descendants of Yaakov, we are expected to know better than to join them. When we recall the message of the י and maturely weigh the present against the future, we make better, more responsible decisions that imbue our lives with deeper meaning and show that we are truly wise.

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

Two types of resha'im exist in the world: One sins against Hashem. The other learns, davens, and performs mitzvos- not for Hashem, but for himself! – The Baal Shem Tov

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיְהִי כִּי־זָקֵן יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶיָן עֵינָיו מֵרְאֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ הַגָּדֹל וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בְּנִי 27:1

The Medrash (quoted by Rashi) tells us that when Yitzchok Avinu was bound on the mizbeach at the Akeida, the angels began crying. Their tears fell into Yitzchok's eyes causing him to become blind later on in his life. We've all learned this Rashi again and again, but what does it really mean? Why would the tears of angels cause Yitzchok to become blind?



R' Shimon Schwab zt"l explains brilliantly, that this Medrash is based on a posuk in Yeshayahu (33,7) which describes the angels as "Malachei shalom, mar yivkayun" - Angels of peace who cried bitterly. Like all angels, these angels of peace were created for only one mission: the purpose of perpetuating peace. They were extremely loving and compassionate, and incapable of seeing anything in a negative or critical. When they beheld the Akeida, they burst out in tears of compassion. Their tears entered the eyes of Yitzchok changing the way he looked at the world. Although Yitzchok embodied the midda of strict justice, these tears had a tremendous effect on the way he looked at a person who caused him the most pain. He saw only good in Esav, he was "blinded" from seeing his evil ways and treated him with utmost love and compassion.

It was for this reason that Yitzchok wanted to give Esav the blessings. It was the tears of the Malachei Hashalom that caused him to see the shleimus, the wholeness, the goodness in Esav, and he truly loved him and wished to bless him even though he wasn't really

worthy. His blindness allowed him to truly "see" the virtues of the wicked Esav and bless him with a loving and compassionate heart.

Every Friday night, we invite these Malachei Hashalom into our homes. We might as well take this opportunity, while they are gracing our homes with their mission of spreading shalom, to try to emulate their behaviour and look at everyone around the Shabbos table without a critical eye, but rather with only love and compassion.

If we ask the malachim to bless us with their mission, we will hopefully be zoche to not only a "Shabbat Shalom" but a life filled with peace and harmony!

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

ויעתר יצחק לה' לנכח אשתו כי עקרה היא ויעתר לו ה' ותהר רבקה אשתו
"And Yitzchak entreated G-d opposite his wife because she was barren, and G-d accepted his prayers, and Rivkah his wife conceived." (25:21)

Why does the pasuk at first refer to "his wife" without mentioning her name, only to conclude "Rivkah, his wife?"

Yitzchak's mother Sarah was barren for many years. It was only after her name was changed from "Sarai" to "Sarah" that she was able to give birth. Had her name remained "Sarai," she would never have been able to conceive.

Yitzchak wondered, "Maybe my wife Rivkah has the same problem as my mother Sara." Therefore, when he prayed to Hashem, he pleaded "Please help my wife to have a child," without mentioning her name.

In response to his prayers, Hashem made a miracle greater than the one He made for his mother. Not only did his barren wife become pregnant, but she retained her original name Rivkah. (**פרדס יוסף**)

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

The Strength to Overcome the Challenges of Life!



וְהָבִאתָ לְאָבִיךָ וְאָכָל בַּעֲבוּר אֲשֶׁר יְבָרֶכְךָ לִפְנֵי מוֹתוֹ -"*And bring it to your father and he will eat it, so that he will bless you before he dies" (27:10)*

Many *tzadikim* have experienced multiple challenges in their lives. Yaakov's life was full of numerous challenges. He had to run away from home to escape being killed by his brother, Esav. Shortly after Yaakov left, Eliphaz, Esav's grandson followed him, with instructions from Esav to kill him. Although he did not kill Yaakov, he took all the money and gifts that Yitzchak had given Yaakov.

When Yaakov arrived in Charan, he had to deal with the constant deceit of Lavan. Lavan kept trying to cheat Yaakov financially. He also tricked him into first marrying Leah instead of Rochel. When Yaakov finally left Lavan to return home, he was confronted by Esav and his army who wanted to kill him. Later, Yaakov's daughter, Dina, was abducted and shortly after, his wife Rochel died in childbirth. He also had to deal with the sorrow of Yosef's disappearance.

How was Yaakov able to overcome the terrible and almost constant *tzaros*?

Rav Avraham Pam zt"l answers this question based on the **Midrash Rabbah** (Bereishis 68:7).

Yaakov was able to keep going during these difficult times because he felt that "if I give up, I will forfeit all the energies that my mother invested in me to help me obtain the brachos". This thought

gave Yaakov the inspiration and strength to overcome any feelings of despair that he may have had.

We all have numerous challenges in life. One method to overcome our challenges is to visualize the efforts and energy that our parents, teachers, or mentors put forth on our behalf. That will infuse us with strength since we want their efforts to have been worthwhile.

[JEP] Can We Bottle This Fragrance?



וַיָּרַח אֶת־רֵיחַ בְּגָדָיו וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ

"…and he [Yitzchak] smelled the fragrance of his [Yaakov's] garments and blessed him." (Bereishis 27:27)

As Yitzchak felt he was nearing death, he wanted to bless his firstborn son, Esau. Yitzchak was unaware that Yaakov had previously purchased the rights of the firstborn from Esau, whose revolting behaviour made him undeserving of the blessings. Yitzchak's wife, Rivka, had received a prophecy from Hashem that Yaakov was the one who deserved the brachos. She **commanded** Yaakov to go in Esau's place to receive the brachos. She prepared a meal for Yaakov to bring to Yitzchak. She also told Yaakov to wear goat skins on his arms so that they would appear as if they were full of hair, as Esau was very hairy.

Rashi says that the smell of washed goatskins is very repulsive. How can the pasuk tell us that Yitzchak smelled a beautiful fragrance? **Rashi** answers that the smell of Gan Eden entered with Yaakov and that is what Yitzchak smelled.

The **Midrash** says, instead of reading the word as *begadav*, it can be read as *bogdav*, those Jews who rebelled against or betrayed Hashem. It was this special fragrance that Yitzchak smelled.

How could a beautiful smell come from the deeds of those who rebelled against Hashem? The **Midrash** continues…. During the Roman destruction of the Second Beis Hamikdash, there was a Jew by the name of Yosef Me'shisa, who collaborated with the Romans. After the destruction, the Romans wanted a Jew to be the first to enter the Beis Hamikdash to plunder the holy vessels. They asked Yosef and offered him that he could keep whatever he selects. Yosef did so and exited with the golden menorah.

When the Romans saw the beautiful menorah, they told Yosef that this item was too special for him and that he couldn't keep it. They told him to go back inside and take something else. Surprisingly, Yosef refused to go in a second time. A transformation had come over him. The Romans offered to give him three years of royal taxes if he would go in again. Yosef refused saying, "Is it not enough that I have angered my G-D once that I should now anger Him a second time?" The Romans then tortured Yosef to death. As he was dying, he cried out, "Woe is to me that I have angered my Creator!" Yosef died, doing complete repentance.

Rabbi Henach Leibowitz zt'l questioned what brought about such a dramatic change in Yosef. One moment he was collaborating with the enemy and the next moment he willingly gave up his life rather than anger Hashem again. The answer is the "*pintle neshama*" that every Jew has.

Every Jew has a spark of holiness within him that could ignite at any moment. Even the lowest Jew has that spark of holiness within him. That spark can be ignited and uplift even a traitorous Jew into one who is willing to sanctify his life for Hashem.

This was the beautiful fragrance that Yitzchak smelled. The inherent beauty of every Jew to go from the lowest of the low to scale great heights.

Every Jew has within him a spark of holiness that can never be extinguished. One should never give-up hope on any Jew, no matter

how low he has fallen. Even the biggest sinner can suddenly rise to the greatest heights in an instant, seemingly without any explicable reason.



Vedibarta Bam

"ויצא הראשון אדמוני...ויקראו שמו עשו" ***"And the first one came out red...and they called him Eisav."*** **(25:25) -** Why did Eisav come out red?

While Eisav and Yaakov were in their mother's womb, they had a very interesting conversation. Yaakov said to Eisav, "Listen, brother, before us there are two worlds: *Olam Hazeh* (this mundane world) and *Olam Haba* (the World to Come). In *Olam Hazeh* there is much eating, drinking, and physical delights. In *Olam Haba* there are none of these things. Everything is spiritual and one enjoys G-dliness. Tell me brother, which you prefer and I will take the other."

Eisav, being of a mundane and gross nature, immediately decided that *Olam Hazeh* was for him and that Yaakov could keep *Olam Haba.* When a person runs or exerts himself strenuously, he turns red. Consequently, when the time came for Rivkah to give birth, Eisav wanted his *Olam Hazeh* as quickly as possible, so he hurried red-faced out of his mother's womb.

According to the *Gemara* (*Chullin* 47b), when a child is born red, a *brit* cannot be performed on him until the blood in his veins settle down. Consequently, when Eisav was born, he was too red to be circumcised. When he became older and returned to a normal complexion, his father wanted to circumcise him, but Eisav refused. **(שער בת רבים - שפתי כהן, ועי' ילקוט שמעוני)**

"ואחרי כן יצא אחיו וידו אוחזת בעקב עשו" ***"Afterwards his brother came out and his hand was holding onto the heal of Eisav."*** **(25:25)**

There is a story in the *Midrash Rabbah* (63:9) about a general who once asked a Rabbi, "Who will be the last to hold on to the kingdom?" The Rabbi took a piece of paper and wrote on it the *pasuk,* **"ואחרי כן יצא אחיו וידו אחזת בעקב"** — "and afterwards came out his brother holding on to the heel."

Why did he omit the word "Eisav," which is the last word of the *pasuk?*

There is a question in *halachah* whether it is permissible to write a complete *pasuk* on a piece of paper. According to some opinions it is not permissible. Therefore, in lieu of writing the *pasuk* as it is written in the Torah, it is advisable to skip some words, or to write only the first letter of each word. The Rabbi who answered the general did the latter. Instead of writing the complete words of the *pasuk,* he wrote only the first letter of each word and did not include the first letter of the word "Eisav."

He thus wrote **ו-כ-י-א-ו-א-ב**. These letters have the numerical value of 46. The first letters of the words **מַשיח בֶן דָוד** or **מַלכות בֵית דָוד** also have the numerical value of 46.

Being a descendant of Eisav, the general was curious to know if his people would continue to dominate. The Rabbi, answered in the negative by hinting that *Mashiach Ben David,* as the continuation of *Malchut Beit David,* would eventually rule of the entire world.

However, being afraid of the general, he did not want to spell it out too clearly. Therefore, he wrote this *pasuk,* which the general could interpret to mean that Yaakov would be holding on to the heel of Eisav and that Eisav would be in command.(**פרדס יוסף-ספר בנין אריאל**)

Vedibarta Bam

"ויגדלו הנערים" *"And the boys grew up."* (25:27)



They now became 13 years of age, and Eisav began to worship idols. On this day Avraham died at the age of 175 (Rashi).

When Yaakov and Eisav were born, Yitzchak was 60 years old (25:26). Since Avraham was 100 years old when Yitzchak was born, he was 160 years old when Yaakov and Eisav were born. Avraham was supposed to live 180 years, but died five years earlier so that he would not see his grandchild Eisav worshipping idols (Rashi 25:30). If Eisav began worshipping at 13, why didn't Avraham die when he was 173 years old?

When Yaakov came to Yitzchak to get the *berachot*, Yitzchak smelled an aroma of *Gan Eden* emanating from him (Rashi 27:27).

How did Yitzchak know how *Gan Eden* smelled? Commentaries (**ריב"א**) say that immediately following the *Akeidah*, Avraham went back home and Yitzchak went up to *Gan Eden* for over two years.

The concepts of time and space are relevant only in this world but not in *Gan Eden*. Therefore, while Avraham lived two years of "real time" in this world, the two years did not count in the age of Yitzchak.

Consequently, though Yitzchak was 60 years old when Yaakov and Eisav were born, Avraham was really 162 and he died at the age of 175 when his grandson Eisav became 13 years old. (**לקוטי שיחות ח"א, ועי' ברבינו בחיי**)

Vedibarta Bam

"ויהי עשו איש יודע ציד איש שדה" ***"And Eisav was a skilled hunter, a man of the field."*** **(25:27)**

The words *"yodei'a tza'yid"* — "a skilled hunter" — refer to the fact that with his sly tongue he fooled and captured Yitzchak's imagination. He would approach Yitzchak and ask him questions such as **"אבא היאך מעשרין את המלח"** — "Father, how does one give *ma'aseir* (tithe) from salt?" (Rashi)

Obviously, Eisav knew that *ma'aseir* means setting aside 10 per cent. Thus, the same should be done with salt — ten bushels from one hundred. Eisav's question was apparently pointless — so how did it impress Yitzchak?

Eisav knew very well that *ma'aseir* means setting aside 10 per cent, and his question was not *how* does one give *ma'aseir* from salt. He was asking, "Father, **היאך**?! — What is the *halachah?!* — **מעשרין את המלח** — Does one have to give *ma'aseir* from salt or not?" When Yitzchak heard how carefully Eisav observed the laws of *ma'aseir,* he thought that his son was indeed very righteous. (**אלוף בישראל**)

Vedibarta Bam

"ויבא אל אביו ויאמר אבי ויאמר הנני מי אתה בני" ***"And he came to his father and said, 'My father,' and he said, 'Here I am; who are you, my son?"*** **(27:18)**

Why did Yaakov only say one word, "*avi*" — "my father" — and not the complete statement which he later made, "Sit and eat from my venison that your soul may bless me" (27:19)?

When Yaakov came into Yitzchak's room, he was trembling lest he be recognized. Therefore, he was afraid to invite his father to eat. Upon entering he said only one word, "*avi*" — "my father."

When Yitzchak asked, "Who are you?" Yaakov was convinced that Yitzchak did not recognize his voice, and that it was safe for him to continue speaking. He then invited his father to eat the meal he prepared for him and to bless him.

(פון אונזער אלטען אוצר)



Vedibarta Bam

"הלעיטני נא מן האדם האדם הזה" ***"Please pour into me some of this red stuff."*** **(25:30)**

The word *"na"* means "please." Is it not strange that the ill-mannered Eisav should speak so politely? Also, since cooked lentils are not red, why does the *pasuk* describe them as red?

The word *"na"*can also mean "raw." Regarding the *Korban Pesach*, the Torah says, **"אל תאכלו ממנו נא"** — "You should not eat it while it is *raw" (Shemot* 12:9). Eisav was a *ba'al ta'avah* — a glutton — he had bad table manners and a lust for food. Before lentils are fully cooked, they are reddish.

Eisav came home and saw that Yaakov had just put on lentils to cook. In his rough manner he said to him, "Throw this red, *raw* stuff down my throat." **(עיטורי תורה)**

"If your friend did you a little good, let it be large in your sight! If he did you much harm, think it a trifle!" ~ Avos Derabbi Nasan.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP] If At First You Don't Succeed, Try Again!



וַיַּחְפְּרוּ עַבְדֵי־יִצְחָק בַּנָּחַל וַיִּמְצְאוּ־שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים

"And Yitzchok's servants dug… and found a well of water. And the herdsmen of Grerar… said, 'the water is ours'…. And Yiztchok's servant dug another well, and they also fought over that… And Yitzchok's servants dug another well, and the herdsmen of Grerar didn't fight over that." (26:19-22)

Yitzchak's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of fresh water. The psukim here are puzzling. First the Torah tells us that Yitzchok dug a few times until he found water. When the ownership of those wells was disputed, he dug others until he found water. Why does the Torah give a lengthy description of Yitzchok's attempts to find water? **The Chofetz Chaim explains** that the Torah is teaching us a very important lesson :

Never give up! When you start something, don't give up because you run into difficulties. This applies to both material and spiritual matters. Be persistent when things don't go the way you want. If at first, a business venture doesn't work as planned, don't give up, right away. Try again. If learning Torah is difficult at first, don't give up! Keep trying and persisting. Often, the reason for failure is that you gave up too soon. If you are determined and keep trying, there is a greater likelihood you will succeed.

Many of the most successful people in the world, whether they are businessmen, sports figures, or just ordinary people all encountered

difficulties before their accomplishments. Had they given-up after their initial failure, they would not have achieved their triumphs.

In the early 1800's, there was a young boy who was not trying hard enough in Yeshiva. His parents tried, to encourage him to put more effort into his Torah learning. Finally, in despair, the boy's parents decided to take their son out of Yeshiva and send him to learn a trade. When their son overheard what they said, he burst out crying and begged for one more chance. He was given the chance, became more serious, and learned very well. This boy became the great Torah luminary known as Rav Naftoli Tzvi Yehudah Berlin; the Netziv. The Netziv was Rosh Yeshiva of the famed Volozhin Yeshiva for almost 40 Years!

Never give up! You <u>can</u> succeed if you keep trying!



Vedibarta Bam

"ויאמר עשו בלבו יקרבו ימי אבל אבי ואהרגה את יעקב אחי"
***"Eisav said in his heart; 'May the days of mourning for my father arrive then, I will kill my brother Yaakov."* (27:41)**

Why did Eisav want to wait till Yitzchak died? Yaakov learned Torah day and night. Eisav knew very well that the merit of learning Torah would protect Yaakov and he would not be able to harm him. (See *Gemara Shabbat* 30b.)

When a close relative passes away, the mourner is an *Onein* until the burial and is forbidden to study Torah. Eisav's calculation was that at the time of Yitzchak's demise Yaakov would not be learning Torah, and thus lack protection, so that it would be easy to kill him then. **(שער בת רבים - כפלים לתושי)**



"A fool raises his voice in laughter - a wise man smiles in silence."



Vedibarta Bam

"ונשלחך בשלום אתה עתה ברוך ה'" ***"We have sent you away in peace; You are now the blessed of G-d."*** **(26:29)**

How were they convinced that Yitzchak was blessed?



According to the *Gemara (Berachot* 64a), when parting with a friend one should say *"lech leshalom"* — "Go to peace." He should not use the expression *"lech* ***be****shalom"* — "Go in peace" — because this could, G-d forbid, bring him evil.

Avimelech and his people were not interested in the welfare of Yitzchak. Not wanting to wish him well, they said to him *"lech beshalom"* hoping that something unpleasant would happen to him. To their amazement, not only did he avoid mishap, but on the contrary, he was blessed with tremendous success.

When Yitzchak asked them, "Why suddenly do you come to me?" they replied, "We parted with you with the wish of *'beshalom'* hoping that you would encounter troubles. Seeing your success, we are convinced that you are blessed by G-d, and therefore, our evil intentions did not affect you." (**שארית מנחם**)

The Secret to Inner Peace

There is nothing greater in the world that can bring a person serenity and tranquility than emuna and bitachon. This awareness is the tried-and-true path to alleviating all of a person's emotional pain. ~ R' Chaim Zaitchyk zt"l

"וא-ל ש-ד-י יברך אתך ויפרך וירבך" ***"And G-d A-mighty should bless you and make you fruitful and multiply."* (28:3)**

Why did Yitzchak employ the Holy Name "**ש-ד-י**" when he blessed Yaakov to be fruitful and multiply?

G-d implanted in man the potential to procreate. The first *mitzvah* of the Torah is "*pru urevu*" (**פרו ורבו**)— "to be fruitful and multiply." The words "*pru urevu*" have the numerical value of 500.

When the letters of the name "**ש-ד-י**" are themselves spelled out, "*shin*" is spelled "**ש-י-ן**" "*daled*" is spelled "**ד-ל-ת**", and "*yud*" is spelled "**י-ו-ד**" The unrevealed part of the letters, i.e. the (60) "**י-ן**" of the "*shin,*" the (430) "**ל-ת**" of the "*daled,*" and the (10) "**ו-ד**" of the "*yud*" total 500.

Thus, the Holy Name of "**ש-ד-י**" has *hidden* in it the potential of *pru urevu* (500), which is the power to bring about G-d's great blessing of having children. For this reason, when Hashem blessed Yaakov to multiply, He prefaced it by saying, "*Ani Keil Sha-dai* — I am G-d A-mighty — be fruitful and multiply" [35:11]. (**בעל הטורים**)

It is customary for a girl to light a candle in honour of *Shabbat*. When she marries, she lights two. The reason for this may be that a married couple has a total of 500 limbs (man has 248 and woman 252 see *Bechorot* 45a) and the *Mitzvah* of *pru urevu* (500) becomes applicable.

The word "*neir*" (**נר**) — "candle" — has the numerical value of 250. Thus, the two candles total 500.

For this reason, it is customary that a *chatan* and *kallah* are led to the *chuppah* with a candle held on each side.

(**מטה משה חלק שלישי, הכנסת כלה, פ"א סי' ב**)

Beneath the Surface - R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(כה:כז) ויעקב איש תם ישב אהלים ***And Yaakov was a wholesome man, living in tents.*** **(25:27) Rabbi Yeshaya *Ha'levi* Hurvitz**, author of **שני לוחות הברית**, also known as the ***Shlah HaKadosh***, said: "Come and see how a man must distance himself from trickery and falsehood.

Yaakov *Avinu* had countless good character traits and yet the Torah focused only on his honesty and straightforwardness. He was an **איש תם** , *a wholesome man*. From here we learn that there is no greater trait than to live a life of honesty and straightforwardness." (*Parperaos LaTorah*)

V'halachtah B'drachav -The Ways of Hashem

Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss, *Shlit"a*, once spoke about how one can fight depression by learning Torah. Depression is a symptom of the *neshamah* in pain. It is through Torah that we can bring *simchah* and fulfillment to our *neshamos*, because Torah is such a great and powerful tool to connect and communicate with Hashem.

Another great way to do this is through saying *Tehilim*. *Tehilim* are praises and songs which bring *simchah*, happiness. Tehilim covers every aspect of our lives and every obstacle that we may encounter. Dovid *Ha'melech* wrote *Tehilim* from all different phases and trials of his life. Therefore, by completing the entire *Sefer Tehilim*, we are assured that our *tefilos* have an impact on whatever challenge we are *davening* for.

"The wise man says: I will eat to live, and the fool says: I will live to eat." ~~ Orchot Tsadikim

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

Rav Naftoli Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, the *Netziv*, was the son-in-law of **Rav Itzele of Volozhin— the son of Rav Chaim Volozhiner**, and he succeeded Rav Itzele as the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Volozhin. The *Netziv* would never go to the doctor, even when he was sick. Once, he went through a period of time where he was not feeling well, and out of concern for his health, his family pressured him to allow the doctor to come check on him. Finally, he acquiesced and allowed the Doctor to examine him. After a thorough checkup, the doctor identified the problem and wrote out a prescription for a medication and handed it to the *Netziv*.



The *Netziv* thanked him, but as soon as the doctor left, the *Netziv* ripped up the prescription and threw it out. His family was shocked and asked him, "If you already agreed to see the doctor, why would you not take the medicine he recommended?" The *Netziv* explained that usually when something bothered him, instead of going to a doctor, he would think about which *mitzvos* are associated with the limb that was affected. He would then examine which of those *mitzvos* he has been lax in, and make an effort to repair his wrongdoing. This would thereby strengthen the *mitzvos* that were done with that part of his body, and ultimately strengthen his body.

However, this time, he could not identify exactly which part of his body caused him to feel weak! Once the doctor identified it, he no longer needed the doctor's medicine. He would now be able to cure it the way he had always cured his own ailments— through Teshuvah.

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections *By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

Why was Yaakov born holding the ankle of Eisav (25:26)? Did he really think that by holding onto his ankle he could prevent him from being the first born? What was he trying to do?

Rav Moshe Mordechai of Lelov explains that Yaakov's perspective was that it is his responsibility to put in the effort— even if logically he might not be able to accomplish, to the fullest extent. We have the obligation to try our best at things, and leave the rest up to *Hashem*.

Parenthetically, we notice that in reality, Yaakov did ultimately merit the rights of the firstborn.

Vechol Maaminim

The Kavanah in Yitzchak's Heart Did Not Help Eisav

כשמע עשו את דברי אביו ויצעק צעקה גדלה ומרה עד מאד ויאמר לאביו ברכני גם אני אבי כז לד

The Ralbag asked: Why was Eisav so afraid? At the time when Yitzchak, his father, blessed Yaakov, his kavanah was for him, and not for Yaakov, and if so, wouldn't the brachah apply to him and not to Yaakov?

Harav Shmuel Dovid Walkin, the Rav of Kehillas Bais Aharon :in Queens, explained with regard to tefillah for a sick person, the Magen Avraham (119a) rules that one who davens for a sick person in front of him does not need to mention his name. However, one who davens for a sick person when he is not in his presence must mention his name in order for the tefillah to be answered.

Now we can understand why Eisav was so afraid. Because he was not standing in front of his father at the time of the brachah, the fact that his father had him in mind when issuing the brachah was not

helpful for him, because his name was not mentioned in the brachah, as is necessary. But it helped Yaakov even without his name being mentioned, because he was standing beside his father at the time of the brachah. (Ramas Shmuel)

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS TOLDOS

No Sugar in the Rabbi's Tea - Rabbi Efrem Goldberg



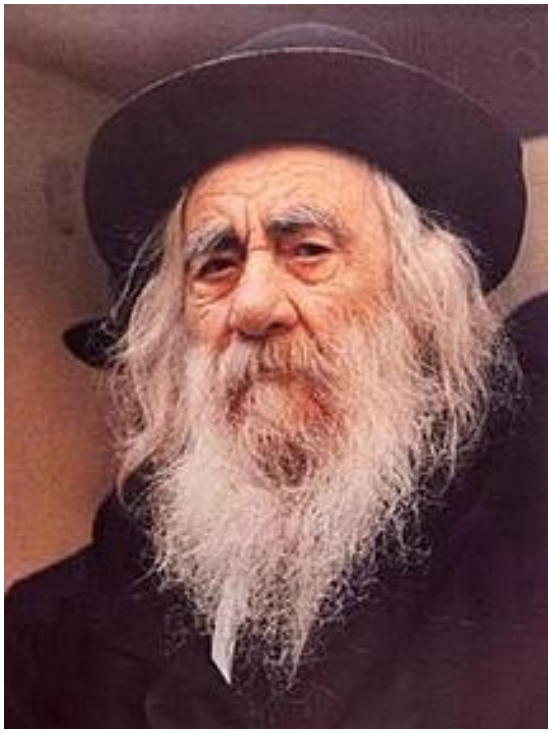
In addition to being an outstanding Talmid Chacham and world renowned posek, **Rav Hershel Schachter** is one of the most prolific Torah teachers of our time. He recently celebrated his 80th birthday but hasn't slowed down a bit, bli ayin harah. During his recent visit to our community over Shavuos, he gave almost 25 shiurim. With all the public speaking, he often drinks hot tea to sooth his throat. When offered sugar or Splenda, he always declines and says he takes his tea plain.

Once, the Schachters were guests in someone's home and when offered tea, Rav Schachter graciously accepted but asked for it plain. The host, curious as to Rav Schachter's preference for no sugar, asked why he wanted it so bland. After being asked several times, Rav Schachter finally relented and explained.

On a trip to Israel with the Rebbetzin when they were first married, he was at a meeting at someone's home in a Kibbutz. The person offered Rav Schachter hot tea, but he was concerned that the person may not be aware that ma'aser must be taken from sugar, so he happily accepted the tea but when offered sugar, responded, "I don't take sugar in my tea."

"So," explained Rav Schachter, "to be true to what I said that day, for the last fifty years, I have never taken sugar in my tea, even if in truth, I would prefer it sweetened." (His son, Rav Shay Schachter, shared with me that none of his children knew why he didn't drink sugar in his tea until that day he was pressed by his host. It is one of many examples of his personal practices that he not only doesn't impose on others but humbly doesn't even share with those closest to him.)

A Tainted Donation



The Steipler Gaon, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky Zt'l, was born in Ukraine in 1899. He later moved to Eretz Yisrael, where he lived until his passing in 1985.

Every year the Steipler received $20,000 from two brothers who lived in America; the money was to be distributed to the poor under the Steipler's guidance. One year, when the *gabbai* came to bring the money, the Steipler refused to accept it.

"This money isn't kosher," he said as the *gabbai* held out the envelope. "I cannot take it. Please give it back."

Bewildered, the *gabbai* called one of the brothers and explained what had happened. "The Steipler Gaon refuses to accept your money. He says it isn't kosher."

The man was silent for a moment and then replied, "Give me a few minutes." A few minutes later the man called him back. "Okay, now you can give Rav Kanievsky the money."

The *gabbai* returned with the envelope and handed it to the Steipler. This time the Steipler smiled and accepted it. The *gabbai* couldn't believe his eyes. He called up the brother to tell him what had happened and to ask for an explanation.

"My brother and I own a business together," the man said. "Every year we make a joint donation of $20,000 to help support the poor in Israel. This past year my brother and I weren't speaking to each other, but despite our estrangement I knew he would still want to keep our yearly tradition and seed the money. I sent off the money without consulting him. That is why the Steipler refused to accept it.

"When I heard this, I immediately called my brother and told him what had occurred. It was the first time we'd spoken in months, and we apologized to each other and made amends."

The *gabbai* now understood. The money, in effect, had been stolen since the two brothers had not consulted about it, and in addition, it had been tainted by discord. Such money cannot be used for charity.

The Guarantor

Around forty years ago, a wealthy Jewish philanthropist in London suddenly lost his fortune. He did not tell anyone what happened, because he did not want those in need to hesitate to approach him to ask for help. He loved giving, and he did not want to stop even after his financial collapse.

The man went to a prominent wealthy Jew in Manchester and requested a loan so that he could continue helping people. He explained that he has a number of investments that would be maturing in two years, and so he asked for a two-year loan of two million pounds. The man was prepared to provide the loan to the philanthropist but asked if he had a guarantor for the loan.



The man from London explained that he'd rather not give any guarantors because he did not want anyone to know about his reversal of fortune. Therefore he preferred borrowing the money without a guarantor.

"You are asking me to do the impossible," the man from Manchester said. "How can I lend you so much money without a guarantor?"

"I am doing this l'shem Shamayim," the man explained, "in order to help people. I know Hashem can be the Guarantor."

The man from Manchester, with complete faith in Hashem, responded, "You are correct. Because this money is needed l'shem Shamayim, we will name Hashem as the Guarantor." And he gave him the sum he requested!

Years later, the man from London returned to Manchester – without the money. He said that he did not yet have the funds to repay the loan, and that he needed another two months.

The man from Manchester began thinking that he would never see the money again, and so he went into his private room and spoke to Hashem. "You are the Guarantor for this loan," he said, "and the time has come for it to be repaid. But I don't want the money. I have a daughter who is already of age and has not been able to find a shidduch. Hashem, please send her husband and I will consider this as a payment of the loan."

The man's daughter was engaged less than three weeks later. He also closed a profitable business deal that yielded almost the complete sum he had lent to the man from London.

Two-and-a-half months later, the man from London returned, ready to repay the loan. But the lender refused, explaining that Hashem,

the "Guarantor" had already repaid the debt in full, and the man did not owe him anything.

But the man from London insisted, saying that he did not take free gifts and was intent on repaying the money he had borrowed. An argument ensued between them as each party was insisting that the other keep the money. Remarkably, they brought the case to a beit din in Israel.

One of the judges who presided over the case, Rabbi Zickerman, said that the judges were all in tears and overcome with emotion upon seeing the honestly and sincerity of these two Jewish men. They eventually ruled that the money should be returned to the "Guarantor," to Hashem.

It was a shemittah year, and so the money was given to a special fund set up to assist farmers who observed shemittah. Both these men put their faith in Hashem: the one who borrowed the money in order to continue giving tzedakah, and the lender who gave the loan relying on Hashem as the Guarantor.

And Hashem did not let them down; He was there ready to catch them. As David HaMelech says (Tehillim 25:2), My Hashem, I trust in You, so I shall not be shamed."

May we all be able to make sacrifices with our heart in order to get closer to Hashem and may we always have the same enthusiasm for our mitzvos and tzedakos whether we have something to gain or not. May we also learn from Hashem to be careful with our neighbour's honour, no matter what his financial situation is.

"If there is one thing superior to life, it is health." ~~ Iggeret Hamusar

Rabbi Avigdor Miller's Letter to His Children

When the great Rabbi Avigdor Miller passed away in 2001 his children found in his will a letter saying to them the following:

"My children and grandchildren, please don't cry or mourn for me too much because I'm very thankful to Hashem for giving me a wonderful life. I had a wonderful wife and five beautiful children who all went in the way of the Torah. My two sons, both Rabbis one a Rosh Yeshivah and my three daughters all married to Rabbis. My grandchildren also all B'nei Torah and following the path of Torah as I have prayed for all my life. I was healthy all of my years and was able to learn for six years in Slabotka Yeshivah. I am truly grateful for the wonderful life that Hashem gave me."

May we all live each and every day to the fullest by spending quality time with our children and grandchildren and be always involved in learning Torah with them every day. This, so we may enter our later years in life old and content with the satisfaction that our days were full and productive with our children and grandchildren around us learning and growing in Torah and Ma'asim Tovim with them! Amen!

A One Dollar Reunion By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

The Garbovskis, Igor, Vladimir and their parents lived in Kiev in a modest home. They were typical Ukrainian Jews: proud they were Jews, as ignorant about Judaism as a Jew can be and had a strong desire immigrate to Israel.

But they had differing ideas about how to do it.

Vladimir, always the idealist, wanted to leave immediately. He figured that with his degree in engineering he would surely succeed in the land of the Jews. But Igor and his parents wanted to wait until they became more proficient in Hebrew and gathered sufficient funds, then they would all move together.

But Vladimir wouldn't hear of it. One day he announced that he had purchased his ticket, packed his bags, made arrangements and would go alone and before they knew it he was gone.

At first Vladimir phoned home once a week and was full of good news: He became a citizen and was living temporarily in one of the immigration centers. He was learning Hebrew and he had been promised a job as an engineer as soon as a position was available.

But a half a year later he didn't sound so enthusiastic: The engineering job never materialized, he was working 'temporarily' as a gardener, he had moved out of the Immigration Center and due to low funds was renting a dingy apartment in the city of Ramle. His parents suggested that he return home and Igor not only seconded the idea but began pressuring him; come home and in a year or so we will all move together and help each other.

But Vladimir would have no part of it. In fact, it made him angry; bad enough that the Israeli Government wasn't helping him, now his family was against him?!

He began calling home less frequently and his conversations were tense and often ended in quarrels. Until he stopped calling altogether.

Igor tried to call him back, but with no luck; at first he didn't answer but eventually he was told that Vladimir's phone had been disconnected. In desperation he contacted the Israeli police and the immigration service but they were of no help.

He felt guilty; perhaps it was his fault; maybe he had been to forceful, to negative? Perhaps if he had been more friendly etc. etc. until finally he decided there was no other way to calm his conscience and his parents' worries than to travel to Israel and locate Vladimir himself. With a heavy heart his parents agreed and he was off.

Igor, unlike his brother already knew Hebrew fairly well and in no time he settled in. He immediately found himself an apartment in Tel

Aviv got a job as an apartment broker to Russian immigrants and just days after he arrived in Israel began looking for Vladimir.

But he discovered it wasn't so simple.

First he went to the immigration center but they had lost contact with him. Then he located the apartment in Romle only to discover that Vladimir had moved out several months ago and all the landlord and neighbors could say was that he looked depressed.

He went to the company for which his brother had worked as a gardener, and they told him that he had been a good worker for the first month or so but then he began complaining and refused to work. He said it wasn't fair that an engineer should do such menial, low paying work so they had to fire him and since then, three months ago, they hadn't seen him.

Igor contacted the police again, got on the radio, spoke on the Russian stations, put ads in the Russian newspapers with his brother's picture and even printed advertisements and put them on telephone poles in the streets. But nothing worked. And he began to suspect the worst.

After a year of fruitless searching in Israel suddenly an idea popped into his mind, maybe his brother moved to America. After all a lot of Russians that didn't make it in Israel went there. And, although Igor realized the irrationality of his thinking; if he couldn't find Vladimir in little Israel he certainly wouldn't succeed in the U.S.A., nevertheless he bought tickets and flew to Los Angeles. A lot of Russians live there.

But as expected, despite a month of praiseworthy efforts he came up with nothing. So he decided to try in New York for a week or two and then if nothing turned up he would return to Israel.

But in New York he fared no better. He put ads in the Russian papers, even got his plea announced on a few Russian radio stations but with no results. Then on Friday, three days before his return

flight on Sunday night, he happened to strike up a conversation with some Russian speaker in the hotel lobby where he was staying and when he mentioned his missing brother his acquaintance replied,

"You can't find your brother? Why, if I was you I would go to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and ask for a blessing."

Igor had no idea what the man was talking about. "Rebbe? Lubavitch?" he replied, "No, I'm sure that my brother would never go any Rebbe." But his acquaintance explained how this Lubavitcher Rebbe was known to help people in the most miraculous ways, told a few stories to make his point and finished by saying the Rebbe gives out one-dollar bills, blessings and advice every Sunday from his headquarters in Brooklyn and that he should go there.

Igor couldn't believe that this fellow was telling the truth. He had heard stories of Chassidic Rebbes doing miracles but he was sure they were just fables or fairy tales.

But then he thought to himself that he really had nothing to lose and was free Sunday morning. Not only that but according to his fellow the Rebbe was very friendly and spoke Russian.



That Sunday Igor found himself standing in a huge line of several thousand people that wound around a large red brick building in Brooklyn and an hour later he was face to face with the Rebbe.

Just as the man in the hotel said; the Rebbe was very impressive but also seemed very warm and friendly. So Igor said in Russian, "I'm looking for my brother who has been lost for a year. Can you help me?" The Rebbe smiled, gave him two dollars and said, "One is for you and the second give to charity, and you will find your brother."

Igor took the dollars, said thank you and moments later was in the subway back to his hotel trying to understand what happened. He concluded that the dollars were probably some sort of good-luck magic charm and although he did not believe in such things he put them in his wallet, returned to his room, packed his bags, rested for a few hours, went to the airport and forgot the whole thing.

When he arrived in Israel he took directly from the airport a cab to Jerusalem where he already had a few meetings planned. Then, once in Jerusalem he got out of the cab and immediately at least five poor people surrounded him and asked for donations. Usually he would simply ignore them, but this time he suddenly remembered the Rebbe's words, dug his hand into his pocket and begrudgingly gave the Rebbe's dollar to one of them thinking to himself, 'At least I'll see if that Rebbe's blessing was real'. But he didn't have to wait long. Although the bum that he gave the dollar to tried to avert his gaze there was something familiar about him. "Vladimir?" Igor asked in disbelief. The disheveled beggar lifted his head and their eyes met. He took a good look. It was none other than his brother!

Vladimir took his brother back, called his parents and when they were finally united and fully realized what a miracle they had experienced they all decided to learn more about and be more connected to Judaism.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

The *Chofetz Chaim* had such pure *Emunah* in *Hashem*, that he would speak to *Hashem* in *Yiddish* the way one speaks to a friend. Several times the *Chofetz Chaim* was heard saying, "*Ribbono Shel Olam*, You have heard my *Tefilos* so many times. Today too, please accept my *Tefilos*!"

Who is the Boss of the Doctor's Office? By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

Dr. Zev Zelenko (a Chabad Chassid) is the main doctor for the community of some 20,000 Satmar Chassidim in the city of Monroe, New York.

The casual reader might not grasp the awesome novelty of this but I will try to explain.

Satmar Chassidim are among the most charitable people in the world. Their acts of kindness and aid to the needy are of epic proportions and what is advertised is only a small percentage of what they actually do.

But they take no credit, neither for this nor for their remarkable devotion to G-d and His Torah. Rather their pride is in their opposition to Zionism. To them, Zionism, Zionists and anyone that supports them are evil.

Only Moshiach, they say (as do all other Jewish sources) will gather all the Jews, certainly not an atheistic based movement like Zionism, and they hate anything and anyone that disagrees with them on this.

Therefore, years ago when the Lubavitcher Rebbe praised the Israeli soldiers that pulled off the Entebbe Raid, they came out with a strong condemnation and declared a 'cold war' on Chabad.

(Which is, in fact, totally unfounded, being that Chabad, especially through their Chassidic teachings, is devoted to bringing Moshiach against the basic tenant of Zionism: that Jews can solve all problems and end the 'exile' on their own.)

What magnifies the novelty of Dr. Zelenko in Satmar is that he wears a Yarmulka that bears an embroidered declaration, in the spirit of Chabad, that he is waiting to crown Moshiach.

Just a few months ago Dr. Zelenko visited us here in the Yeshiva and told the miraculous story of his appointment.

Several years ago, he saw an advertisement that the Satmar community in Monroe was seeking a Doctor and, being that he had to provide for his wife and budding family, he applied and was called for an interview.

When he arrived at the interview and they saw his credentials, portfolio and recommendations they were very pleased and were considering hiring him on the spot, until he took off his hat. Suddenly their eyes affixed on the letters decorating his Yarmulke "Long live King Moshiach" and for the rest of the conversation they heard nothing he said.

After a very short time they closed the meeting with, 'don't call us, we'll call you', didn't even shake his hand and that seemed to be the end of it.

Although things looked dim, Dr. Zelenko still had hopes.

But after five weeks passed and he heard nothing he gave up and began searching again, but nothing better presented itself.

Then, in the sixth week after his interview he received a telephone call. Satmar wanted him to come for another interview.

This time when he arrived and sat down opposite them, they did not beat around the bush, they pointed to his head covering and said, "That Kippa" (nickname for Yarmulka)….

But before they could continue he interrupted them, "My friends, this kippa is part of the package. If you want me, you want it, and if you don't want it, you don't want me. This is the first time we are talking about this and the last. If you hire me then in my office, I will be the boss and you cannot tell me what to do, but outside of my office, in your community, you are the boss."

They looked at him blankly and again said. "We'll think it over." And, sure enough, a week later they called him, and he got the job! Now the story begins…

About a year later, one of the most influential members of the community came to him complaining of persistent stomach pain. It was rumored that this Chassid had over 100 million dollars in the bank, and he was in charge of all the finances of the community, assuring that everyone got paid fairly and on time etc.

After a thorough examination, Dr. Zelenko gave him some pain pills to hold him over and advised that he have a colonoscopy (a harsh intestinal examination) as soon as possible.

A few weeks the same Chassid returned and asked for more pain pills. "Did you have the colonoscopy?" Dr. Zelenko asked. "Maybe later" was the reply.

"Dr. Zelenko removed his glasses, stood, pointed at the door and said firmly, "Get out of my office …. NOW!"

"Excuse me!" The Chassid said indignantly. "No one talks to me like that here! I can have you fired in a second, do you understand?! You're only here to serve us, so watch what you say!"

Dr. Zelenko wasn't affected. "In my office I am the boss! If you don't like it then you can fire me! But as long as I'm here, you either do what I say or get out of this room. Either you leave here now, or you can fire me!"

"Okay! We'll see who leaves!" said the Chassid as he angrily exited and slammed the door behind him.

A month later the Chassid returned with a large present for Dr. Zelenko; a huge, pure silver, wine Cup of Elijah for his Passover table and a story.

"I had the colonoscopy test like you said and they found a tumor. A malignant tumor! They said it was the last minute, that there still was hope and that another week it probably would have been too late.

They sent me to the operating room immediately and, well, thank G-d, they said that the operation was successful and they removed

it completely! You were right. If you hadn't yelled at me, I would have pushed it off and who knows…so you saved my life!"

"Now I want to tell you something" The Chassid sat down and continued. "Do you know why it took six weeks for them to call you, back then when you were hired? Well, I'll tell you.

"Because when you took off your hat in that first interview and they saw that kippa of yours they thought you were crazy. I mean, you know what some people here think about Chabad. Well, they figured you would hide your being Chabad and they would ignore it too. But not you! You threw it in everyone's face.

"Anyway, no one wanted to hire you, but for the next five weeks they just couldn't find anyone that had your credentials. And, not only that but before you took off your hat they really liked you. So they came to me for advice what to do.

"So I thought about it for a few minutes and told them like this. I told them to call you again and ask you if you're willing to change that Kippa. And that if you say 'yes', that you're willing to take it off they should NOT hire you because it's a sign that you don't believe in your principles. But if you refuse to remove it then it means you'll be honest with us and won't hide anything and they should hire you.

"So it ends up that because of your stubbornness we hired you and because of your stubbornness you saved my life! Another doctor would have worried about his job and let me do what I wanted.

"So it ends up that …. Well…. I saved myself!!! I gave them the advice to take someone as stubborn as you."

Do you love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.

The Torah Any Times Newsletter

Stay Thirsty - Mr. Harry Rothenberg



As the father of twin boys who are inseparable, it's difficult for me to read this week's Parsha. It begins with twin boys, Yaakov and Eisav. When they were young, we'd imagine that they too are inseparable, but as they get older, their paths don't just diverge; their worlds collide. In a feud that spans the centuries to this day, Eisav's descendants have made countless attempts to wipe out the Jewish people.

The sibling rivalry reaches a fever pitch, a crescendo, at the end of the Parsha when Rivkah, their mother, overhears her husband, Yitzchak, telling Eisav to go out and hunt for some animals and to prepare the tasty dish that he likes so that "his soul can bless Eisav." Rivkah realizes that her husband is about to bless the wrong son, so she quickly summons Yaakov and tells him that he will need to impersonate his twin brother. She herself then prepares a delectable dish that she knows her husband likes and gives it to Yaakov to bring to him. Yaakov arrives, and Yitzchak, who is blind, is uncertain who stands before him. Yaakov convinces him that he is his brother Eisav, and then gives his father the tasty food to eat.

But then, as the Torah tells us, Yaakov does something extra, beyond his father's request. He gives Yitzchak some wine, and Yitzchak drinks it. And then Yitzchak gives Yaakov a beautiful, expansive blessing. Eisav immediately appears, and at that moment, Eisav and Yitzchak realize the apparent subterfuge Yaakov has committed. Eisav begs his father to give him a compensatory blessing, and eventually Yitzchak agrees.



Eisav had also arrived with food for his father in hand. However, if you look carefully at the text, you will notice a discrepancy between what Yaakov brought to his father and what Eisav did. Yaakov brought Yitzchak food and wine, whereas Eisav only brought food, but no wine. Why the difference?

One commentator observes that the subtle difference means everything. To Yitzchak, wine was important. He knew that wine is what we use to greet the Sabbath with Kiddush and to bid fond farewell to it with Havdalah. Wine is used for Birkat Hamazon, Grace after Meals, in addition to being the libation which was poured on the Mizbeach when the Beit Hamikdash stood. Wine when drunk properly, in moderation, can assist a person to come in touch with their deepest essence, the part that cleaves to G-d. It brings us into contact with our inner spirituality. Yaakov therefore brought wine, because he knew that if his father would drink it, it would expand his father's soul and lead him to provide a generous blessing.

Eisav had a totally different vision of wine. Wine to Eisav was something that left you waking up not knowing where you are, where you've been or what you did. Wine drunk to excess, Eisav-style, brings someone down to the lowest level. Therefore, that wasn't something Eisav was going to bring to his father when he was attempting to receive a blessing from him.

It's the same item and yet worlds apart in perspective. Used properly, wine can bring us to the highest of spiritual levels; used improperly, to the lowest depths.

Many years ago when I was single, I was invited to the home of a well-known rabbi for a Shabbos meal. Seated at one end of the long

table was the rabbi and on the other end, his wife. At the end of the meal, the rabbi lifted a glass of wine and proposed a toast to his wife. "Our mission here in this world is to take the physical and raise it to the level of the spiritual. And clearly, my wife has done that tonight with the meal that she has cooked." I remember thinking to myself, "Wow, what a beautiful compliment, and what great words to live by. What a mission statement." Stay thirsty, my friends.

Mind Hunter -Rabbi Avi Shafran

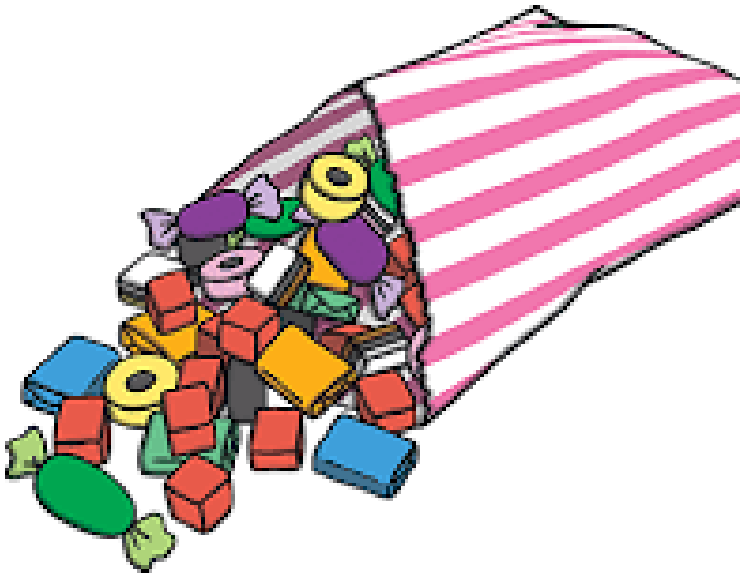
Yaakov's middah is emes, truth, and so Rashi parses Yaakov's misleading words to Yitzchak to make them true at least on some level. For instance, allowing his father to believe it is Esav to whom he is speaking, Yaakov says "I am Esav your firstborn." Rashi interjects a presumed pause in the sentence, rendering it "I am [the one bringing you food]; Esav is your firstborn" (Braishis, 27:19).

Yet one misleading phrase still stands out: "Come eat of my hunted [food]" (ibid), says Yaakov, offering his father the goat meat he could mistake for game. But it was neither Yaakov's food – his mother Rivka had prepared it – nor had it been "hunted."

What occurs is that "hunting" is a word we've seen earlier, as the Torah's description of Nimrod, "a powerful hunter" (ibid 10:9). And there, Rashi explains that what Nimrod "hunted" and captured were people's minds. He used words and subterfuge to amass followers.

Perhaps here, too, Yaakov was subtly, slyly "confessing" to his father that he was engaged in a subterfuge, presenting himself as someone he wasn't, offering his "hunting" to Yitzchak, his ability to navigate a tricky world. Thereby demonstrating that he, Yaakov, too, was capable of dealing with that challenging world no less than his brother, something that, as the Malbim and others explain, Yitzchak had assumed was not true.

Candy for a Child



Rabbi Elazar M. Shach, O"BM, was known for carrying candies in his pocket to be handed out to children who either came to him for a blessing or took an oral test from him. The sweet candy was to impress upon the children the sweetness of Torah.

Once, when another Rav was with Rav Shach, the Rosh Yeshivah called over his grandson and offered him a candy from a large bag of candies.

"The Rav responded, "The Rebbe is making him into an Eisav."

"You do not understand," Rav Shach explained. "Eisav acted like a child. A young child lives in the world of imagination, something which he is allowed to do - because of his tender age.

"The criticism against Eisav is that he had no business living in the world of imagination, the world of a child. Eisav must live in the real world, the world of reality and truth.

"A mature person can no longer live a life filled with imagination. He must now use common sense and confront reality in its true nature, something Eisav refused to do. One who follows in this path, who takes the Eisav approach to life, cannot accept upon himself the concept of Yiras Shomayim, Fear of Heaven. He is like a fool, gravitating to every foolish image which he or others conjure." (Heard from Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum)

Chizuk – Inspiration



As a young Rav in Russia, **Reb Moshe Feinstein ZT'L** suffered terribly under the wicked Communist regime. In addition to continued harassment and persecution, the Communists actually tried to kill him several times.

Incredibly, Reb Moshe once commented that he was able to forgive the Communists for everything that they had done to him, except for one thing: Once during an escape, Reb Moshe was forced to tell a lie to save his life. "For that, I will never forgive them," said Reb Moshe.

This is an amazing statement. The situation under the Communists was one of perpetual Pikuach Nefesh. The Chofetz Chaim ruled that one is allowed to be Mechalel Shabbos in order to escape the Communists.

Reb Moshe was certainly justified in deviating from the truth, even obligated to do so. But nevertheless, he never forgave those who caused him to lie. A shining example of the Possuk in Tehillim 119:163 "Sheker Sunaisi V'Ahsoaivah"- I have hated falsehood and abhorred it. (**Life's Ladder - Reaching New Heights in Avodas Hashem – by Rabbi Zev Smith**)

A Shabbos Vort- Rabbi Yisrael Bronstein

וַיִּתְרֹצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ "***The children struggled inside her***" (25:22)



Rashi explains that when rivkah passed by the beis midrash of Shem and Ever, Yaakov would attempt to leave his mother's womb. When she passed a house of idol worship, Esav would attempt to leave.

R' Yechezkel of Kuzemir posed the following question to his students: It is understandable why Yaakov was unable to leave Rivkah's womb when she passed by the beis midrash of Shem and Ever. Since Esav was the intended firstborn, he was in a position that blocked Yaakov's exit. But why was Esav unable to leave the womb when Rivkah passed by a house of idol worship? Who was blocking his exit?

From here we can see just how wicked Esav really was, answered the tzaddik. For he was willing to delay his birth and forgo his idol worship as long as it would prevent Yaakov from entering the beis midrash!



וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִמּוֹ עָלַי קִלְלָתְךָ בְּנִי "***His mother said to him, 'My son, let your curse be upon me***"' (27:13)

Why, asked the **Vilna Gaon**, would Rivkah invite a curse upon herself? Why did she not simply say, "***He will not curse you, my son***"?

Rivkah, answered the Gaon, was hinting to Yaakov that he would face three main forms of hardship in his life. These hardships are alluded to in the acronym of the word "עָלַי": Esav, Lavan, and Yosef!



אוצר פלאות התורה - R' Shmuly Noe

To Love and Draw Close To A Son, Even Though He Is Off The Yiddishe Derech

In the Sefer Divrei Meir the holy **Rabbi Meir of Premishlaan ZY'A** writes that the holy **Rabbi Chaim of Tshernovitz** author of sefer Be'er mayim Chayim and the holy sefer Siduro shel Shabbos, had a son that had moved away from the straight Derech of Yiddishkeit.

Despite this, his father, the holy rabbi supported him with food and clothes and supplied him with all his needs with great affection.

Early each morning when the holy Rabbi rose to carry out his service to Hashem, he would begin his Teffilos to the master of the Universe with these words, "Master of the universe look down at what I am doing with my son, that even though he is not following the straight path, I am doing for him a large measure of good and kindness. Yet I am but flesh and blood, whereas You Hashem, our merciful Father gives such an abundance of good and kindness should you not grant His children, the Bnei Yisroel the same kindnesses - even though they (chas V'sholom) do not carry out your will. Notwithstanding this, may You be merciful as a father would to his child. How much more so, should You therefore shower your benefits upon us to supply all our requirements."

Regarding the above, in Sefer Divrei Meir explaining the Pasuk in Toldos, VaYehav Yitzchok es Eisov, which at first glance is inexplicable – how can such a holy man like Yitzchok love a Rosho like Eisov ? as the posuk says "he entrapped him with his mouth" – he did this by portraying himself as being so particular about Mitzvos, that too is incredible, how could he have hoodwinked and pulled the wool over the eyes of Yitzchok ?

We can explain all this with the Gemorro in Shabbos (89a) that when Moshiach comes Hashem will tell Avraham "your children are sinning" and Avraham Avinu will keep silent, then Hashem will tell Yitzchok

the same and he will reply " half is my fault and half is your fault". To all appearance Yitchok is making superhuman efforts on behalf of Klall Yisroel, that hashem should be merciful to them. But using the argument of Rabbi Chaim of Tshernovitz (about the treatment of his son) we have a good answer, that only Yitzchok was in a position to ask Hashem for this mercy because he too had behaved well to his son Eisov even though he was off the Derech.

And that is the meaning of "He entrapped him with his mouth" which meant that he loved Eisov even though he was a Rosho he would have something captured in his mouth to be used as an answer to Hashem when the latter accuses Klall Yisroel "Your children are sinning", ie you owe me to be merciful to them because I was merciful to my son Eisov even though he was a Rosho.

From this we can learn a deep lesson of Mussar. That should a person have the misfortune to have a wayward son, he should not abuse him and he should not drive him away from his house. On the contrary he should encourage him and feed him and supply all his needs including clothes and he should do so with great love (ie not grudgingly). Eventually the child will return to the path of good and the parent will live to witness Nachas and Kedusha from his child, as the Gemorro says in Sotah (47a) .. a person should always push away with his left and draw near with his right.

Avraham Aveinu went to Visit Yishmoel After He had driven him From His House

An amazing story told in Pirkei D'rebbe Elazaar (its similar to Pirkei Avos) which explains the events that occurred after A"A drove Yishmoel from his house but how Avraham Avinu never forgot his son and even went to visit him. These are the words of Rabbi Elazaar. Yishmoel was 37 years of age when he left Avraham Avinu's house. Yishmoel then took a wife from the people of Arvos Moav, a woman by the name of Iysah.

After three years A"A went to visit his son Yishmoel, but only after he promised Soroh that on arrival (at Yishmoel) he would not dismount from the camel. He arrived and spoke to Iysah asking where Yishmoel was and was told he was not there but had gone the desert to harvest dates. A"A asked her for a little water and a little bread and explained that he was famished and hungry from the journey. She replied that there was no water and no bread. So A"A told her to tell Yishmoel when he returned that an old man had come to visit to see you and he said that the lintel of your house was not a good one (this was a hint that the wife was not a good person). When Yishmoel returned she told him the story and gave him the old man's message. Yishmoel (understanding the meaning) promptly divorced her and sent her away. He sent a message to his mother to get him a wife who sent him a new wife by the name of Ptumah.

After another three years A"A made another visit to Yishmoel and arrived at Yishmoels' house. There he met Ptumah. He asked after Yishmoel and was told he had gone to the desert to look after the camels. Again he asked for water and bread. Ptumah brought out the water and the bread and gave them to A"A. A"A stood up and davened for his son Yishmoel. His house was immediately filled with an abundance of good things and all sorts of Brochos. When Yishmoel returned, his wife told him all that had occurred and Yishmoel understood that until now the Rachamim of his father had been with him, as it says in Tehillim K'rachem Av al Bonim.

It is amazing that that A"A had never forgotten his son Yishmoel and even after he had sent him away (by command of G-d) he went to visit him on two occasions and gave him messages to divorce his wife , which Yishmoel did. This a powerful musaar - see what the end result was – Yishmoel returned to the Derech of his father and did Tshuvah (as rashi tells us in Parshas Chiye Soroh) (Br' 25:9) "and Yitzchok and Yishmoel (A"A's sons) buried him -from which we learn that Yishmoel did T'shuvah.

Rabbi Eli Mansour – *A Good name Remains Forever!*

טוֹב שֵׁם מִשֶּׁמֶן טוֹב וְיוֹם הַמָּוֶת מִיּוֹם הִוָּלְדוֹ (קהלת פרק ז פסוק א)

Shlomo Hamelech says a good name is better than good oil. I always wondered that besides the fact that *shem* and *shemen* sound similar, what's the analogy, what's the comparison? You could have said, a good name is better than a good orange, or a good name is better than a nice slice of pizza.



What is the connection of a good name to good oil? I would like to explain it in a novel way.



Has anyone seen an oil tanker spill its load and cause a huge oil slick on the ground? If you know anything about cleaning it up, the fastest and best way is to take dirt, (soil/sand) and cover over the oil spill. The dirt is able to absorb the oil. And if you put enough dirt on, it will get rid of the oil.

You can have oil and get rid of it with 6 Ft of dirt. But a good name – no matter how much dirt you chuck on him when he passes away, you can never cover up a good name! **טוֹב שֵׁם מִשֶּׁמֶן טוֹב** – ***A good name remains forever!***

Sparks of Shabbos



The gemara tells us that when Hashem gave us the mitzva of Shabbos, He instructed Moshe Rabeinu to tell us about it, because, when a person gives a gift, he should inform the recipient about it. Rashi explains that the reason for this is so that he isn't embarrassed and refuse to accept it. Telling him, demonstrates the importance of the gift.

If Hashem told us about Shabbos, it is incumbent upon us to realize how lucky we are to have been chosen as the recipients, and that Shabbos is a lot more than a well deserved rest at the end of a long week, but a tremendous gift and opportunity for us to come closer to the One who gave it to us!

Rabbi Gavriel Friedman



There was a couple who unfortunately couldn't have children. After many years of davening to The Riboino Shel Olam, their dream of having children was just not happenning.

Chazal say (Sanhedrin 19b) that **שכל המגדל יתום בתוך ביתו מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו ילדו** – That anyone who raises a child, it is as if you gave birth to them. So they decided that they are going to adopt a child. After it went well, they decided to adopt another baby. After a few more years, they adopted a third baby.

One day The man got a phone call from the organisation that had dealt with all the adoption processes, and they said, "We are really sorry, and we have never requested this before, but we could really do with your help. Would it be possible for you to take on another child, as this child is a biological sibling of one of the other children?"

Although difficult, he thought about it and said, "ok, we will do it." But when he discussed it in more detail with his wife, she nervously remarked, "I'm not sure that we will have enough room for this extra child."

Her husband said, "what do you mean, we have recently had an extension, we have extra bedrooms, sure we will have room. It really won't be a problem."

She says, "No, you don't understand, I just now came back from the doctor... I'm expecting!

He is so happy. He is over the moon, and he says, " That's amzing, ok, so we'll make room."

She says...."TRIPLETS!"

"Really, ok you may be right, we don't have room. But I dont know what wer'e going to do, but let's make it happen." So they had four adopted children, and triplets.

This couple just made the chasunah for the fourth biological child that they had during the ensuing years!

This all came about because of the Chesed that they did. The Riboino Shel Olam says,"Your'e not having children – I'm sorry, that's the *Emes*. Chesed – youv'e just changed the Emes!"

Impact

You never know what kind of an impact you will have on someone. It may even outlive you. **R' Dovid Winiarz z"l** wouldn't leave his office until he'd scheduled several pieces of Torah to be published online throughout the day. What a lesson to those who saw that!



A man in shul taught me something many years ago. When wrapping the arm Tefillin, we wind the straps seven times around the arm. He told me that one could use the verse, to ensure we've done it correctly.

פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת־יָדֶךָ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל־חַי רָצוֹן – "***You open your hand and satisfy all life with its desire***"

This Pasuk has seven words. Though one cannot enunciate them because it is forbidden to speak between putting on the arm Tefillen and the Head Tefillin, one can think them. Besides helping with the count, it's a great thought to reflect on as one focuses on his own arm, which is the source of action in the human body.

It is now over 35 years since I heard this. The man passed away nearly 15 years ago, yet his lips are still moving as I recall and share his piece of advice. Think about this when you speak and interact with others. Remember that what you say today may ingrain itself in their minds and souls and will become your living memory. It will help you choose to say things that are worth repeating forever.

Dvar Torah



There was once a chasunah in Yerushalayim and the chosson was asked to say a dvar torah by the chosson's tisch.

Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv זצ"ל realized that the chosson felt uncomfortable speaking in front of many people, so he quickly said, "These days, who comes to a chasunah to hear speeches? People come to a chasunah to eat and enjoy!"

After Rav Elyashiv said that, it was decided that the chosson shouldn't say a dvar torah, and he was very happy that he was able to enjoy the rest of his chasunah without being embarrassed.

Long-Time Guests From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

Reb Baruch-Mordechai of Warsaw had an open house to anyone who wished to enter. People came and went as they pleased, never asking permission, taking everything for granted. They really felt at home there.

And R. Baruch Mordechai did not care. That is how he wanted it!

Reb Shabsai Yofel of Slonim described it well: "When R. Baruch Mordechai takes a nap on a couch at home," he commented, "it is not as if it were his couch. Rather, it is because he happened to find it unoccupied first, before anyone else lay on it."

R. Baruch Mordechai himself came and went just like the others. He had no special place at the head of the table. He was served his

meals just like the rest. He did not want anyone to make of fuss over him.

Small wonder, that when a poor man came to this house and stayed for several weeks, he did not even recognize R. Baruch Mordechai as the master of the house. He thought he was just another guest! Once this poor man turned to R. Baruch Mordechai and asked innocently, "I see that you are a steady guest here. You probably know what is customary here better than I do. Tell me, do you think that they would mind if I stayed a few weeks longer?"

R' Baruch Mordechai shrugged his shoulders and reassured him, "No. I am sure you are welcome to stay on. I have been living here - eating and sleeping - for a long time and no one has ever said anything...."

Short Vort – Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

27:23 וְלֹא הִכִּירוֹ כִּי־הָיוּ יָדָיו כִּידֵי עֵשָׂו אָחִיו שְׂעִרֹת וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ

27:25 וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּשָׁה לִּי וְאֹכְלָה מִצֵּיד בְּנִי לְמַעַן תְּבָרֶכְךָ נַפְשִׁי

Why did Yitzchak give an undisclosed blessing to Yaakov in verse 23 and then give him another blessing the one that he came for - the blessing of the firstborn - in verse 25?

The Sforno answers that one who suspects his fellow, but his suspicion turns out to be unfounded, must appease him and must also give him a blessing. Therefore, when Yitzchak suspected that the son before him was not Esav, he asked him to draw close, and after acknowledging that "the hands are Esav's hands", he immediately gave Yaakov a blessing. This blessing was the one for the 'false accusation'.

Perhaps with this in mind we can answer another question. Why does the Torah not relate to us what the first blessing actually was, why does it simply say "and he blessed him"?

Since Yitzchak was actually correct in his initial suspicion that it was not Esav in front of him, therefore, strictly speaking, he did not actually owe Yaakov a blessing. For this reason, Hashem did not want to make mention in the Torah of the specifics of this blessing, since it was not really deserved, However, when it comes to the blessing of the firstborn, since Yaakov truly deserved this blessing, the Torah addresses it in great detail.

L' Maaseh

A former student of R' Shmuel Auerbach had left yeshiva and was no longer a Torah observant Jew. One day, R' Shmuel called him out of the blue and told him that he would like to come visit him. Embarrassed to let his rebbe know how far he had strayed, he acquiesced and made up a time a few days later.



At the appointed time, R' Shmuel showed up with his gabaim and other students with an entire festive meal and they sat and spoke while they ate. When it came time for bentching, R' Shmuel placed a cup of wine in front of this student and told him to lead bentching.

Knowing that as a mechalel Shabbos, he would render the wine prohibited, he declined the honour and told the Rosh Yeshiva to give it to someone else. R' Shmuel was insistent, and he didn't know what to do until he remembered learning that if one fully commits to do teshuva, he is considered a tzadik, and so in his heart of hearts, he regretted his ways and made a firm decision to return to shemiras Shabbos.

Those who knew R' Shmuel testified that he never bentched with a cup of wine during the week, and this was likely exactly what he

intended, and indeed this student went on to become a talmid chacham and marbitz Torah of note.

Thoughts and Sayings of Rav Chaim Visoker zt"l By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

Imagine an adult playing with children's toys. This is us, when we involve ourselves in the pursuit of gashmius – physical luxuires. Man, a reflection of Hashem's Divine Image, was meant for much greater things – the pursuit of the ruchnius.



This is just one of many of the profound ideas of Rav Chaim Visoker zatzal, the saintly Rosh Yeshiva of Beis HaTalmud in Bensonhurst.

Rav Chaim Visoker zt"l(1896-1985) was one of the Gedolei HaRoshei Yeshiva in America, yet very few have ever heard of him, much less his Torah thoughts.. He was among the closest students of **Rav Yeruchem Levovitz zt"l** and helped bring his remarkable mussar thoughts to the world.

Rav Visoker and his close friend, Rav Leib Malin (1906-1962), were those who took it upon themselves to save the Mir Yeshiva students. Later upon the arrival of the Mir students in the United States, he and Rav Leib Malin opened up the Beis HaTalmud Yeshiva, first in East New York and then in Bensonhurst.

Rav Chaim was born in Pieski, in Tsarist Russia (Poland) a province of Volkovysk in 1896 (Feb.3rd). Pieski was located 55 miles east of Bialystok.



At the time of Reb Chaim's birth, Piesk was a town of about 2400 residents, one third of them being Jewish. It had grown significantly, since 50 years earlier (1847) when there were 662 Jews. Piesk was located on the Ros River, a tributary of the Neiman River.

Many of the Mir Talmidim arrived in the United States on July 18th, 1946 in San Francisco, from Shanghai China among them Rav Chaim Vizoker and Rav Leib Malin.

They opened up Beis HaTalmud in 1948 with the notion of recreating the atmosphere that existed in pre-war Mir.

In January of 1962, his partner Rav Leib Malin passed away. Rav Chaim made his residence in Bensonhurst after the Yeshiva moved there. Rav Chaim continued leading the Yeshiva for 37 years, until his passing in 1985. His mussar shmuessim were nothing short of breathtaking in their depth. Among Rav Visoker's talmidim was **Rav Shimshon Pincus and Rav Chaim Fasman**.

His thoughts and sayings were remarkably inspiring, and some are listed below:

- Immersing oneself in the pursuit of luxuries or gashmius is analogous to an adult playing with children's toys. (IC 26)
- Tefilah is an all-encompassing capacity for the entire world – it fills deficits and shortfalls. It is sad that people do not appreciate its value and capabilities. It truly stands b'romo shel olam (Brachos 6b) (IC 24)
- The concept of Tikkun HaLev is key, and each and every organ in a person's body requires effort and a tikkun. How does one do so? Listening and accepting Tochacha, and the study of

Mussar. When one adopts this perspective, Tefillah itself becomes a Mussar Sefer in and of itself, accomplishing major growth for the individual (IC39).

- Kabbalas Ol malchus shamayim doesn't just mean that one takes on what Hashem requires of us. It means that we must accept upon ourselves the yoke of Heaven that is a sense of achrayus for all – the sense of responsibility that hashem – the King has. His desires and goals for us and mankind must become ours. (IC 1)
- Fear of Hashem is an obligation incumbent upon everyone. However, this does not and cannot detract at all from one's faith in Hashem, from one's bitachon. They are two separate concepts that work hand in hand together (IC 55)
- Everyone needs chizuk, and we the essential chizuk in the fundamentals. The main area we should strengthen ourselves is in limud haTorah, which will ultimately strengthen the other fundamentals. (IC68).
- The source of all sin is that a person refuses to recognize the good that Hashem has done for us. Otherwise, it would be impossible to sin. (IC2).
- The Avos prepared and set forth a path for our divine service. They laid it out for us so that we could achieve a remarkable level of dveikus, of Divine closeness. All we have to do is follow it. (IC3)

One of his students, Rav Yisroel Dovid Ehrlich shlita, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Mishkan HaTalmud in Lakewood, NJ wrote a sefer of Rav Wisoker's mussar Shmuessim entitled, "Imros Chaim" in Tishrei of 5750 (1989). The 8 thoughts and sayings found above were culled from this work.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Unfolding Uniqueness

There are those who say that the development of the child/student is stunted because he is trained to follow a path just like everyone else rather than to develop his own individuality. One may even do this with his own children in that they want their children to be a certain way.

However, if we want a child/student to fulfil their maximum potential we need to let them develop with their capabilities and the way Hashem made them. We need to follow Shlomo Hamelech's advice, **חנך לנער על פי דרכו**, train the youth according to his way. This follows the expression, "***Kids are not meant to be molded, they are meant to be unfolded***."

Many gedolim are the outcome of such education. Indeed, Moshe davened that the leader that should be appointed is one who can tolerate each one **לפי דעתו**, according to his personality

Now, listen to these astounding words of **R' Shamshon Rafael Hirsch**: "***The sharp contrast between Yaakov and Esav was caused not only by their natural tendencies but also by mistakes in their upbringing. While they were little, no one paid attention to the differences in their natures; they were given the same upbringing and same education. The cardinal principle of education of חנך לנער דרכו על פי, train the youth according to his way, was overlooked. Each child should be guided in accordance with the path intended especially for him, the path that suits the qualities and tendencies latent in the depths of his personality, and thus he should be educated, both as a man and as a Jew.***

To attempt to educate a Yaakov and an Esav together in the same classroom, in the same routines and in the same manner, to raise both of them for a life of study and contemplation, will inevitably mean to ruin one of the two.

A Yaakov will draw from the well of wisdom with ever-increasing interest and desire, while an Esav will hardly be able to wait for the

day when he can throw away the old books and, together with them, a great life-mission, of which he was taught in a one-sided manner, totally unappealing to his nature. Had this been done and Esav educated differently, world history would look different!

Esav was an expert hunter; he knew the art of self-control: set a trap and then wait patiently for the opportune moment. His upbringing, which was so contrary to his nature, only repressed his true self and forced him to develop patience, the ability to wait for the opportune moment. These were skills that made him an איש שדה , a man of the field. Precisely because he had been forced to remain glued to the school bench, he now rejected everything and was entirely a man of the field."

R' Yitzchak Hutner wouldn't speak to two boys at the same time because what he wants to say to one, he doesn't want to say to the other. He said that his job is to connect to each individual and see how each one works. A person can't speak to two worlds at the same time. No person is like another. This idea is hinted at by the fact that initially only one man was created.



A family that embodied the **חנך לנער דרכו על פי** approach had each of their children choose a different path in the Torah world. One became a Chabad chassid while another remained Litvish. Another became a Stolliner Chassid and is a Rosh Kollel of a Stolliner Kollel while a different one received semicha from **R' Pam** and became a principal of a Yeshiva.



Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zaztal with Yb"l Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlita

R' Yaakov Kamenetzky was once asked by his grandson, R' Yitzchak Shurin, what he should keep in mind when starting a Yeshiva. He answered, "***Don't make Sodom beds***."

R' Yaakov explained a Sodom bed refers to the cruel practice of demanding that everyone be of uniform size and cutting off legs or stretching the individual who didn't conform to the one accepted height.

Just as we can't expect everyone to be a lawyer because not everybody is cut out for it, so too, we can't expect everyone to follow the same path in spirituality. There is a saying, "***You were born an original. Don't die as a copy***."

The pasuk Shemos 10:2. states **ולמען תספר באזני בנך**, so that you may relate in the ears of your son. The word **בנך** is singular indicating that we need to speak to each child as an individual, the way they are. This is why it says **והגדת לבנך** in the singular.

This is analogous to a puzzle of many pieces. No two pieces are alike and go in the same place.

The Alter of Kelm never had more than 30 students in his Yeshiva as he would say he raises shepherds not sheep. The Avos became who they were because they each expressed a different trait, Avraham with Chessed, Yitzchak with Din and Yaakov with Emes.

The root of this is because each of us is a letter in the Sefer Torah as there are 600,000 letters and 600,000 root Neshamos. Just as

each letter is placed differently in the Torah so too is each person with his qualities, talents and capabilities. We, therefore, each have that which is unique to us and need to be educated accordingly.

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez **לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע״ה בן ברוך הלוי נ״י**

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק 25:19

Sarah Imeinu waited ninety years for a child of her own. At last her hopes came true. Yitzchok was born.

Now even at age 90, as long as her name was still **שרי** she did not have the zechus to bear a son like Yitzchok. As the pesukim teach us in parshas Lech Lecha (**יז:טז-טו**) it was only **after** Hashem changed her name to **שרה** that she received the bracha that she would have Yitzchok.

The Rabeinu Efrayim shows us a beautiful hint in the name **יִצְחָק** itself, that as long as Sarah was called **שרי** - Yitzchok remained 'hidden' from the world...

The Gematria of the **מלוי** - 'hidden letters' in the name of Yitzchok are 510, **י-וד צ-די ח-ת ק-וף** which is the same Gematria as **שרי!**



וְהִנֵּה תוֹמִם בְּבִטְנָהּ - *and behold, there were twins in her stomach.(25:24)*

Now usually, the word for 'twins' is spelled **תְּאוֹמִים**. Why is it written in our pasuk as **תוֹמִם** – missing the **א** and the **י**?

The Megale Amukos explains that there is a deeper meaning being hinted to here:

The 22 letters of the Alaph-Beis are made up of **11** letters representing Rachamim, and **11** letters representing Din. The good cancel out the bad.

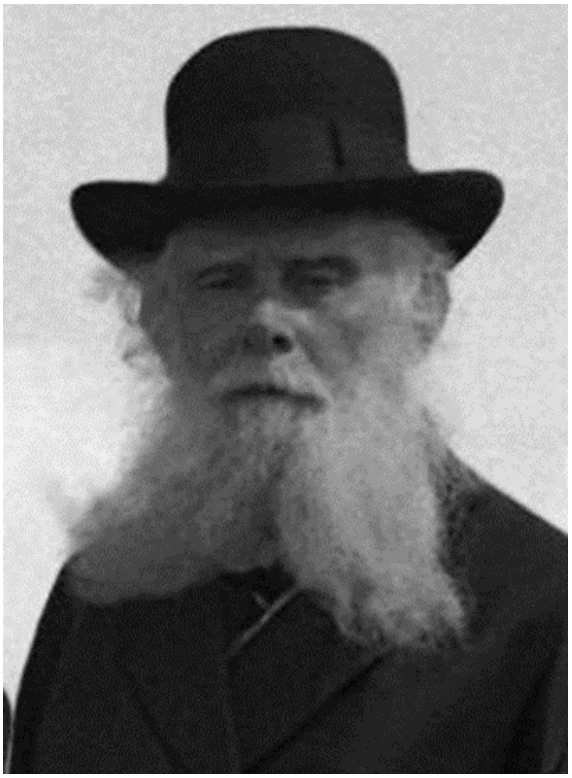
Back in parshas Beraishis, when Kayin Killed Hevel, the **11** letters of rachamim lost their power of bringing kindness and mercy into the world. This is alluded to in Hashem's words to Kayin after he killed his brother: וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־קַיִן אַי הֶבֶל אָחִיךָ (4:9) – '***And Hashem said to Kayin, "Where is Hevel your brother?***' The gematria of **אַי** is **11**, hinting to the **11** letters of the Aleph-Beis that lost the power of rachamim!

And who restored the rachamim to the missing letters? It was Yaakov Avinu. Later on in the parsha, Yaakov steps forward and takes the **10** brachos away from Eisav. **1** bracha remained for Eisav, which Yitzchok gave him. Yaakov only succeeded in 'taking back' ten out of the eleven letters. This is alluded to in the words of the Pasuk when Yaakov left Yitzchok after taking the 10 brachos: **וַיְהִי אַךְ יָצֹא יָצוֹא יַעֲקֹב מֵאֵת פְּנֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו** (27:30) . **אַךְ** is the gematria of **21**, hinting to the **21** out of the **22** letters in the Aleph-Beis in total, after Yaakov restored the **10** missing letters through the **10** brachos he received…

It was through the restoration of these 10 letters that we merited Kabalas HaTorah. The 'Aseres Hadibros' begin with the letter **א** and end with the letter **ך** : **א-נכי.... לרע-ך** once again hinting to the **21** letters!!

And all this is incredibly hinted to in the word for '**twins**' in our Pasuk that we began with, which is missing the **א** and the **י** – the missing 11 letters which were missing due to Kayin, that Yaakov (10) and Eisav (1) would later repossess!!

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע״ה בן ברוך הלוי נ״י



הַקֹּל֙ קוֹל יַעֲקֹ֔ב וְהַיָּדַ֖יִם יְדֵ֣י עֵשָׂ֑ו "***The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esav***." 27:22

The Medrash tells us that in the future of Klal Yisrael, whenever the קוֹל will be that of Yaakov, the voice of Torah will be strong – then the hands of Esav, the power of the Goyim, will be weak....

ר׳ יהושע מהורודנה asks a simple question on the words of this famous Chazal. In our pasuk we see the exact opposite from the Medrash! We clearly see that while the voice **was** indeed Yaakov's – the hands were **still** the hands of Esav!

How did the Medrash know to make such a drasha, which seems to contradict the pasuk itself?

He answers, that the idea came from Yitzchok's reaction to this surprise before him...

He heard the beutiful voice – the קוֹל of Yaakov, and bentched him, even though his hands were 'the hands of Esav!'

We learn from Yitzchok's actions, that when there is a קוֹל of Yaakov - 'the hands of Esav will be ***hidden***...'

If you look at the ***hidden*** letters in Esav : **ע-ין ש-ין ו-יו** – they are the same gematria as קוֹל (136)!



Parsha Pages - Reasons for the Custom that the Chasan and Kallah Fast on the Day of the Chuppah

1. On the day of one's Chuppah one's sins are forgiven; it is like a personal Yom Kippur. Exegesis from the verse (Bereshis 28:9) "and Eisav took Machalah (for a wife)." Since the day of the Chuppah is like one's day of judgement, so one needs to fast to be forgiven (**מחל**).

2. On this day, one is advancing to a higher place. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 14a) states that one does not advance to a higher place unless one has be forgiven from one's sins.

3. One needs to avoid becoming drunk at the time of Kiddushin. If one becomes drunk one would not have the required knowledge of one's action which might disrupt the legal actions taking place.

4. One needs to avoid situations that might lead to quarrels at the Chuppah. The Gemara (Shabbos 130a) states that there is no Kesuvah that does not lead to quarrels that any Mitzvah that that one does not fulfil with joy, can lead to bad tidings. Thus, one must fast to nullify the negative "energy."

5. The customs at the Chuppah are derived from Matan Torah. At Matan Torah the Jews fasted in preparation for their marriage with HaShem, so too the Chasan and Kallah also fast prior to the Chuppah.

6. The fasting is in order to be in complete Simchah. Fasting for the sake of the Churban is only for special individuals at special times.

7. Mitzvos are beloved upon them. Rokeach tells us the due to the strong positive feelings and desire to perform Mitzvos, the early Chassidum would fast prior to doing a mitzvah (like Lulav) so they wanted to first perform the Mitzvos prior to eating.

עֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקֹלִי "Because Avrohom listened to My voice" 26:5

The Baal Haturim points out that the word **עקב** which has a numeric value of 172, as the years that Avrohom listened to Hashem's voice.

Avrohom lived 175 years. For the first 3 years he did not yet listen to G-d's voice (recognized his Creator at the age of three per Nedarim 32a) but did so for the next 172 years!



Torah Temimah וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים 25:27

מלמד שנולד יעקב אבינו מהול: [אָבוֹת דְּרַבִּי נָתָן פ״ב]

Great is the mitzvah of Milah, that with all the Mitzvos that Avrohom did in his life, he was not called **תמים** until he was circumcised. Thus, when at birth, Yaacov is called **תם**, this indicates that he was born already circumcised.

Torah Temimah - Upon Marriage, Sins Are Forgiven

וַיֵּלֶךְ עֵשָׂו אֶל־יִשְׁמָעֵאל וַיִּקַּח אֶת־מָחֲלַת בַּת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אֲחוֹת נְבָיוֹת עַל־נָשָׁיו לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה 28:9

וכי מחלת שמה והלא בשמת שמה, אלא מלמד שנמחלו לו כל עונותיו, מכאן לחתן שמוחלין לו עונותיו - ירושלמי בכורים פ״ג ה״ג .ויקח את מחלת

How does the Gemara learn this (forgiving of sins of one that is getting married) from this verse and from this woman? Perhaps, Eisav saw how Yitzchak told Yaacov not to take a spouse from the Canaanites, so out of respect to his father, Eisav went to Yishmael

(a member of the family) and took a wife. And HaShem does not withhold reward from a deserving person.

Therefore, the verse alludes (by changing the name of the spouse as if a new person) to signify that Eisav received his reward for honouring his father, by having his sins forgiven. Additionally, we can understand that the time of the chasuna is appropriate for seeking forgiveness and thus, the bride and groom should fast to further enable the teshuvah process.

The Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אָבִיו אָנֹכִי עֵשָׂו בְּכֹרֶךָ עָשִׂיתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ ***"I am Esov, your firstborn. I have done what you told me to do"*** (27:19)



The Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh asks the obvious question: how could Yaakov [whose midda is emes – truth] lie outright like this to his father?

The Ohr HaChaim says that since Yaakov purchased and acquired the birthright from Esov, he was in effect Esov with regard to this birthright. So when he declared, "I am Esov your firstborn," he was telling the truth, being that he was in effect now the firstborn in lieu of Esov.

Then, when Yaakov said, "I have done as you asked me to do," he was also telling the truth. Explains the Ohr HaChaim, since Yitzchak asked Esov to hunt game was only because he thought Esov was the rightful firstborn, owner of the birthright. Now that Yaakov was the legal and rightful owner of the birthright and considered the firstborn, it was he who had been commanded to carry out the instructions to hunt game.

Since Yaakov now owned the birthright, it was as if this command had been issued by Yitzchak to him to perform. Thus, Yaakov answered Yitzchak truthfully when he said, "I have done what you told me to do."

Tosefes Beracha

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק 25:19

This Parsha is called Toldos and not Yitzchak (contrary to the same language in Parshas Noach). The main part of this Parsha is the lives of Yaacov and Eisav, and not the life of Yitzchak. Therefore, the name of the Parsha reflects this concept in short with the word Toldos.

The word Toldos is written one with Vav (and one Vav missing). This indicates that one of the children (Yaacov) is proper and the other is lacking (Eisav). Thus, Rashi mentions Yaacov first and then, Eisav.

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע"ה בן ברוך הלוי נ"י

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ 'And Yitzchok prayed to Hashem opposite his wife' 25:21

Yitzchok and Rivkah were still childless after close to twenty years of marriage, when they travelled together to Har HaMoriah to daven for children. (Sefer Hayashar)

What is the Torah hinting to us here by saying **לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ – *opposite his wife*?**

The Ben Ish Chai explains: According to the gemara in mesechta Brachos (34b), great tzadikim had a tradition that when they davened, and their tefilah was **שגור** -fluent- coming out clearly the first time; it meant that it would definately be accepted by Hashem.

Our pasuk hints to us that the tefilos of Yitzchok **were** fluent and orderly as ... Yitzchok beseeched Hashem '**Opposite/Before**' Rivka.

The letters in the Aleph Beis which stand opposite his wife's name, **רבקה** spell the word **שגור**, (**ר** comes before **ש**: **ב** comes before **ג** : **ק** comes before **ר** and **ה** comes before **ו**) and that is why the tefilos were answered!

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע"ה בן ברוך הלוי נ"י

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ 'And Yitzchok prayed to Hashem opposite his wife' 25:21



Yitzchok Avinu davened to Hashem with perfect kavanah and deep concentration. He davened the 'Quintissential Tefilah', and of course was answered.

The Mishnah in the beginning of the fith perek in Brachos, tells of the pious tzadikim who would come an hour early to davening, to prepare to stand before Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Great tzadikim would sit and daven that they merit to daven a complete Shemonah Esrai with proper *kavanah*. A 'pre-davening' that their minds not drift during tefilah. This is what Yitzchok was davening for here in the pasuk – the perfect tefilah.

The **מגלה עמוקות** writes that the gematria of **יצחק** (208) and **רבקה** (307) together, is the same gematria as **תפלה**.(515)

Yitzchok davened **לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ – *opposite his wife***. This hints to the famous words (Tehilim 51:17)... **אֲדֹנָי שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי** which we say before each Shemonah Esrei, asking Hashem to open our lips and allow us to daven properly, with the correct concentration. Having

kavanah in tefilah is not something to take for granted. It is not something that we can accomplish on our own.

Yitzchok Avinu teaches us, that for concentration in davening - we must **also** daven!



Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי
נשמת יהושע ע״ה בן ברוך הלוי נ״י

'בְּטֶרֶם תָּבוֹא וָאֲבָרֶכֶּנּוּ גַּם־בָּרוּךְ יִהְיֶה' while you had not yet come, and I blessed him? He, too, shall be blessed.'

The Zohar (99:100) tells us in parshas Emor that hidden in the brachos that Yitzchok gave to Yaakov, were the secrets of the **ימי רצון** of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The **חמרא טבא** show us hints to this Zohar here in our Pasuk: **בְּטֶרֶם תָּבוֹא וָאֲבָרֶכֶּנּוּ** is the same gematriah as **כתיבה חתימה.** There are also 240 hours in the Asres Yemei Teshuvah- this is hinted to in the word **וָאֲבָרֶכֶּנּוּ** which is gematriah **240!**

[JEP] Clothes Make the Man-And The Woman!

וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בִּגְדֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנָהּ הַגָּדֹל חֲמֻדֹת הָאֲשֶׁר אִתָּהּ בַּבָּיִת וַתַּלְבֵּשׁ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב בְּנָהּ הַקָּטָן *"Rivka took the garments of Esav, her elder son, [the garments] that were precious [to him] that she had in her house, and put them on Yaakov, her younger son." (Bereishis 27:15)*

The traveller was weary and hoped to get a hot meal from a kind-hearted person in the town. He noticed a beautiful mansion on the edge of town and was hopeful that he would get a meal there.

He knocked on the door which was opened by the owner. When the homeowner saw the stranger in his tattered clothes and rags he said, "Sorry but we don't serve beggars here."

The traveller knocked on the door of another house where he was welcomed and served a hot meal.

A few years later, Beryl, a wealthy and respected man came to town. All the townspeople wanted the honour of hosting him for a meal. They all begged Beryl to be their guest. The rich man who lived in the beautiful mansion at the edge of town begged him incessantly until he agreed to come to his home. The rich man was so happy. He was prepared to serve a sumptuous meal with many courses.

During the feast, Beryl acted very strangely. During each course, instead of eating he put the food onto his clothes. Overcome by curiosity, the rich man finally asked Beryl why he was doing that. Beryl's response taught the rich man a very important lesson.

Beryl said that he had assumed the invitation to dinner was just for Beryl's clothes and not for Beryl himself. After all, when Beryl visited this man a few years ago, wearing tattered clothing, he was not invited into the house. Now, that he was wearing fancy clothing he was invited. He was the same person and the only difference was the type of clothes that he was wearing, Thus, he said that he assumed the dinner invitation was just for his clothes.

Scientific studies show that the clothes we wear largely affect how we think and act. They affect our behaviour, attitudes, personality, mood, confidence, and even the way we interact with others.

In one study, the participants were given white coats to wear. Some participants were told that they were wearing painters' smocks while others were told that they were wearing doctors' coats. Research published in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, showed that those who were told that they were wearing a doctor's white coat had a higher level of concentration than those who were told that they were wearing painter's smocks.

Researchers also found that if we dress for a particular role, we will start to live it. In a study reported by the Journal of Experimental

Psychology, subjects were required to wear formal and informal clothing in negotiation meetings. Those who wore business suits performed much better, as they asserted dominance over the person with whom they were negotiating.

Of course, the Torah knew this fact thousands of years before the scientific studies. Our forefather Yitzchak wanted to bless his firstborn son before he died. He sent his first-born son, Esav, to hunt an animal, prepare a meal for him and then come to receive the bracha. Unbeknownst to Yitzchak, Yaakov rightfully deserved the bracha because he had previously purchased the birthright from Esav.

The Ohr HaChaim (Bereishis 27:8) says that Rivka knew prophetically that Yaakov was the one who deserved the bracha. She prepared a meal for Yitzchak and told Yaakov to bring it and then receive the bracha for himself. She placed the skins of young goats on Yaakov's hands and the smooth part of his neck in order that he should appear hairy like Esav.

The commentaries explain why Yaakov was permitted and required to do this seeming subterfuge of pretending to be Esav to receive the bracha from Yitzchak.



Rivka then gave Yaakov Esav's "precious garments" to wear. **The Da'as Zekanim** says that these garments had pictures of all the animals and birds in the world painted on it. The animals appeared to be alive. Whenever the wearer walked in the field, the animals were attracted to the pictures and approached the wearer, making them easy prey for the hunter.

The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 65:16) says that Esav had taken these garments from King Nimrod when he had killed him. What did Rivka hope to gain by

clothing Yaakov in these special garments of Esav? Yitzchak was blind and would not even see Yaakov's attire! It must be that Rivka wanted Yaakov to feel as if he was Esav, since one's clothing affects one's thoughts and actions. It seems from this Da'as Zekanim that had Yaakov not worn these special garments, his actions would not have been like those of Esav. Then, Yitzchak would have discovered that it was Yaakov. Yaakov's mission of getting the brachos would have failed.

Yaakov had a lot to gain by receiving the brachos. He also had a lot to lose if Yitzchak would have realized that he was not Esav. Yitzchak might have cursed him for attempting to misleading him. Yet, since Esav's actions were so different than Yaakov's, Yaakov's mission would have failed had Yaakov not worn Esav's special garments. Those garments made him feel like Esav and he was able to act accordingly.

We see how much our thoughts and actions are influenced by the way we dress. That is why it is so important to dress as a Jewish man and a Jewish woman should. [Based on a dvar Torah by **Rabbi Henach Leibowitz zt"l]**

I am left with a question. According to this, while wearing Esav's clothes, Yaakov's actions should have been just like Esav. Yet, when Yaakov came to Yitzchak (Bereishis 27:19), he spoke gently, "Please sit up". When Esav came, he spoke gruffly, "Let me father sit up".

Furthermore, when Yitzchak questioned how Yaakov was able to come to him so quickly, Yaakov said that Hashem had sent him good fortune (Bereishis 27:20). Esav would not have invoked Hashem's name.

Those two comments of Yaakov almost caused his mission to fail as Yitzchak knew that Esav did not normally speak this way (see Rashi 27:21 and Bechor Shor on pasuk 26).

Maybe you can say that although what you wear affects your thoughts and actions, perhaps it does not affect your speech. Possibly, since the way you speak is so much a part of who you are, that it is not fully affected by the way that you dress. Therefore, it is so important to actively choose a refined manner of speech.



Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

At the end of the parsha, Esav comes before Yitzchok and says, "I can't believe it – Yaakov came before me and took away everything." **וַיַּעְקְבֵנִי֙ זֶ֣ה פַּעֲמַ֔יִם אֶת־בְּכֹרָתִ֖י לָקָ֑ח וְהִנֵּ֥ה עַתָּ֛ה לָקַ֥ח בִּרְכָתִ֖י וַיֹּאמֶר֙ הֲלֹא־אָצַ֣לְתָּ לִּ֔י בְּרָכָֽה** (27:36) '***He has cheated me twice, did you not leave over a bracha for me?***' **וַיַּ֥עַן יִצְחָ֖ק וַיֹּ֣אמֶר לְעֵשָׂ֑ו הֵ֚ן גְּבִ֣יר שַׂמְתִּ֔יו לָ֖ךְ** '***What should I do? "Behold, I made him a master over you.***' (27:37) **וַיֹּ֣אמֶר עֵשָׂ֔ו אֶל־אָבִ֖יו הַבְרָכָ֣ה אַחַ֣ת הִוא־לְךָ֣ אָבִ֑י בָּרְכֵ֥נִי גַם־אָ֖נִי אָבִ֣י וַיִּשָּׂ֤א עֵשָׂו֙ קֹל֔וֹ וַיֵּֽבְךְּ** '***And Esav said to his father, "Have you [but] one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father." And Esav raised his voice and wept.***'(27:38) **וַיַּ֥עַן יִצְחָ֖ק אָבִ֑יו וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֵלָ֗יו הִנֵּ֚ה מִשְׁמַנֵּ֣י הָאָ֔רֶץ יִֽהְיֶ֖ה מוֹשָׁבֶ֑ךָ וּמִטַּ֥ל הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם מֵֽעָל** '***And his father Yitzchok answered and said to him, "Behold, your dwelling place shall be the fat places of the earth and of the dew of the heaven from above.***' (27:39)



Rashi says, what is this place referring to? **זו איטליאה של יון** – '***This is the part of Italy belonging to Greece.***'

The Chanukas HaTorah [Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel] asks what is Rashi saying here? Didn't Yitzchok give everything away? There was nothing left to give. Where did he suddenly find something else?

The Chanukas HaTorah answers, that there is a Gemarah (Shabbos 56b) that says **בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁנָּשָׂא שְׁלֹמֹה אֶת בַּת פַּרְעֹה יָרַד גַּבְרִיאֵל וְנָעַץ קָנֶה בַּיָּם וְעָלָה בּוֹ שִׁירְטוֹן, וְעָלָיו נִבְנָה כְּרַךְ גָּדוֹל [שֶׁל רוֹמִי].**

When Shlomo Hamelech married <u>Pharaoh</u>'s daughter, the angel Gavriel descended from heaven and implanted a reed into the sea, and a sandbar grew around it, growing larger each year, and upon it the great city of Rome was built.

At the time that Yitzchok gave the brachos, he really had given everything to Yaakov, however, Italy hadn't been created yet. And he gave him something that would be created in the future.





Reb Leibish Rabinovich told me that he heard from his father – **The Biala Rebbe** that the clue to this enigma is in the last four words of the Pasuk - **וַיִּשָּׂא עֵשָׂו קֹלוֹ וַיֵּבְךְּ** ***'And Esav raised his voice and wept.'*** He desperately wanted something, so he davened and cried for it – and his request was granted.

When a door is shut, there is no access, nothing will help. But one can break the door down with Tefilah and weeping! Esav's tefilah was a genuine cry, so he was answered successfully!

The Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer (32:3) famously writes: **ישמעאל מנין, שנאמר וקראת שמו ישמעאל. ולמה נקרא שמו ישמעאל, שעתיד הקב"ה לשמוע נאקת העם ממה שעתידין בני ישמעאל לעשות בארץ באחרית הימים, לפיכך נקרא שמו ישמעאל**

Why was his name called Yishmael? Because in the future the Holy One, blessed be He, will *hearken* to the cry of the people arising from (the oppression) which the children of Yishmael will bring about in the land in the last (days);therefore his name was called Yishmael.וְקָרָ֣את שְׁמ֔וֹ יִשְׁמָעֵ֑אל כִּֽי־שָׁמַ֥ע ה' אֶל־עָנְיֶֽךָ (16:11)

Tefilla is something incredibly powerful . We should ensure to use it properly. When we daven, we bring The Riboino Shel Olam into our lives.



Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series **לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה**

25:21 'וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ ***And Yitzchok davened to Hashem opposite his wife.***'

Rashi says that they davened in separate corners - **זה עומד בזוית זו ומתפלל, וזו עומדת בזוית זו ומתפללת** . Why couldn't they daven together? [**The Radak** (Melachim I 17:21) says that Eliyahu faced the child when he davened for him, because when you face the person you are davening for , the tefilah has more efficacy - **וישם פיו על פיו ועיניו על עיניו וכפיו על כפיו והענין הזה שתהיה תפילתו בכוונה יותר על הילד כששוכב עליו ויתמודד עליו**]

Rashi says that Yitzchok's tefilos were answered and not hers. **שאין דומה תפלת צדיק בן צדיק לתפלת צדיק בן רשע לפיכך לו ולא לה** - ***for the prayer of a righteous man, the son of a righteous man, does not compare to the prayer of a righteous man, the son of a wicked man. Therefore, [He accepted] his prayer and not hers***.

This is difficult to understand. She had turned her whole life around. Why wouldn't her tefilah be as effective?

Rav Shimon Schwab in **Maayan Bais Hasho'eivah** brings a beautiful pshat: They were davening in separate corners, because they were davening two separate and different tefilos. Yitzchok was davening to have a son who would be like his father – a **צדיק בן צדיק.** But Rivka was davening to have a son who was a **צדיק**, ***but not like her father!***

This is why they davened separately, and why his tefilah was answered, as his tefilah was more *b'derech hatevah*.



Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק And these are the generations of Yitzchok the son of Avraham; Avraham begot Yitzchok. 25:19

Rashi asks a basic question: why does the Pasuk repeat itself? If Yitzchok was the son of Avraham, why does the Pasuk then say that Avraham begot Yitzchok – it's obvious?

One of the answers of Rashi is that it was only after Avrom had his name changed to Avraham that he begot Yitzchok.

Another answer of Rashi why it had to say: "Avraham begot Yitzchok," is that the '*Letzonei hador*'- the scorners of the generation (I once heard that in those days, there used to be *Letzonei hador*', but today, we have become a *Dor of Letzonim*!) were saying that Sarah had conceived from Avimelech, for she had lived with Avraham for many years and had not conceived from him.

What did Hashem do? He shaped the features of Yitzchok's face to resemble Avraham's, and everyone attested that Avraham had begotten Yitzchok - **והעידו הכל אברהם הוליד את יצחק**.

The Sefer Darchei Musar by Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh Neiman, Rosh Yeshiva Petach Tikva brings a novel idea and pshat in these pesukim.

There are three different scenarios associated with a father/son relationship.

You could have a son who is proud of his father, but he himself is not following the *derech* of his father. The father therefore is not proud of the ways of his son.

It could sometimes be the other way around, where the father is very proud of his son, but the son is not proud of his father.

Or you could have the case where both the father and son are proud of each other.

Avraham Avinu had each type of scenario with his children.

At the end of last week's sedra where the B'nei Keturah were sent away - **וַיְשַׁלְּחֵם**, we don't find that they had any strong bond to their father Avraham Avinu, and he certainly wasn't *meyaches* to them. He wasn't proud of them, and they were not proud to have Avrohom as their father.

Yishmael was proud to be associated with Avraham – He went around calling himself **ישמעאל בן אברהם** -he was a son who was proud of the status of his father, however, he led a completely different lifestyle (until the end of his life) of which his father was not proud of.

Yitzchok Avinu was very proud of his father Avraham Avinu, and Avrohom was very proud of Yitzchok and his legacy.

This is what the Torah is telling us here. **וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת אַבְרָהָם** - Yitzchok went around saying **יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם** – '***I am the son of Avraham Avinu***.' And Avraham went around saying **הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק** – '***I begot Yitzchok***.' They were equally proud to be son and father and father and son.

We should try to emulate this - that we should be proud of our ancestors, and they should be proud of us. Let the legacy of Klal Yisrael continue.

The Chofetz Chaim once said: "I hope I won't be ashamed when I stand in front of Moshiach. (when all the previous generations come back) I hope that they will be proud of me, like I am proud of them."

"We may be imperfect, but we are perfect for The job we need to do in this world." ~ R Zecharia Wallerstein ztl.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

There is nothing like the bracha of a father/parent to a child. Usually on Shabbos we take the opportunity to bentch our children.

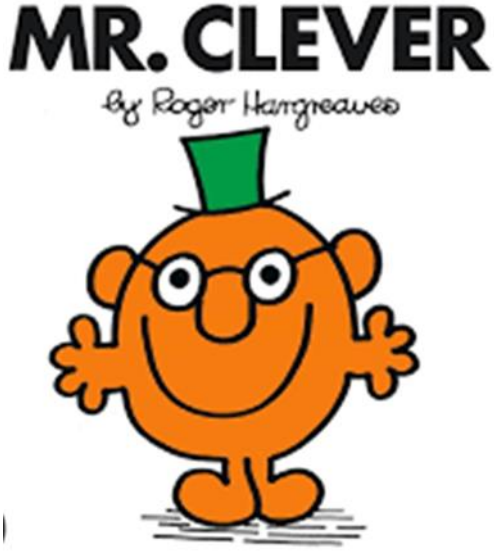
The Seforno says that there are indications from the way that Yitzchok gave over the brachos to Yaakov and Esav, as well as in parshas Vayechi – when Yaakov bentched Menashe and Efrayim, that impart importance to us, and a lesson in how **we** should give over a bracha.

In Vayechi, Yaakov used his right hand. Ideally, a person should use both hands. If a person can only use one hand, he should use his right hand.

When a person gives a bracha, it should ideally be given with a **נשיקה** – a kiss. Over here it says that Yitzchok drew them near - וַיִּגַּשׁ֥ וַיִּשַּׁק־לֽוֹ It is a way of imparting from a person's own ruach, and it gives the bracha much more power and effectiveness.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

וַיֹּ֖אמֶר בָּ֣א אָחִ֑יךָ בְּמִרְמָ֔ה וַיִּקַּ֖ח בִּרְכָתֶֽךָ׃ *'And he said, "Your brother came with cunning and took your blessing.'"*



Rashi says: בחכמה – *'with cleverness'* What was this chochma?

The Beis Halevi says that Esav said to Yitzchok "You are asking me to get food for you in order that you should feel happy/satisfied, and that the brachos should be more effective.(both I and Yaakov know that you are coming to the end of your life and that there are these brachos up for grabs.)

'I am worried that Yaakov is going to pre-empt me and try to snatch the brachos.-So when he comes, he will imitate me. He will copy my voice. So, to stop that happening, I will go out hunting, bring you the food and I will speak like Yaakov. So, when you hear Yaakov's voice, you will know that it is really me!' If you hear my voice, it will be Yaakov pretending to be me!

Yaakov - **בחכמה** – ***'with cleverness'*** realised Esav's intentions, and when he went into Yitzchok, he spoke with his normal voice - **הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב** ! That's how Yaakov received the brachos with Chochmo!

Peninim on the Torah – פנינים על התורה

וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ Hashem allowed Himself to be entreated by him, and his wife, Rivkah, conceived*. (25:21)*

Yitzchak *Avinu* and Rivkah *Imeinu* both prayed for a child. Hashem replied affirmatively to Yitzchak's prayer – rather than to Rivkah's. *Rashi* explains: "There is no comparison between the prayer of a *tzaddik ben tzaddik*, the righteous child of a righteous person, to that of a *tzaddik ben rasha,* a righteous person, the child of a wicked person." The question is well-known; the answer is also well-known; the "why" however, is not.

One would think that after all that Rivkah endured in the home of her youth, she would achieve greater recognition. She achieved *tzaddeikes* status, despite being the daughter of Besuel, the sister of Lavan, and having been raised in an immoral, pagan culture.

One would think that having successfully navigated the obstacles placed before her by her ignoble family, her prayer would achieve even more attention than that of her husband, who, for all intents and purposes, benefited from a spiritually correct and inspiring upbringing.

The simple answer is that the *tzaddik ben tzaddik* has much more to live up to. Having hailed from such a wonderful family background,

he has a more difficult and demanding legacy to which to adhere. Failure on his part is not countenanced. The anxiety that accompanied him as he climbed to the top was palpable.

The *tzaddik ben rasha* has it much easier. For him, whatever he achieves is an accomplishment beyond anything that has been expected of him. To be slightly better than his murky background does not take much effort, nor does it involve disgrace if he fails. After all, he descends from *reshaim*. Whatever he observes is for him a great achievement and does not involve much stress.

Horav Mordechai Mann, Shlita, offers a powerful insight. It may be compared to two professional archers, the best of the best, who were competing to see who can bag a deer first. They both have the best archery implements; both are at the top of their game; both sight the deer at the same time; and both let

their arrows loose at the same time. Yet, one's arrow achieves its goal mere seconds before his competition. What happened?



Apparently, one archer was standing 500 yards away, while the other one (whose arrow took down the deer) was standing 100 yards away. He was closer to the target; thus, his arrow reached it a few seconds earlier.

A similar idea applies to the dichotomy between the *tzaddik ben tzaddik* and *tzaddik ben rasha*. The one whose father was a *tzaddik* is closer. He is not praying from as far as his colleague, who must overcome family obstacles and peer pressure to achieve his goal.

Beneath the Surface - R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ורב יעבד צעיר '***And the elder shall serve the younger***' (25:23)

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zt"l, says that these words were not said to Rivka just as a prophecy, rather, this was a treatment to ease her suffering.

According to Chazal (Midrash HaGadol): The twins were bouncing up and down in her stomach as the waves of the sea. This one said, 'I will go out first' and the other said, 'I will go out first'. But when they heard that 'the elder shall serve the younger', neither one wanted to go out first, and they calmed down! This alleviated the suffering for Rivka.

Torah U' Tefilah- Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



Yitzchak blessed both Yaakov and Eisav.

The Chizkuni notes a big difference between the two Brachos. When blessing Yaakov, Yitzchak utilized Hashem's Name, Elokim, which symbolizes exact judgment, and thereby implying that the blessings would need to be earned. While in Eisav's blessing, Yitzchak made no condition, and Eisav would get everything whether he deserved it or not, because he would never have earned them.

With Yaakov's Brachah being conditional, we understand that he was capable of fulfilling the conditions. As descendants of Yaakov, we have the opportunity to earn his wonderful blessings, and therefore it must hold true that we are capable of earning them as well.

"Nefesh Shimshon" – From the Teachings of Rabbeinu Shimshon Dovid Pincus Zt"L - Pray Again. And Again

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לה׳ '***Yitzchak prayed copiously to Hashem***.' (25:21) ***Rashi*** – '***He offered many pleading prayers***.'

What should you do if your prayers are not answered?

If a person sees that he prayed, but was not answered, he should pray again, as it says, קַוֵּה אֶל־ה׳ חֲזַק וְיַאֲמֵץ לִבֶּךָ וְקַוֵּה אֶל־ה׳ "Hope to *Hashem*, be strong and fortify your heart and hope to *Hashem*."



There is a difference between a request made to *Hashem* and a request made to a fellow human being. Let's say we ask something of a person, and he doesn't grant our request. If we keep on asking him and pleading to him, he will feel bothered and burdened. It is not so with *Hashem*. On the contrary, He wants us to ask again and again, to beg and plead over and over.

Chazal say that *Moshe Rabbeinu* prayed to enter *Eretz Yisrael* 515 times. This number equals the *gematriya* of **ואתחנן** . And early Torah sources say that if he would have continued to plead, *Hashem* would have granted his request.

Why is *Hashem* different from human beings in this respect? Because when we ask something from a human being, our goal is only to get what we are requesting. If he doesn't grant our request when we ask for it, this is because he doesn't want to, or is unable to. So what's to be gained by asking him again and again, since he doesn't want to grant our request?

If we keep repeating our request, this naturally pushes him to do what he is asked to, although he doesn't really want to. It makes him feel pressured. Consequently, the more we ask him and plead to him, the more we are going against his will. We are bothering him and burdening him more and more.

Not so with *Hashem*. First of all, as regards our asking Him to grant us something, He surely wants to give us. There is nothing that blocks or limits *Hashem's* infinite kindness and mercy. His *chesed* is boundless. The only reason we even need to ask for it – which is also the reason why we were lacking it in the first place – is not because *Hashem* didn't want to give it to us. Rather, it is because He wants us to ask for it so that the request itself will be heard, thus bringing us closer to Him by standing before Him in *avodah* and *tefilah.*

Why were our forefathers barren?

Because *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* desires the prayers of the *tzaddikim.* From the outstart, *Hashem* wants to give us what we ask for. But He wants us to *daven* for it, for our own benefit. Consequently, the more we ask and plead and *daven* and beg, the more *Hashem* loves us and is pleased with us.

This is for two reasons. First, because we are facilitating the granting of our request, which is what *Hashem* wanted all along. Second, because we are drawing closer to *Hashem* and becoming more attached to Him, which is the whole reason why *Hashem* did not grant it to us immediately.

So the more we ask and plead, the more we are fulfilling *Hashem's* holy Will.

Emunah is seeing light with your heart, when all your eyes see is darkness.



Boundaries

The Torah says (25:27) **וַיִּהְיִ֥י עֵשָׂ֛ו אִ֥ישׁ יֹדֵ֖עַ צַ֑יִד אִ֣ישׁ שָׂדֶ֔ה וְיַעֲקֹ֖ב אִ֣ישׁ תָּ֑ם יֹשֵׁ֖ב אֹהָלִֽים** "Eisav was a man who understood hunting, a man of the field, whereas Yaakov was an innocent man, dwelling in tents."

The difference between a field and a tent is that a field doesn't have boundaries, while a tent has boundaries and limitations.





This describes the difference between Yaakov and Eisav. Eisav doesn't want boundaries. He wants to feel free to do whatever he chooses and whenever he wants. Yaakov Avinu has boundaries.

A leaf perched high on a tree watched birds fly by and was jealous. "Why can't I also fly? Why do I have to be tied down to a tree?"

Hashem heard its prayers. A strong wind blew, and the leaf broke free from the tree. It floated high up in the sky. It felt so proud of itself and free like the birds. But then it fell to the ground… and began to dry and crumble.

The nimshal is that some people want to break out from their boundaries, not realizing that the boundaries are for their benefit.

There's a moment of euphoria when one breaks away but then come distress and destruction. The boundaries are there for our benefit and eternal bliss.

Humility



Yaakov Avinu received Yitzchak's brachos in a most unusual manner. Yitzchak thought he was blessing Eisav, and Yaakov, dressed as Eisav, received the brachos.

The Drashos HaRan (drush 5) asks, "Why did Hashem want Yitzchak to bless Yaakov unknowingly? Although this didn't detract from the strength of the brachos, nonetheless, wouldn't it be more ideal if Yitzchak knew to whom he was offering the brachos?

"Furthermore, the way the brachos were given resulted in eternal animosity from Eisav to Yaakov because Eisav claimed that Yaakov stole his brachos. This problem could have been averted if Yitzchak had been told in a prophecy that he should bless Yaakov.

"The answer is that Yitzchak loved Eisav. He didn't recognize Eisav's true ways and nature. If the nevuah had told him to bless Yaakov and not Eisav, the elder son he loved, Yitzchak would have been upset, and his sadness would have caused the Shechinah not to be with him fully [because the Shechinah doesn't reside when one is sad].

Therefore, Hashem wanted Yitzchak to think he was giving his brachos to his beloved son so that he would be happy and have the ruach of Hashem [as he blessed Yaakov]."

Scent of Gan Eden

When Yitzchak kissed Yaakov, he said, **רְאֵה֙ רֵ֣יחַ בְּנִ֔י כְּרֵ֖יחַ שָׂדֶ֑ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר בֵּרְכ֖וֹ ה׳** , "***Behold, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field, which Hashem has blessed!***"



Rashi writes, "There is no odour more offensive than that of washed goat skins! But this teaches us that the fragrance of the Garden of Eden entered with him."

Reb Leibele Eiger zt'l explains that Yaakov Avinu was broken and humble at this time, as he stood before Yitzchak, dressed in Eisav's clothing.

When you crunch and break besamim, the scent becomes stronger. This is what happened to Yaakov at this time. Since he was broken and humble, Yitzchak smelled the divine scent.

"The greatness of Hashem is that He is infinite, and yet He takes an interest in the smallest details of our lives. - He oversees the entire universe, and yet He listens to the prayer of a single individual." Rabbi Avigdor Miller (1908-2001).

Saying of The Week with Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"Make a bad decision and it will come back to haunt you."



Eisav was called "Edom" because he traded his birthright for red lentils. One might think this is because he loved the colour so he was called Edom.

The Ramban says Eisav didn't even know what the food was when he wanted it; that's why he referred to it by its colour. This caused others to actually make fun of Eisav that he exchanged his birthright for a pot of some red stuff. He is called this name for eternity because of this terrible decision. Let's try to make great decisions that we will be known for, that will last for eternity.

Torah Compilations with Yossi

A missing letter provides a clue to the survival of the Jewish people. In Parshat Toldot, we read how Yaakov deceived his father Yitzchak into thinking that he was his twin brother Eisav. Yitzchak declared, "**הקל קול יעקב והידיים ידי עשיו** - ***The voice is the voice of Yaakov but the hands are the hands of Eisav***."

From here the Midrash teaches as follows. As long as the voice of Yaakov is heard in houses of prayer and halls of study, the hands of Eisav will not be able to destroy the Jewish people. Now, many of our commentators ask how the Midrash derives this lesson from our Passuk. After all, Yitzchak exclaimed, **הקל קול יעקב**- ***The voice is the voice of Yaakov***," indicating that the voice was heard, " **והידיים ידי עשיו**- ***and the hands are the hands of Eisav***," indicating that his hands were there and they were powerful.



The Vilna Gaon brilliantly explains that this has everything to do with **מלא וחסר**.'What is **מלא וחסר** ?' The term literally means 'complete and incomplete', and it refers to a phenomenon that we sometimes see in the Torah, wherein some of the words are missing a vowel.

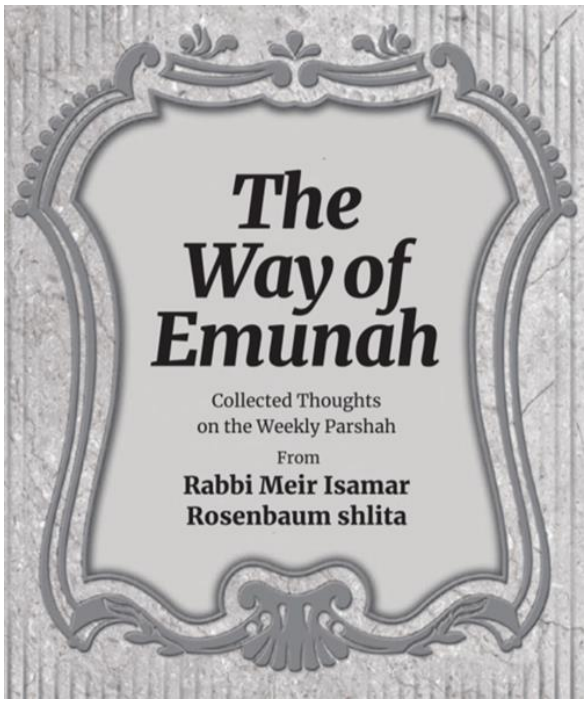
Each time this happens, **זה אומר דרשני** - the word cries out for an explanation. I cannot think of a better example of this than in the verse that we have quoted. **הקל קול יעקב**.The word **קול** is mentioned twice. On the first occasion the **קל** – the voice, is spelled **חסר** ,missing the letter vav **ו** . On the second occasion just one word later, it's spelled **קול** which is **מלא** – complete – it has the letter vav **ו** (in the middle of the word.

Thanks to the Vilna Gaon we can now understand the Midrash. Because this is indicating that something is absent. The voice is not as loud as it might have been. Kol has become **קל** – light. The power of the voice has gone. It is in such circumstances, Heaven forbid, that **הידיים ידי עשיו** – the hands of Eisav can be powerful.

What emerges from here is a timeless and powerful lesson for the Jewish people. Time and again we have needed to fight for our very survival on the battlefield, but in addition to doing that, there is another source of great Jewish strength. It lies in the **קול יעקב** - the sound of Yaakov, our voices in our shuls and in our halls of study. It is the authentic Jewish voice of tradition, and the more it is heard the stronger we, as a nation, are. The better our Jewish education, the more we have a capacity to guarantee our survival.

Yes indeed, a missing letter of the Torah provides us with the key to Jewish survival. So let's join together, let's sound the sound of Yaakov and let's pray together for our soldiers and emergency service personnel who risk their lives to defend and help us, as well

as those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual Shabbat.



One Thing With The Mouth and Another Thing in The Heart

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק And these are the generations of Yitzchok the son of Avrohom. Avrohom bore Yitzchok. (25:19)

Rashi states that the jokers of the generations claimed that Avimelech was Yitzchok's father; therefore, Hashem made Yitzchok's face look just like Avrohom's to prove that he was his son.



The Chidushei Harim asks why people who could spread such vicious rumours are only called "jokers" ("leitzanim"). It would seem that they should be called reshaim, as it is truly evil to say such things.

He answers by quoting the Gemara (Bava Kama 92A) that says that if a person davens for his friend, and he needs the same thing his friend needs, he will be answered first and he will receive that thing before his friend.

We learn this from Avrohom Avinu. He davened for Avimelech to be healed and to be able to bear children. In this merit, he merited having a child with Sarah.

When the jokers claimed that Sarah conceived from Avimelech, they actually were saying that Sarah was able to have a child because of Avrohom's tefillah for Avimelech.

Although they were correct, they are called "jokers" because they made it into a joke, as the simple people who heard them say this thought they meant that Avimelech literally was Yitzchok's father, which was a tremendous slander against Avrohom and Sarah.

Why The Plishtim Envied Yitzchok

וַיִּגְדַּ֣ל הָאִ֔ישׁ וַיֵּ֥לֶךְ הָל֖וֹךְ וְגָדֵ֑ל עַ֥ד כִּי־גָדַ֖ל מְאֹֽד׃ וַיְהִי־ל֣וֹ מִקְנֵה־צֹ֗אן וּמִקְנֵ֤ה בָקָר֙ וַעֲבֻדָּ֣ה רַבָּ֔ה וַיְקַנְאוּ֥ אֹת֖וֹ פְּלִשְׁתִּֽים ***And the man grew constantly greater until he had grown very great. And he had possessions of sheep and possessions of cattle and much production, and the Plishtim envied him.*** *(26:13-14)*




The Ben Ish Chai (Sefer Aderes Eliyahu) explains this pasuk as follows: If Hashem wants to give a person 1,000 gold coins in order to make him wealthy and He sends it to him in one shot, the person will be very happy at that time. If He sends it in two or three increments, the person will be happy each time he receives part of the money. Another benefit of receiving something in smaller installments is that others won't notice a sudden change in the person's status, so they won't be incredulous about him.

The pasuk says that Yitzchok grew gradually, rising from one level to the next until he became exceedingly great. In the beginning, he

had sheep. Later, he also acquired cattle. After that, he acquired "much production" of all types of animals.

This is the reason why the Plishtim envied him. If he had become wealthy all in one shot, they would have said that just like he suddenly got rich, he also could suddenly lose all of his money and become poor. But once they saw that he became wealthy gradually, and every venture he undertook was a success, they understood that his mazal was so good that he would never fail. That is why they were jealous of him.

100 Gates Are Opened in The Merit of The 100 Brachos

וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק בָּאָרֶץ הַהִוא וַיִּמְצָא בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִוא מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים ***And Yitzchok planted in that land, and he found…one hundred gates, and Hashem blessed him.*** (26:12)

The Chidushei Harim says that the 100 gates mentioned in the pasuk symbolize the 100 gates of good influences that are opened every day in the merit of the recitation of 100 brachos.

One Who Gives Tzedakah Brings Good Influences Upon Himself

וְיִתֶּן־לְךָ הָאֱלֹקִים ***And may Hashem give you.*** *(27:28)*

Chazal say (Bereishis Rabbah 66:3): יִתֵּן וְיַחֲזֹר וְיִתֵּן לְךָ "***May he give and repeatedly give.***"

The Divrei Shmuel of Slonim zy"a explains that everything comes from Hashem and everything that happens in this world is guided and orchestrated by Hashem. This is true both in terms of gashmius and in terms of ruchnius.

When a Jew recognizes this, he will give tzedakah with a full heart because he knows that he isn't giving away anything that is really his.

Once one does this, in the merit of his tzedakah Hashem will give him more and more.

This is the meaning of the Medrash. If a Jew understands that everything he has comes from Hashem, he will give a lot of money to tzedakah, and Hashem will then give to him again.

In this vein, it is related that **Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov zy"a** once promised a certain man that he would become wealthy and, indeed, the man become extremely rich. The Rebbe's chasidim asked him why he had blessed this man with such wealth. Would it have been better to divide the money amongst many people? Why should one man get so much for himself?



The Rebbe answered, "I blessed the man with wealth. I didn't tell him how much he would get. He was very smart, and he knew that by giving tzedakah, Hashem would grant him more wealth.

This is as the **Baal Haturim** says (Shemos 30:12): The word 'venasnu', and he will give, is a palindrome. It reads the same way forwards and backwards. This teaches us that whenever someone gives money to tzedakah, it will come back to him.

"Once this man became a little wealthy, he gave money to tzedakah. When Hashem saw what he was doing, He sent him more riches so that he should be able to give more tzedakah. The man then gave more money to tzedakah and he merited more wealth. And he eventually amassed a huge fortune."

If One Is Happy for his Friend's Success, He Will Also Succeed

וּמְבָרֲכֶיךָ בָּרוּךְ ***And those who you bless will be blessed***. (27:29)

Sefer Divrei Shmuel writes about this pasuk that the Torah is giving us a piece of good advice regarding how to be saved in times of danger. At such times, one should focus on loving his fellow Jew with his entire heart and being happy for his success. If one does this, he will be blessed with all brachos.

When the pasuk says that those who you bless will be blessed, it indicates that those who bless others will be blessed themselves. Unfortunately, the yeitzer hara has succeeded in implanting jealousy and hatred into our hearts. Many people are not happy for their friends when they succeed because they envy or dislike them. This causes a person to become unable to succeed himself.

The Divrei Shmuel says that a person has to work hard not to feel this way and to be happy for his friend's success. In that way, he will be able to succeed himself and be saved from whatever is threatening him.

Zera Shimshon

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק ***And these are the generations of Yitzchok the son of Avraham, Avraham begot Yitzchok***. (Braishis 25/19)

Zera Shimshon asks a few questions on this posuk. Firstly, the two phrases in this posuk, "Avraham begot Yitzchak" and "Yitzchak the son of Avraham" seem to repeat itself!

Yitzchak is the son of Avraham means that Avraham begot Yitzchak, so what is the possuk teaching us by writing the same thing twice!

Secondly, on the words "And these are the descendants of Yitzchak..." Rashi comments, "Yaakov and Eisav (who are) mentioned

in the Parsha". Why does Rashi stress that they are mentioned in the Parsha? We don't find any other Yaakovs or Eisavs mentioned anywhere else in Tanach, so why does Rashi specify which Yaakov and Eisav they were?

Thirdly, why did two such great tzaddikim like Yitzchak and Rivkah deserve such a wicked child, like Eisav?

Some Mefarshim explain the reason is because Rivkah was the daughter of a rasha and the "wicked genes" of her father were passed down to her child. However Zera Shimshon rejects this explanation since Sarah and Avrohom also came from wicked people and they begot only a tzaddik, Yitzchak.

Zera Shimshon answers in light of the Medrash (Breishis Rabah 44/21) that at the Bris Bain HaBessarim, Hashem let Avrohom Avinu choose how his descendants will rid themselves of all impurities in order to totally rejoice in Olam Habah; by suffering in Gehenom or to suffer under the hands of the nations. The Medrash relates that after contemplating the entire day Avrohom chose the latter.

In light of this Zera Shimshon explains that in this parsha we read how Eisav vowed to take revenge from Yaakov for his being blessed by Yitzchak. This tremendous sibling hatred in a house where both parents are tzaddikim isn't something that is very common and has to be understood.

Therefore the Torah begins the parsha that "Avraham begot Yitzchok" to stress that the roots of Eisav's wickedness is not some imperfection of his parents but rather it was because "Avraham begot Yitzchok." Meaning, this wicked Eisav was born because Avraham chose for the Jewish people to suffer in this world to be able to enter Olam Haba instead of going through Gehenom and Eisav will be the agent to do this.

This is why Rashi mentions the descendants of Yitzchak who was begot by Avraham are "Yaakov and Eisav (who are) mentioned in the

Parsha". Meaning the Yaakov and Eisav who have this terrible relationship (like we see in the parsha) are a product of Avraham's choice that his descendants, the Jewish people, will have it hard in this world.

Zera Shimshon

וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־נָא זָקַנְתִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי יוֹם מוֹתִי Behold I have become old and I do not know the day I will die (27:2).

The Zera Shimshon asks why did Yitzchok Avinu have to add, "and I do not know the day I will die", this goes without saying since no one knows when they will die - as the Gemara (Pesachim 54b) says that the day one will pass away one is hidden from humans? It seems superfluous for Yitzchak Avinu to have to add this?

The Zera Shimshon answers with a Medrash Rabba (99:5) that says that Yitzchak Avinu wanted to reveal to Esav when Moshiach would come but Hashem did not allow him to. Based on this the Zera Shimshon suggests that since Yitzchak Avinu knew the date Moshiach would come, which is also something that humans do not know, he had to clarify that at the same time, he did not know the day he was supposed to die.



The Zera Shimshon now asks a very intriguing question why indeed is it that Hashem does not want a person to know when he will die?

Some suggest that the reason is that were a person to know when he would die, many people would sin until close to their date of expiry and then would do Teshuva.

The Zera Shimshon dismisses this idea since Hashem could have allowed people to know how long they were going to live but with a

condition that if one sins he can be taken out of this world before his time and this would prevent many people from sinning. Therefore this reason does not suffice.

To explain why Hashem chose not to allow humans to know how long they would live for, the Zera Shinmshon offers the following explanation:- The Shulchan Aruch (CH"M $341:1) rules that if one lends an item to his friend without saying how long he is lending it for, he can reclaim it at any time he desires. However, if they made up that the item would be lent for a certain amount of time, once the borrower (halachically) takes it, the owner may not demand it back before the agreed upon time.

Sometimes, if Hashem sees that a Tzaddik will sin, He removes the Tzaddik from this world before he falls, (this happened to Chanoch). As well, if a wicked persons sins too much, his own sins cause him to be removed from the world early. However, since our souls are lent to us by Hashem, if Hashem would allow a human to know how long he will live for, Hashem is essentially lending the person that soul for a certain time period. Then, if a circumstance would arise where Hashem would decide that for the benefit of the person or of the world, this individual must die, halacha would not allow it to happen, since the soul was loaned for a certain time period and cannot be taken back before then.

This is the reason that Hashem decided not to inform humans how long they would live so as not to be limited by the aforementioned halacha not allowing Hashem to change the date that a person's life should end when the circumstance arose.

To trust in Hashem means to know that He has already prepared the solution before we even see the problem. ~ Stories To Inspire.

B'SIYATTA D"SHEMIYAH
ZERA SHIMSHON
Fascinating excerpts and intriguing discourses from the works of the great Gaon and kabbalist Morainu HaRav **Shimshon Chaim** ben Reb **Nachman Michael Nachmani**
Author of **Zera Shimshon** and **Toldos Shimshon** who lived almost 300 years ago.
HE PROMISED THAT WHOEVER LEARNS HIS WORKS WILL SEE HELP WITH CHILDREN, LONG LIFE, AND PARNASSAH MANY PEOPLE CAN ATTEST TO THEIR PERSONAL SALVATIONS!

How Yitzchok's Blindness Was the Cause of Him Wanting to Bless Eisav

וַיְהִי֙ כִּֽי־זָקֵ֣ן יִצְחָ֔ק וַתִּכְהֶ֥ינָה עֵינָ֖יו מֵרְאֹ֑ת *'It came to pass when Isaac was old, and his eyes were too dim to see….*

The simple understanding of this Passuk is that when Yitzchak saw himself aging, he called over his son, Eisav, and told him that now that he is growing old, he understands that his day of death is coming closer, and thus he wants to bless him before he dies.

There is a difficulty with this explanation; why does the Passuk feel it necessary to mention that Yitzchak's eyes have dimmed, as it doesn't seem to have anything to do with the discussion at hand, of Yitzchak wanting to bless Eisav, for it seems that it was Yitzchak's old age alone which compelled him to do so.



The Midrash tells us a reason why Hashem caused Yitzchak to lose his eyesight: *Yitzchak's eyes dimmed to prevent him from seeing evil, that is, from seeing the evil of the wicked one, Eisav. Hashem said, "Yitzchak will go out to the marketplace and people will say about him, "This is the father of that wicked person". Rather, to avoid this, I will dim his eyes and, inevitably, he will need to remain inside his home."*

We find another Midrash that tells us an additional reason why Hashem caused Yitzchok to become blind: *Yitzchak requested physical afflictions - He said, "Hashem, at present a man dies without having experienced any afflictions, and consequently,*

following his death the Divine Attribute of Justice is extended against him. However, as a result of Your bringing afflictions upon him during his lifetime, following his death the Divine Attribute of Justice will not be extended against him."

Hashem said to him, "You have requested a good thing. I will therefore grant your request, and I will begin this practice with you…", as the Passuk states, 'And it was when Yitzchak had become old, and his eyes dimmed from seeing…'

When Yitzchak became blind, he initially understood that the reason for his blindness was in order to protect him from seeing Eisav's wickedness. Thus, he realized that when the time would come for him to bless his children, although Eisav was the older brother, and it would only make sense that he should receive the blessings, nevertheless, because he was wicked, so much so as to cause Yitzchak to need to become blind, he definitely was not worthy of receiving the blessings.

But when Yitzchak realized the timing of losing his eyesight, that it was only after his becoming old, he understood that because he had aged, it was within reason to assume that his day of death was getting closer, and thus his blindness had nothing to do with Eisav at all. Rather, his blindness was a fulfillment of his request to Hashem, that before passing away one should be afflicted with physical ailments, so that the Divine Attribute of Justice will not be stretched against him following his death.

Thus, his blindness which came with old age, brought Yitzchak much clarity. It made him realize that his day of death was coming closer; it also made him realize that there was no reason to believe that his blindness had anything to do with Eisav, and thus he was indeed worthy of being blessed.

Accordingly, we can understand why the Torah says, 'When Yitzchak became old and thereafter his eyes dimmed from seeing', for indeed it was only the fact that Yitzchak became old, and subsequently

became blind as well, which caused him to recognize that his day of death was near, and thus made him feel that the time had come to bless one of his sons. It also brought Yitzchak to understand that there was no reason to doubt Eisav's worthiness, as his blindness had no connection to Eisav, and therefore, 'he summoned his older son, Eisav, and said to him, "Now that I have aged and do not know the day of my death, please sharpen your gear and make delicacies for me so that my soul may bless you before I die."

Zera Shimshon

וַיֵּצֵא הָרִאשׁוֹן אַדְמוֹנִי כֻּלּוֹ כְּאַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו ***And the first one emerged ruddy; he was completely like a coat of hair, and they named him Esau.***

It is written in Shemuel (16/12) "***So he (Shemuel) sent (Dovid's brothers) and brought him (Dovid). He was red, bright-eyed, and handsome…***".



On this posuuk the Medrash Yalkut Shemoni comments that when Shemuel saw that Dovid had a red complexion he became scared and said that he is a murderer just like Eisav (who also had a very red complexion). Hashem (calmed him and) said to him (to Shemuel) that there is a big difference between Eisav and Dovid. Eisav was a murderer and killed whoever he wanted while Dovid only kills with the permission of Sanhedrin.

Zera Shimshon asks that this medrash seems to contradict the Gemmora in Shabbos (daf 56a) that says that when Dovid killed Urie HaChiti (Bas Sheva's first husband) he did not ask Sanhedrin but

killed him on his own accord! How can we reconcile these two statements of Chazal?

He answers that it is written in the Torah that disloyalty, defiance, or disrespect to the throne is punishable by death. However, there is a machlokos between the Rishonim exactly when this punishment is given.

The Rambam paskens that the king doesn't even need permission to kill him. When the king discovers that someone is defiant or even disrespectful to him, he can immediately kill him.

Tosafos disagrees and paskens that the king cannot kill him without first getting permission from the Sanhedrin. According to this, explains Zera Shimshon, we can reconcile the medrash with the Gemorro in Shabbos.

Dovid HaMelech paskened like the Rambam and since Urie HaChiti was disrespectful towards Dovid, he didn't need permission to kill Urie HaChitti. What he did was 100% according to Halacha. When the medrash wrote that "Dovid only kills with the permission of Sanhedrin" it didn't mean exclusively "with the permission of Sanhedrin". It meant that Dovid only kills when the halacha permits it and killing "with the permission of Sanhedrin" is only an example of putting to death according to the halacha. Therefore since what Dovid was in the bounds of halacha, he is completely incomparable to Eisav who killed whoever he wanted to do.

A question still remains though. If Dovid paskened like the Rambam why did Nosson HaNovie rebuke him? What did he do wrong? And even more than this; how can the Rambam pasken differently than Nossan HaNavie?!

Zera Shimshon answers that the Rabmam only paskened that the king doesn't need to get permission when a person was deliberately disrespectful to the king. However if it was unintentional, like it was in the case of Urie HaChitti, even the Rambam holds that the king

needs permission from Sanhedrin. It is because of this that Nossan HaNavie rebuked him. However since Dovid thought that he acted according to the halacha he cannot be compared to Eisav who did whatever he wanted!

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk



In this parsha, we learn that at the age of forty, Esav, the eternal playboy, married. Why? To settle down? To build a family? No. Because it looked good. His father Yitzchak had married at forty, so he married at the same age. It was part of his charade.

In the Haggada, we find that the Rasha, the wicked son, asks, "What is this service to you?" He is castigated and ridiculed. But why? He's asking the precise question the Torah says our children will ask?

The answer is that he is just like Esav. He sees what he is supposed to ask and says his lines on cue, as if he means it. Because he is too perfect, we recognize that it's just an act.

Yaakov, on the other hand, is like the wise son, who is interested in all the laws, and we tell him everything, down to the point that we do not eat anything after the Afikomen. This helped him here, as some commentaries explain that this episode took place on Pesach and once Yitzchak had eaten from "all" Yaakov's food, including the Afikomen, he could no longer taste Esav's food, thus foiling his attempt to get a blessing.

Podcast by Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld (office@beisdovid.com)



Rav Zvi Hirsch of Rimanov Zt'l 1778-1846

Rav Hirsch of Rimanov, was a talmid and successor of the famous **Rav Mendel of Rimanov Zt'l** – one of the greatest Chasidic masters after the passing of the **Rebbe Rav Meilech of Lizhensk Zt'l**.



He was born in 1778 to his father Reb Yehuda Leib. Unfortunately, he lost both his parents at a very young age. Rav Hirsch became an apprentice to a tailor, so at least he could learn a trade and possibly earn a living. As he grew older, he heard of the legendary Rebbe - Rav Mendel of Rimanov, and he decided that he's going to travel there.

He became his Shamess and served as his Gabbai. He was viewed in everyone's eyes as a simple person. But secretly, he was growing in Torah, Yiras Shamayim, and Avodas Hashem. Until the passing of his Rebbe – Reb Mendel, who, before he died, ordered that Rav Hirsch should succeed him. This was to everyone's surprise.

So much of a surprise, that in the first year of his leadership, he came to visit the great Rav of Lemberg – **The Yeshuas Yaakov**, who

said, "A Shamess is also a Rebbe?" And he ordered that all the chairs in the room should be removed, so that the visitor should not have anywhere to sit when he arrived.

When Rav Hirsch arrived, he put his hand on the mezuzah to kiss it, but quickly removed his hand. He did this numerous times, until the Rav said to him, "Are you trying to passel my mezuzahs? I just had them checked."

As a precaution, he sent them back to the sofer for re-checking, and sure enough, it was found to be pasul! The person that put it up had accidently put the nail right through the mezuzah and caused it to be pasul as he had nailed it through one of the words!

After this episode, the Yeshuas Yaakov realised that rav Hirsch was not just an ordinary person. He immediately became respectful, and ordered a chair to be brought in for Rav Hirsch. He gave Rav Hirsch tremendous kavod.

The grandson of the Yeshuos Yaakov who was present at the time, said that even though Rav Hirsch's Ruach HaKodesh was clear to see, he noticed something else – That Rav Hirsch's facial expression was exactly the same when he first arrived, when he was poorly received, as it was when he got tremendous kavod afterwards! He was completely unmoved by the honour or the embarrassment. It made no difference to him, he was always the same! What a tremendous accomplishment.

A widow lived in Rimanov with her six children. For months, she couldn't pay her rent. The landlord wanted to evict her, but being a chassid, he went to ask the town rabbi what to do.

The rabbi determined that according to Torah law, he could evict her. The landlord informed the widow that if she would not pay by a certain date, she would be evicted from her home.

The widow came to Rebbe Tzvi Hirsch of Rimanov in tears. "Who said this?" asked the Rebbe. "The landlord," she answered, according to

the decision of the town rabbi." Without thinking twice, Rebbe Tzvi Hirsch rose and went to the rabbi to clarify the matter. "That is what is written in the *Choshen Mishpat*!" the town rabbi claimed. "It is a clear law!"

"I honour you very much, but I would like to see the law myself," Rebbe Tzvi Hirsch answered. "Can you please open the book for me in the right place so that I may read it?"

The rabbi opened the book, looked, clutched his head and looked again. "It is just the opposite! I made a mistake," the rabbi said in dismay. "It says that in this type of case, it is prohibited to evict the tenant!"

"How did you know?" the Rebbe's students asked him. "I didn't know," Rebbe Tzvi Hirsch answered. "I am not an expert in financial law. But when this woman came in, I felt such great compassion for her, that my heart told me that it cannot be that in the Torah of G-d, the Merciful Father, there could be such a cruel ruling."

It was said, that when he married off his daughter, to a grandson of the **Der Heiliger Ruzhiner**, he was told that it was a minhag to talk about the yichus of the families of the chasan and kallah. The Mechuttan went on to say that he is a grandson of the Heiliger **Maggid** of **Mezeritch** and other great luminaries.

Rav Hirsch responded that he comes from a simple background, who was once an apprentice to a tailor from a young age. But one important thing he learnt from the tailor was that the main thing in this trade, was to fix the old material, and not spoil the new cloth. And to this, the Ruzhiner responded, "***Your yichus is better than mine***!"

He died on the 30th Cheshvan 1847, and he is buried in Riminov *Galicia, which today is in Poland.* His z'chus should be a z'chus for all Klal Yisrael.

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk - Lashon Harah



Upon learning that Yaakov had received the blessings Eisav thought should be his, Eisav's anger burned and he wanted to kill Yaakov. Rivka therefore wished to send Yaakov away to save his life.

Rather than telling Yitzchak the reason for her desire, she used the excuse that there were no suitable women in Canaan for Yaakov to marry. This was to avoid the terrible sin of Lashon Hara.

By definition, Lashon Hara is saying something derogatory or harmful about someone. The fact that it's true does not make it permissible. Lashon Hara may be spoken under certain conditions when necessary. However, from Rivka's actions, we learn that if there is another way to achieve the desired result without speaking the Lashon Hara, one must do so.

Obviously, there was a benefit to telling Yitzchak about Eisav's plan, so Yaakov could flee. However, by pinning Yaakov's departure on marriage, Rivka avoided the need to malign Eisav.

Rechilus is speech which will cause animosity or hard feelings between people, again, whether true or not. While Rivka told Yaakov that Eisav wanted to kill him, as he had to know to stay away in order to save his life, she also softened the issue by saying he should go for "a few days," until Eisav's anger subsided. She was thereby limiting the Rechilus damage of her words by enabling Yaakov to be upset at Eisav's anger, not at him personally.

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

ויגדלו הנערים ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש שדה ויעקב איש תם ישב אהלים 25:27



Although Yaakov and Eisav were twins, the Torah records that they were polar opposites. Yaakov spent his days dwelling in the study hall to learn Torah, while Eisav focused his energies on hunting animals in the field. Although Rashi writes that these differences were not apparent until they matured and reached the age of 13, Chazal tell us that their different values and priorities were already established even before they were born.

The Midrash relates (Yalkut Shimoni 111) that when they were still in their mother's womb, Yaakov told Eisav that Hashem created two worlds: the physical world in which we live and the spiritual World to Come. The physical world is full of eating, drinking, doing business, getting married, and having children, none of which may be enjoyed in the World to Come. Yaakov offered to divide the two worlds, with Eisav taking the physical world and Yaakov receiving the spiritual world, an offer to which Eisav was only too happy to agree.

In Mah Yedidus, one of the songs traditionally sung on Friday night, we eloquently describe the wonderful delicacies and pleasures of this world, such as fattened chickens and sweet wines, which we

enjoy at the Shabbos meal. Curiously, after relating the mouth-watering treats associated with Shabbos, we proudly declare **נחלת יעקב יירש**– a person who properly honours Shabbos in this fashion will inherit the portion of Yaakov.

This seems difficult to understand. The midrash says that Yaakov's share that of the spiritual World to Come. Although Shabbos indeed offers delectable enjoyments, isn't it dishonest to associate these physical pleasures with Yaakov?

Rav Moshe Wolfson suggests that this song resolves this question just a few stanzas later, when we proclaim **מעין עולם הבא יום שבת מנוחה** –the restful day of Shabbos is itself so spiritual that it represents a microcosm of the World to Come. As we enjoy the Shabbos delicacies at our meals, we should appreciate and give thanks for this weekly opportunity to enjoy a small taste of the tremendous reward waiting for us – Yaakov's descendants – in the World to Come.

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

ויאמר עשו אל יעקב הלעיטני נא מן האדם האדם הזה 25:30

Parsha Toldos begins with the birth of Yitzchok's twin sons, Yaakov and Eisav. Shortly thereafter, the Torah records that one day, Eisav came in from the field, tired and exhausted. He saw that Yaakov was cooking a lentil stew, and in his fatigued state, he begged Yaakov to feed him "the red food," identifying it solely by its colour and not even bothering to refer to it by its proper name.

Rav Mattisyahu Salomon relates that he was once in the house of **Rav Elozar Menachem Shach** and observed Rav Shach, who was well-known for giving candy to children, offering a lollipop to one of his grandchildren, adding, "You want a red one, right?" Rav Mattisyahu interjected, "Isn't the Rosh Yeshiva encouraging him to be like Eisav, who insisted that Yaakov feed him 'the red food?'"



Rav Shach, who was capable of imparting valuable lessons and perspectives through even mundane conversations and actions, responded that there was a critical difference between the two cases. He explained that for a child, living in a world of superficial dreams and imagination and preferring a shiny red lollipop is ordinary behaviour and is to be expected. Children are only capable of appreciating the external appearance of an object, and there is no problem with recognizing this reality and interacting with them on their level.

The problem, Rav Shach continued, begins when an adult refuses to mature and elects to live his entire life in this shallow manner. As a person grows up, it is expected that his mind will mature as well, enabling him to see and appreciate an item's internal value.

When Eisav requested that Yaakov provide him with "the red food," he was demonstrating his focus on externality and his inability to concern himself with the actual content of the dish.

Although most of us do not spend our days pursuing red lollipops or red stew, Rav Shach's message is still relevant to each of us. As children, we were drawn toward flash and superficiality, as could be expected of us at that time. As we age, it is imperative to transition to a more mature outlook and perspective, recognizing that people, possessions, and accomplishments should not be judged by their external appearance, but by their deeper – and true – value.

"Serving Hashem begins with thanking Hashem." ~ Rebbe Rashab

You Are Not What You Eat By Rabbi Shmuel Blinder

The פסוק כה:ל writes: "על כן קרא שמו אדום"

The simple pshat is that this means that the velt called Esav Edom because of the fact that he drank something red that day.



The Ramban adds , that the pshat is, that the velt laughed at him for being such a fool and selling his Bechora for a measly portion of food, therefore they called him Edom.

The Or Hachaim has a different pshat in the pasuk. He learns that the pasuk is referring to Esav himself; that Esav started calling HIMSELF Edom. Esav told himself, I was about to die. The only reason why I didn't was because of this red soup that I ate. Therefore, I am basically red soup.

Now let's take a step back for a moment. Was Esav REALLY a big walking talking bowl of soup? Not really. Is this a logical conclusion to come to for a normal thinking human being? Probably not. So why in the world would Esav call himself that?

The Or Hachaim is teaching us a big lesson. There are sometimes in life , where people tell themselves that they do aveira x, y, or z because that is who they are. I'm the guy who comes late to davening ." I'm the guy who talks during davening." " I'm the guy who shmoozes a whole seder." They look at THEMSELVES as batlanim/avaryanim.

This is obviously just the Yetzar Hara. If they would think logically, they would come to the conclusion that no matter what they've done in their life, they don't have to "shtemple" themselves as that. If

you don't want this to become who you are , it doesn't have to be. The choice is yours.

This was Esav's mistake. He "shtempled" himself as a red bowl of soup. That's all he was. His life has no inherent purpose other than 'eat drink and be merry.' Esav personified the saying 'You are what you eat.' Esav really took his actions to heart and went to the negative extreme with it.

May we always look at ourselves in ways that bring us higher in avodas Hashem!



What caused Yaakov to become Yaakov Avinu (our holy forefather), and Eisav to become Eisav HaRasha (the evil one)? The Midrash (Beraishis Rabbah, Parshas Toldos) tells us that until their Bar Mitzvah, Yaakov and Eisav were nearly identical in their deportment. However, after their bar mitzvah, things started to change. How did Yaakov and Eisav turn out so differently?

Rav Dov Meir Rovman ZT"L (1895-1967) was a student of the Kelm Yeshiva, the Rosh Yeshiva in Vilkomir and the founder of the Tiferes Yisroel Yeshiva in Haifa. In his Sefer, Zichron Meir (Maamar 37), he points out that from the Passuk in Malachi (1:2) which states, "Behold Eisav is a brother to Yaakov" we see that Eisav was comparable to Yaakov in certain respects and had remarkable qualities.

Regarding the honour he gave to his father, the Midrash Rabbah (65:12) quotes Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel who says, "All my life, I served [and honoured] my father, and I did not even reach one percent of what Eisav reached in serving his father."

We also see that he had a deep appreciation for the blessing of a Tzaddik. In the Passuk (Bereishis 27:34) after Yaakov leaves Yitzchok Avinu and having secured the better blessing that is reserved for the first born, Eisav bitterly cries and asks Yitzchok for a blessing as well.

We also find that Eisav was well versed in certain areas of Halacha, as the Midrash says that Yitzchok Avinu actually relied upon Eisav's knowledge of Shechita (the laws of slaughtering Kosher animals) as he asked Eisav to serve him food (meat). We also see an allusion to his grasp of Pilpul (analytical Torah study) when he asked Yitzchok, "How does one take Ma'aser (tithe) from salt?" arguing that just as the Torah requires a tithe from food that is grown, the Torah should require a tithe from food that is mined (i.e. salt).

With of all of Eisav's remarkable qualities and his inherent potential, how could it be that he still became Eisav Harasha, while Yaakov actualized his inherent potential and achieved such greatness that his likeness is figuratively carved into the Kisei HaKavod itself?

We all have different character traits that can influence our decisions and our future path of life. Rav Rovman explains that Eisav had a specific "talent" for persuasion and deception. We see this talent described in Rashi – "Yode'ah Tza'id" – he knew how to trap, capture and deceive.



There is a Midrash (Bereishis 65:1) that explains that Eisav is likened to a pig (see Tehillim 80:14) because he would showcase his good qualities and hide his bad ones, just as a pig metaphorically presents his "split hooves" so to speak (which is the first criteria needed to make it a good / Kosher animal), while hiding the fact that he is not a ruminant (which ultimately makes it a bad / non-Kosher animal).

Rav Rovman explains that this talent for deception led to his downfall. His penchant for creating falsehoods prevented him from leveraging his remarkable qualities. He ceased to grow as a person and never actualized his potential. Ultimately, this led to his very serious moral failings and the well-deserved moniker, "Eisav Harasha".

On the other hand, Yaakov Avinu was an "Ish Emes" – a man of truth. He was truthful with others and with himself. He was introspective and consistently examined his actions and motives for any wrongdoing. Due to his appreciation of Emes, Yaakov's spiritual stature grew enormously.

We see from Rav Rovman, that the appreciation for truth and conversely, the penchant for falsehood, can greatly influence the direction of our future lives just as they did with Yaakov and Eisav - two individuals who started off similarly, but ended off in very different places.



Drunk?

וְיַעֲקֹב נָתַן לְעֵשָׂו לֶחֶם וּנְזִיד עֲדָשִׁים וַיֹּאכַל וַיֵּשְׁתְּ וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ ***And Yaakov gave Esav bread and a pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank and arose and left. 25:34***

Esav ate bread and lentils, and he drank wine. Why does the Pasuk then say that he got up and went? This is a normal thing to do after a meal?

R' Avrohom Brode answers (Tallalei Oros) that if a person is drunk, he can't carry out *mekach u'memkar* – his dealings will not be *chal*, as he is not in the right frame of mind. This is brought in the gemarah Eruvin 65a that if a person was as shikur as *Lot* was (completely

legless) than of course he can't carry out any financial deals. **אָמַר לֹא שָׁנוּ אֶלָּא שֶׁלֹּא הִגִּיעַ לְשִׁכְרוּתוֹ שֶׁל לוֹט אֲבָל הִגִּיעַ לְשִׁכְרוּתוֹ שֶׁל לוֹט פָּטוּר מִכּוּלָּם**

We surmise that Esav drunk wine, as this was a seudas havarah (mourner's meal for which wine was created). How do we know that he wasn't drunk? Because **וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ** , he was able to get up and walk normally! He passed the sobriety test! Therefore, his sale of the brachos to Yaakov was good!

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld- Rosh Yeshivas Beis Dovid

Rav Aharon Kotler 1891-1962



Rav Aharon Kotler was born in Sislovitz, White Russia, in 5652 (1891) and passed away in New York City, on 2 Kislev, 5723 (1962). During his years in Europe – He learnt in Slabodka and Slutsk and became Rosh Yeshivah in Kletzk at the age of 22, and in his later years after escaping Europe in 1940 to America – as Rosh Yeshivah of Bais Medrash Govoha, in Lakewood, New Jersey, he was a dominant Torah personality. He married the daughter of **Reb Issur Zalman Meltzer Zt'l**.

In his youth, he was – in the words of **Reb Meier Simcha of Dvinsk** – the greatest illui (prodigy) to be born in forty years. To **Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzenski**, he was the "**Reb Akiva Eiger**" of the generation. To the devastatingly critical "**Ragotchover Gaon**" – in what is perhaps the greatest tribute of all – "He knew how to learn well."

Both the Chofetz Chaim and Reb Chaim Ozer, saw in him the future Gadol Hador. The Chofetz Chaim devoted more time to him than to any other single individual and treated him with utmost respect.

When Reb Aharon was a young boy studying in Slobodka, he met with the sage of the generation **HaGaon Reb Chaim of Brisk**. Reb Chaim subsequently said, "***Someday half of the world will rest on this boy's shoulders***."

During the waning days of the year 5700 – as Torah Jewry was emitting its last dying breath on the European Continent, the undisputed leader of his age, **Hagaon Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzenski Zt'l**, found solace, as he told **Reb Elchonon Wasserman Zt'l**: "***Reb Aharon will build Torah in America***."

In 1945, **The Brisker Rav**, son of Reb Chaim, surveyed the enormity of the disaster that had befallen Yisrael and sighed, "***At least Hashem has done us one grace; He has left us Reb Aharon***."

An older student recalls Reb Aharon delivering a shiur in his yeshivah in Kletsk despite a high fever – a presentation of several hours' duration – coughing blood, but proceeding with the same sparkle, concentration, and verve as ever. The Torah energized Reb Aharon, replenishing his vigour. Torah was the breath of his life; and so long as he breathed, he breathed Torah. The yeshivah gave him his strength and his stamina.

Reb Aharon's own love for Torah study was phenomenal. His ultimate fulfilment and happiness was to be found in Torah. With Torah as his possession, Reb Aharon lacked nothing.

Once, eight bochurim came to be fathered for entry into the yeshiva. They all prepared a piece of Torah to say. One boy prepared five incredibly hard questions for Reb Aharon to answer. These questions actually stumped him!

Fifteen years later, this bochur meets Reb Aharon again, and asks, "Rebbe, do you remember me? I took an exam in your yeshiva."

Reb Aharon replied, "Do I remember you? – Of course, I do. I couldn't sleep for three weeks after you asked me those questions!

He considered his Talmidim as his "Children." In fact, his widow, the much-revered Rebbetzin, once remarked, "***He loves his grandchildren almost as much as his talmidim***!"

A student, newly arrived at the Yeshivah, complained to his former Rosh Yeshivah, himself a talmid of Reb Aharon, that he could not understand Reb Aharon's speech. "Well, then simply sit and look at his face," was the reply! Indeed, a prominent American Rosh Yeshivah once remarked that one who saw Reb Aharon had some idea of how the **Vilna Gaon** might have appeared.

Reb Aharon is remembered for saying about his gabbai (who helped him build up The Lakewood Yeshiva) that –"Someone who supports Torah and helps Torah to flourish, gets the same reward as someone who actually studies the Torah!"

So, somebody asked Reb Aharon, "What is the difference between a supporter and you financially?

He answered very simply and famously, " The difference is **עולם הזה ועולם הבא** . In the next world – true maybe we will be equal. But, where is the **עולם הזה** of someone that doesn't appreciate the gadlus and depth of the **תורה הקדושה**.

The Lakewood Mashgiach, **Rabbi Nosson Wachtfogel Z"tl** once went with him to the office of a wealthy man to solicit funds for the Yeshiva. On the wall behind the gentleman hung a large reproduction of the famous Chagall painting of a bearded Jew wearing T'fillin.

In the middle of the conversation this person pointed over his shoulder and said "See Rebbe-the beautiful picture." The Rosh Yeshiva looked up, gazed at the painting for a moment and said, "Yes. But the T'fillin are not on the right place!"

"Rebbe", the man said with the tone of someone giving the ultimate explanation of the mysteries of life, "That is art!" The Rosh Yeshiva was totally unimpressed, "And why can't it be art" he asked, "with the T'fillin on the right place!?"

Once when travelling on the highway he would divert the driver away from the automatic toll booth to a manned one: "it's not k'vod habriyos (respectful of humanity) to pass up a man for a machine – as though man were redundant."

He virtually belonged to Klal Yisrael – his door, like his mind and heart, ever open – unsheltered by organization or secretariat. His home was a reshus horabbim (public domain) where everyone felt at home. It was not possible to impose upon Reb Aharon, for he recognized no imposition.

His diligence was legendary. In his youth in Slobodka, there were periods when he would learn till he fell asleep at the shtender (desk) – wake up refreshed and continue his studies.

In his advanced age, absorbed in the affairs of Klal, he always held a sefer in his hands, turning to it every unoccupied moment, never really diverting from his Torah, ever studying with utmost intensity and zeal. Many were the times he stayed awake throughout the night engrossed in his studies. In the words of his father-in-law, Hagaon Reb Isser Zalman Meltzer, '***Reb Aharon could learn sitting on the blade of a knife***!'

It was one of the Yeshivah bachurim's turn that day to be the Rosh Yeshivah's driver. Reb Aharon left his apartment in Boro Park immediately after breakfast. The entire day was spent without any let-up – traveling, meetings, the Yeshivah office, visiting people to solicit funds – a day full of strain and its usual share of heartache.

During the day, Reb Aharon ate one apple – in the car, holding the core, the peel, and the pits in his hand until the next stop, so as not to litter the road.

The day continued beyond exhaustion, finally returning home close to midnight. The moment Reb Aharon walked in, he stopped. "Oh" he exclaimed, a look of pain on his face, and the sound of anguish in his voice, like a man who had been starving for a month – " I have not

yet learned today!" – despite the fact that he had held a sefer in his hands throughout the day, glancing into it every spare moment, and that he had been "talking in learning" with his driver.

He immediately seized a Gemara and sat down to learn with extreme zeal. When the Rebbetzin brought in a bowl of soup, he refused it. "Give it to him," he said pointing to the exhausted and hungry driver. He himself had no time to eat.

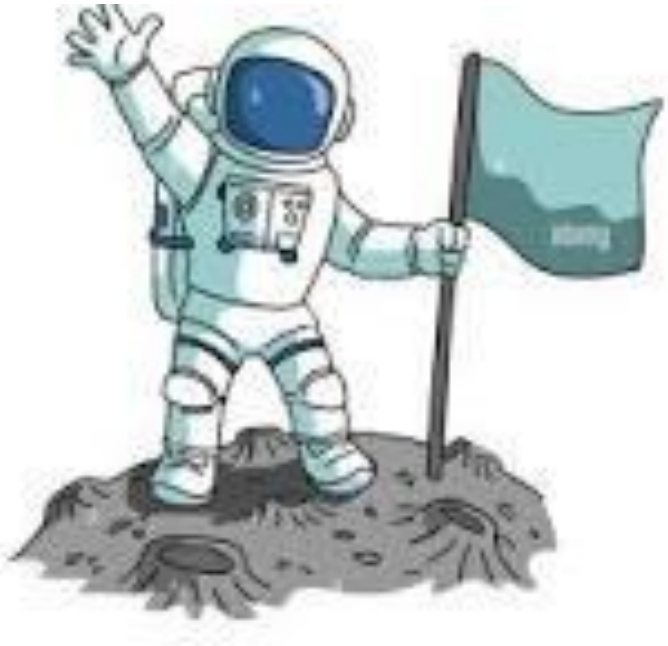


In his zechus, and in the zechus of his limmud HaTorah with hasmada, it should be a zechus for all of us, our families and all of Klal Yisrael. [additional source from Jewish Observer]

The Difference Between a 'Double-Life' and a Broad Life - By Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Near the beginning of our parsha, the *pasuk* says "…And Eisav was a man who knew how to hunt, a man of the field; and Yaakov was a pure and straight person who dwelt in tents." [Bereshis 25:27] Eisav and Yaakov are described as two brothers with very different personalities. There is an inference that jumps out at us from this *pasuk*. When speaking about Eisav, the Torah describes him twice as an '***Ish***' (man). That means there were two distinct aspects of his personality: (a) He knew how to hunt; and (b) He was a man of the field. Yaakov Avinu is also described in two ways: (a) He was a "*Tam*"—a very pure, innocent, and straightforward uncunning type of person, and (b) He was also a "*Yoshev Ohalim*"—he dwelt in tents. However, in reference to Yaakov, the Torah only uses the word '***Ish***' (man) once. What is the reason for this lack of literary parallelism in describing the two brothers?

I saw an answer to this question in a sefer called Mishchas Shemen. In the 1950s, there was already talk about the possibility of putting a man on the moon. The author of this *sefer* asked **the Shotzer**



Rebbe (Rabbi Shulem Moskovitz [1877-1958]) "Will they ever put a man on the moon?" The Rebbe responded with a definitive "No!" He buttressed his answer by quoting the pasuk "The Heaven belongs to Hashem and the Earth belongs to mankind." [Tehillim 115:16].

As we all know, President Kennedy pledged early in his brief presidency that by the end of the decade of the 1960s, America would put a man on the moon, and so it was—on July 20, 1969, a man walked on the moon! 1969 is the year I received *Semicha*. The *Chag HaSemicha* was in August of that year, less than a month after this historic event. [Parenthetically, this was the last *Chag HaSemicha* Ner Israel has ever held – don't ask me why.] The guest speaker at that event was Rav Simcha Elberg. He spoke (in Yiddish) about "*de shpatzir af de Levana*".

At any rate, the author of Mishchas Shemen now had a strong question on the definitive answer given to him years earlier by the Shotzer Rebbe. This Rebbe was no longer alive by that time, so the author went to the Biala Rebbe and told him about his previous conversation with the Shotzer Rebbe. The Biala Rebbe did not say "The moon landing was all a fake—it took place in a Hollywood studio (as some claimed at the time). He did say that the event that occurred was **not** a contradiction to the cited *pasuk*. Even though America indeed placed a man on the moon, but Neil Armstrong could not survive on his own in the atmosphere of the moon. He had to bring oxygen from earth, he had to wear a space suit to protect him from the moon's environment. His lifeline was still the '*Aretz*' (Earth). He may have physically been on the moon, but since he still

needed all the earthly elements to exist, he was still considered an 'earthling' – not a 'moonling.'

The eternal truth of the *pasuk* "*HaShamayim Shamayim L'Hashem v'ha'Aretz nasan livnei Adam*' remains. Neil Armstrong still remained a human being who belonged to the earth, his source of life.

With that in mind, the Mishchas Shemen explains why Yaakov Avinu is called an ***Ish*** *Tam Yoshev Ohalim* and Eisav is called an ***Ish*** *Yodeah Tzayid;* ***Ish*** *Sadeh*.

Yaakov Avinu, no matter where he went, no matter what he did, and no matter what environment he found himself in, his life line and his life blood was still from the "tent"—the *Makom Torahi* which reflected his "home base". His sustenance always came from that holy place, no matter what he did with the rest of his life. His lived a unified existence. All dimensions of his life had a singularity to them that all stemmed back to the *Ohalei Torah*.

True, he became a shepherd, engaged in commerce and became a wealthy man. But even while he was in the field shepherding, he was still a "*Yoshev Ohalim*." Just like the man on the moon may have been far away from "his base", but his oxygen was still brought from his home planet and he is still called an earthling. That is the source of his life.

On the other hand, Eisav lived a double life. The Torah testifies that he knew how to hunt. *Chazal* say that this means he knew how to put on a good act and trick people. He even knew how to fool his father. He would ask Yitzchak all his "*frum shaylos*"—how does a person take tithes from salt?

He was an *Ish tzayid*, a cunning person. Beyond that, he was an *Ish Sadeh*. He was a different person than the person he pretended to be. He led a double life. He talked the talk of a pious person (through his cunningness as a *Yodeah Tzayid*), but he walked the walk of a man of the field.

This reminds me of a very famous letter that **Rav Hutner, *zt"l*,** wrote to one of his students. In addition to Rav Hutner's Pachad Yitzchak on the Yomim Tovim, he also wrote a *sefer* called *Igros v'Michtavim*, in which he publishes correspondence he had with various students. One of these letters (#94) is a response to a former student who engaged in a secular career. The student complained to his former *Rosh Yeshiva* that he felt he was living a "double life." On the one hand, he was a *Ben Torah*, a Yeshiva graduate; on the other hand, he spent the majority of his day in a very secular environment. He felt that he was being hypocritical by leading this contradictory life.

Rav Hutner wrote back to him that his assumption that engaging in a career was ipso facto leading a secular life is not true. Having a secular career does **not** mean you are leading a "double life." Rav Hutner compares this to a person who has a multi-room house where different rooms are used for different activities. This does not imply he is leading a "double life". It means he is living a broad life. He writes that it is not a contradiction for a person to be in the secular world and yet be a full-fledged *Ben Torah* and an *Ehrliche Yid* (a Jew with integrity). As long as one derives his *chiyus* (sustenance) from the "*Ohel* of Torah" then regardless of how he spends the rest of his day, he is still in the *Beis Medrash*.

Rav Hutner writes that he remembers once visiting the Shaarei Tzedek Hospital founded by Dr. (Moshe) Wallach [1866-1957]. He noticed that when Dr. Wallach would visit a patient who was about to go into surgery, he asked him for his mother's name so that he could pray for him before his operation. Rav Hutner writes, "When I told over this story to one of the *Gedolim* in Yerushalayim, he commented, 'How much a person must be jealous of such a Jew as Dr. Wallach, who uses his professional career as a vessel to promote the Honour of Heaven."

This is not a double life; it is a broad life. It is not a contradiction. A person can be an *Ish Tam, Yoshev Ohalim*—grounded in

the *Beis Medrash*, in the Tents of Torah—no matter where he may find himself during considerable portions of his day.



A bochur came late to Yeshiva one day. His Rosh Yeshiva asked him, "Why are you late?" The bochur replied, "I snoozed my alarm." The Rosh Yeshiva told him, "Your alarm is **הקול קול יעקב**, but the fact that you pressed the snooze button, that is **ידיים ידי עשיו**."



Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – Where does the term shalom zachar come from?

It is derived from the gemara (Nida 31b) that states *ba* ***zachar*** *l'olam ba* ***shalom*** *b'olam*. But did you ever wonder why we have a shalom zachor (See Yoreh Deah, 265:12) on Shabbos?

One idea of Shabbos is to elevate physicality. That is to say, we take the physicality and we raise it towards kedusha. This takes expression with the nice clothing we wear and the special delicacies that we consume on Shabbos. This concept is expressed in the gemara that tells us that on Shabbos *ba'inan nami lachem*, physical pleasures are also required (Pesachim 68b).

According to a 1914 Chassidish publication, **R' Pinchas Koritzer** (1726–1791) explained that on the Sabbath, Jews can spiritually elevate even lowly things. Thus, even such humble foods as *gala* (calves'-foot jelly, also known as *ptcha*), onions, and kasha are transformed into Sabbath "delicacies." Even animal tails become a crown, in the form of a *shtreimel*.

In light of this we can understand why it is referred to as *Shabbos Kodesh* since through Shabbos we make even the physicality kodesh. We can also now grasp the words we sing on Shabbos in the *zemer* Baruch Keil Elyon (see Shemos 31:14), *Kodesh he lachem* (the simple meaning is, "Shabbos is holy to you"), as we make the *lachem*, physicality, kodesh, holy.

Yaakov symbolizes this idea. He is one who elevates physicality to kedusha as it says *kedosh Yaakov* (Yeshaya 29:23). Interestingly, the first three brachos of Shemoneh Esrei correspond to the three *avos*. Consequently, Yaakov matches up with *attah kadosh*.

Based on what we said, it comes as no surprise that chazal connect Yaakov to Shabbos as the gemara derives from (Yeshaya 58:14) *az tisanag al Hashem v'hirkavticha al ba'masai aretz v'ha'achalticha nachalas* ***Yaakov*** *avicha* (If you proclaim Shabbos 'a delight'…then you shall be granted pleasure with Hashem, and I shall mount you astride the heights of the world; and I will provide you the heritage of your forefather Yaakov) that *kol ha'me'aneig es ha'Shabbos nosnin lo nachalah bli metzarim* (Shabbos 118a-b), whoever delights in Shabbos is granted a boundless heritage.

In light of this we can grasp why we have a shalom zachar on Shabbos. Once the child has emerged from the mother's womb into this physical world, and the Torah he learned was removed from him, we console him by celebrating with physical food, channeling it toward Hashem. - This shows the child that the physical can be channeled to holiness. The shalom zachar represents this idea of elevating the physical, and therefore it is most fitting for it to take place on Shabbos.

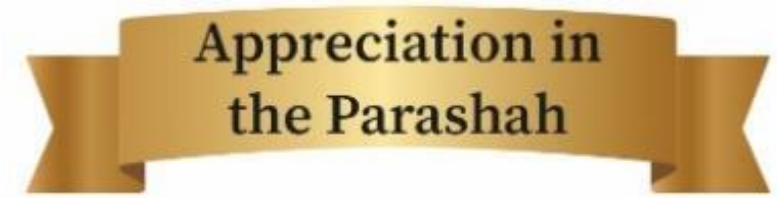
As we stand at the doorway of Kislev, we enter a time that has always taught our nation a powerful truth: that even when the world feels dim, light is never out of reach.

Kislev reminds us that a single flame can push back an ocean of darkness, that hope can grow even in the coldest season, and that Klal Yisrael's strength shines brightest when the night is at its peak.

The Weekly Vort

■ **וישמע אל אביו ואל אמו וילך פדנה ארם** – ***And Yakov listened to his father and to his mother and went to Padan Aram*** (28:7).

R' Chaim Kanievsky in his sefer *Taama D'Kra*, explains why the *pasuk* repeats the word **ואל**, *and to*, in reference to his mother. When Yakov went to Padan Aram, he accomplished two separate *mitzvos* of honoring one's father and mother. He obeyed his father's request to go to Padan Aram and marry a proper wife, and he simultaneously obeyed his mother's request to flee from the wrath of his brother Eisav. The *pasuk* repeats the word **ואל**, *and to*, since Yakov specifically intended to fulfil his mother's request as well. (*A Gut Vort*)



The Eternal Berachah

וְיִתֶּן־לְךָ֤ הָאֱלֹקִים֙ מִטַּ֣ל הַשָּׁמַ֔יִם וּמִשְׁמַנֵּ֥י הָאָ֖רֶץ וְרֹ֣ב דָּגָ֑ן וְתִירֹֽשׁ

The *berachah* which Yitzhak gave Yaakov before his passing had tremendous significance throughout all generations. It was a *berachah* both for physical abundance and spiritual success (*Ohr HaChayim* 27:28). Furthermore, Chazal point out that this *berachah* is continuously in motion; interpreting the words "*Veyiten lechah,*" to mean, that Hashem will give again and again. The verse could have just said "*yiten*- He will give," this additional *vav* displays how the giving will be continual, again and again for all eternity. (*Bereishis Rabbah* 66:3)

Interestingly, the word *veyiten* is connected to the word *matanah*, gift (*Degel Yehudah* p.64). **Rav Moshe Shternbuch** notes that this powerful *berachah* that Yitzhak gave over was not conditional on us performing the *mitzvos*. Rather, it was that we would receive undeserved gifts from Hashem. Each blessing we experience would be a *matanas hinam*, an undeserved gift. Accordingly, when Chazal

teach that this *berachah* is constantly set in motion, they mean that Hashem is always showering us with gifts, regardless if we are deserving. (*Tam VeDa'as* p.128)

Therefore nowadays, many centuries after this *berachah* was given we can still access its tremendous power. Yet how exactly can gain the most of these *berachos*?

The *Seforno* explains that the answer to this is found in the previous phrase, "…Which Hashem blessed." The following verse states, "*Veyiten lechah Elokim*- Hashem will give you." So when we focus on Hashem's blessings we will be rewarded much more.

It is impossible to describe the abundance of blessings we receive on a constant basis. The fact that we are here and the world is continuing is solely due to Hashem's goodness. As we recite each day in *Shacharis*, **המחדש בטובו בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית** - "*Who continually renews in His goodness the creation of the world*." The creation of the world wasn't a one-time event. Rather, each second Hashem renews our existence and the existence of the entire world, due to His tremendous love for us.

The Rashba (*Shut* 1:19) explains that it is for this reason that Chazal instituted that we recite *Birkas HaShachar* each morning when we arise. This is a series of many *berachos* in which we thank Hashem for the gifts we receive on a daily basis. For example, the ability to see, walk, stand up straight. These gifts we benefit from are really given to us again and again; it is not just a onetime experience. So, even though we recited these *berachos* many times before for all these gifts, we are receiving them once again. Therefore, we need to express our gratitude for these benefits that we re-experience.

This helps us understand why the *berachos* are in the present tense such as *pokeach ivrim*, —Who gives sight to the blind, or *malbish arumim* —Who clothes the undressed as opposed to the past tense.

These gifts are being given to us anew and therefore we use the present tense. (***The Alter of Slobadka***)

The truth is that since Hashem is constantly providing us with these priceless benefits, we should be saying these *berachos* throughout our day. However, our Rabbis knew that this will be difficult, so they enacted that we recite them once a day, having in mind the entire day. (***Rav Yerucham Levovitz***, *Da'as Torah Shemos* 17:8)

When we focus on the constant *berachos* in our life— such as the ability to see walk, talk, listen, the fact we are healthy, for our family etc. — we will be showered with even more blessing. As the *Seforno* teaches, focusing on Hashem's goodness helps release the tremendous power contained in these precious *berachos,* that Yitzhak gave to Yaakov and to his descendants for all generations. Over 3,000 years later we can tap into these *berachos* that are constantly motion.

This idea helps shed light on the ancient custom to recite "*Veyiten Lechah*" on *Motzai Shabbos*. This practice is in fact very old and is recorded in the **Zohar** *(Vol.1 14b)*. Our Rabbis teach that saying these verses is an incredible *segulah* to be blessed with livelihood *(Segulas Yisrael 61*). Presumably when a person focuses on the reality that Hashem is the one Who is constantly showering Him with *berachos* He makes himself worthy to receive them. So, reciting these verses that describe the abundance that Hashem will give us, is a way of affirming that He is the source behind all our blessings. Therefore, this is very auspicious for livelihood.

A business man came to Rav Binyamin Zev MiBalta on Tuesday telling him that he went to the large business fair yet didn't earn any profits. "Did you say Veyiten Lechah on Motzai Shabbos? He asked. "I didn't get a chance, it was very busy" the man responded. "Well, saying it is very auspicious for paransah, I recommend that you take out a Sidur and say it right now!" (Adapted from Ohr Haganuz p.47)

Parashah pearls

The Torah relates how when Yitzhak planted seeds, the land gave forth 100 times of what he planted—referred to as *meah shearim,* liter ally 100 gates (26:12). **The Rekanati**, one of the *Rishonim,* explains that this refers to the 100 gates of blessing that are opened when one recites *berachos.* Accordingly, he understands the verse that Yitzhak expressed gratitude to Hashem and 100 gates of plenty were opened, thus giving him a large amount of wealth.

This teaching is echoed by the Zohar, that when we recite a *berachah*, it draws forth blessing from Up High. So, we see that in addition to the great spiritual reward we receive when expressing gratitude to Hashem, we also receive great physical reward.

The Torah is extremely sparing with words. It is therefore surprising that our Parashah goes into great detail discussing a dispute over wells.



The Torah relates that Avraham had dug a well and after he passed away the *Plishtim* filled it up. Yitzhak dug the well again and the *Plishtim* quarreled with him. So, he then dug one somewhere else, and they disputed this also. Finally, he dug a well where the *Plishtim* didn't protest and he called it *Rechovot.*

The *Chafetz Chaim* teaches that the message behind this is that a Jew should never give up. Just as Yitzhak determinedly persisted until he was successful, so too, we must never give up when pursuing our dreams. (*Chafetz Chaim Al HaTorah, Toldos*)

Appreciation in the *Siddur*

Modeh Ani.

Why do we specifically say the words *Modeh Ani?* Surely, it will make more sense grammatically to say *ani modeh,* just like we say "I want- *ani rotzeh",* or "I need- *ani tzarich?"*

The word *modeh* is actually very unique. We usually translate it as to thank yet it also means to acknowledge. Really the two go together. We first need to acknowledge and only then can we thank. So, starting our day with an attitude of gratitude begins with acknowledging how much we are indebted to Hashem for graciously giving us a new lease of life. (**Rav Chaim Freedlander**)

We therefore say *modeh* before *ani* to symbolize our submission to Hashem, affirming that everything we have is from him. We for sure don't begin our day by putting ourselves first! *(Avodas Levav)*

Let's ask another question. Why is it this in the singular? Why don't we say "*Modim Anachnu*- We are grateful?" **Rav Shimshon Pincus** explains that this is because we shouldn't just be grateful because other people are. We need to try and arouse ourselves with own unique feeling of gratitude for the kindness that Hashem personally did to me in that He restored my soul giving me a new lease of life.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe notes fact that our first words we utter we arise are '*Modeh Ani* — I am grateful,' displays how fundamental gratitude is. Some also have the custom to say, **הריני מקבל עלי עול תורה** - "I accept upon myself the yoke of *Torah*" after *Modeh Ani.* - ***Rabbi Chaim Velozhin*** taught that when this is said, we will have world distractions removed from us that day. (Keser Rosh 71)

"Hashem's love for us is like the sun – always shining, even on the cloudiest days." – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov

Rabbi Jeremy Golker

וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַה' לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא וַיֵּעָתֶר לוֹ ה' וַתַּהַר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ – *'And Yitzchok davened/pleaded to Hashem opposite his wife because she was barren, and Hashem accepted his prayer, and Rivka his wife conceived.'* (25:21)

Notice the spelling of the word **הִוא** – It is normally spelled with an **י** as the middle letter, but here it is spelled with a **ו**. -Why is that?

The Meshach Chochmo says: According to the way Rashi learns, Rivka was 3 years old when she got married (Rashi Bereshis 25:20). Yitzchok at the time was 40 (Beraishis 25:20). The pasuk says that when Yitzchok became a father, he was 60 years old (Ibid 25:26). This means that he was married for 20 years before he became a father. This implies that Rivka was 23 years old when she became a mother.

The gemara in Yevamos (12b) says that a woman is unable to bear children until she's at least 11 years old. She's just too young to physically be able to bear children. **פחות מי"א שנה ודאי לא תתעבר**

So, if she was 23 years old when she became a mother, but for the first 11 years she was unable to physically have children, then she was actually (only) barren for 12 years. - **כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא** – This word **הִוא** spelled with a **ו** is gematria of 12!

The Torah was alluding to the fact that Rivka was actually barren for 12 years. [From the age of 11-23]

"Our role is to act. Whether we succeed or not is not in our hands. That is up to Hashem. We just have to put in the effort, but the results are from Hashem!" ~ Rav Elazar Menachem Mann Shach, zt"l.

How Old was Rivka when she Married?

There are three major opinions about the age of Rivka. The most well know opinion is that Rivka was 3 years old. This is quoted in Rashi (Bereshit 25:20). The source of this is in the Midrash Seder Olam Rabba Chapter 1. The premise of this calculation is the juxtaposition of the torah telling us of Sara's death at the age of 127 as a result of the Akeda. Since Sara was 90 when she bore Yitchak, the result then makes Yitzchak 37 at the time of the Akeda. Since the birth of Rivka is mentioned at that time, and the fact that Yitzchak was 40 when he married Rivka, this makes Rivka 3 years old at the time of her marriage.

[However, it should be mentioned that the Vilna Gaon in his emendations to the Seder Olam corrects the version of Seder Olam and writes that Yitzchak was 26 at the time of the Akeda, and Rivka was 14 when they married. (See also Torah Shleima to Bereshit 22 note 108)]

A second opinion is that Rivka was 14 years old. This is based on the Sifre Devarim 357 and the Midrash Hagadol to Bereshit 25:20. The premise for this calculation is that Rivka lived to the age of 133 as did Kehat. The deduction of different periods in her life from the time of her death place her at the age of 14 when she married Yitzchak. This opinion is also cited by Tosafot Yevamor 61b in the name of Rav Shmuel Hachassid of Speyer.

The third opinion is the Talmud itself (Yevamot 61b) which quotes the Torah where Rivka is called a "Naara" which then places her between age 12 and twelve and a half.

Tosafot (ibid) mentions all three opinions reconciling them by simply saying that the Midrashim are conflicting. As aforementioned, Rashi on the Torah says that Rivka was 3 at the time she married Yitzchak. Although, getting married at the age of three is totally foreign to the world we live in now, and Rivka being only 3 poses other questions, the concept of marriage at the age of three should not come as a

total surprise since it is mentioned in the Mishna (Niddah 5:4) that when a woman is 3 years old she can be betrothed with the consent of her father and this is codified in the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch, though it is not in practice nowadays.

What concerns some of the Rishonim (commentators) Ramban, Rashba, Meiri , Tosafot Rosh in their commentary on the Talmud (Yevamot 61b) is not the fact that Rivka was 3 years old, but the fact that the Torah calls her a "Na'ara" which denotes an older age. They entertain the idea of the version of Rivka being 14 at the time but are unconvinced about it.

To sum up, the earliest sources on the subject of Rivka's age at the time of her marriage are in conflict which leaves room for commentary and requires a deeper understanding.

Doing & Seeing (Rav Elyokim Schlesinger) by Rabbi Jeremy Golker

At the end of the parsha the narrative is as follows:

<u>בראשית פרק כח</u>

(ה) וַיִּשְׁלַח יִצְחָק אֶת יַעֲקֹב וַיֵּלֶךְ פַּדֶּנָה אֲרָם אֶל לָבָן בֶּן בְּתוּאֵל הָאֲרַמִּי אֲחִי רִבְקָה אֵם יַעֲקֹב וְעֵשָׂו

And Isaac sent Jacob, and he went to Padan aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebecca, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

(ו) **וַיַּרְא עֵשָׂו** כִּי בֵרַךְ יִצְחָק אֶת יַעֲקֹב וְשִׁלַּח אֹתוֹ פַּדֶּנָה אֲרָם לָקַחַת לוֹ מִשָּׁם אִשָּׁה בְּבָרְכוֹ אֹתוֹ וַיְצַו עָלָיו לֵאמֹר לֹא תִקַּח אִשָּׁה מִבְּנוֹת כְּנָעַן

And Esau saw *that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan aram, to take himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him, he commanded him, saying, "You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan."*

(ז) **וַיִּשְׁמַע יַעֲקֹב** אֶל אָבִיו וְאֶל אִמּוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ פַּדֶּנָה אֲרָם

And Jacob listened *to his father and his mother, and he went to Padan Aram.*

(ח) **וַיַּ֣רְא עֵשָׂ֔ו** כִּ֥י רָע֛וֹת בְּנ֥וֹת כְּנָ֖עַן בְּעֵינֵ֣י יִצְחָ֑ק אָבִֽיו

And Esau saw *that the daughters of Canaan were displeasing to his father Isaac.*

(ט) וַיֵּ֤לֶךְ עֵשָׂו֙ אֶל יִשְׁמָעֵ֔אל וַיִּקַּ֗ח אֶת מָחֲלַ֛ת בַּ֥ת יִשְׁמָעֵ֖אל בֶּן אַבְרָהָ֑ם אֲחֹ֥ת נְבָי֖וֹת עַל נָשָׁ֥יו לֹ֖ו לְאִשָּֽׁה׃

So Esau went to Ishmael, and he took Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, the sister of Nebaioth, in addition to his other wives as a wife.

Rav Elyakum Schlesinger says fascinatingly in his sefer **בית אב**:

If you look closely at these pesukim, there is a theme that emerges. Wherever it refers to Esav, the Torah says **וַיַּ֣רְא עֵשָׂ֔ו** – **Esav saw** – But when it comes to Yaakov, it is **וַיִּשְׁמַ֥ע יַעֲקֹ֖ב** – **Yaakov listened**.

Why the distinction?

Because when Yitzchok instructed Yaakov **לֹֽא תִקַּ֥ח אִשָּׁ֖ה מִבְּנ֣וֹת כְּנָֽעַן** "*You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan*." – Esav **saw** that, but only after Yaakov **listened** to his father - **וַיִּשְׁמַ֥ע יַעֲקֹ֖ב** אֶל אָבִֽיו and acted on it, did Esav do the same thing. Esav didn't act immediately of his own volition until he'd seen Yaakov follow the command of Yitzchok.

That's the way of superficial individuals. Knowing something doesn't make an impression upon them. But Esav only acted when he **saw** Yaakov **listening** and doing what their father commanded! Only then did it make an impression on him. – When one sees another fulfilling instructions, and listening to the words of Hashem, that's what influences them to do it. – Only after Yaakov led and carried out the instruction, did Esav do the same!

And this is instructive to those who want to influence others. Telling someone to do something will not have as much impact as doing it yourself and letting them see you in action and copying your example.

Parsha Points - Compiled by Harav Moshe Lewis Z"tl

Chazal [Avos 6]: tell us, " The only [true] kavod (honor) is Torah ." If so, why were the sons of Lavan complaining when they stated " Yaakov took all of this Kavod " **כבד** [31:1]? Why would they care about Yaakov "walking off" with Torah (we can be sure that this was the last thing in the world that they were interested in)?

The answer is that there are two types of kavod : 1 true kavod, which is Torah, 2 false kavod , which is money. Real kavod is written in full using four letters spelled with a vav **כבוד**. False kavod, though, is only written with three letters spelled without a vav **כבד**.

When Chazal said that "The only kavod (honor) is Torah" they were referring to true kavod **כבוד**. The sons of Lavan though, were only interested in money, false kavod. The posuk therefore spells kavod without a vav **כבד**. [**חפץ חיים על התורה** pg. 69 in the name of the **גר"א**].

Fitting Wealth by Michael Winner

"*Rivka took the garments of Eisav, her older son, the fine ones which were with her in the house, and she dressed Yaakov, her younger son*" (Bereishis 27: 15).

It's a nice feeling when you're learning the parsha and something sticks out, and you find a nice reason for it.

Why does the pasuk need to state that Eisav was the older son and Yaakov was the younger son? We know that already. Why does it need to be stated, so clearly, once again, when Rivka is dressing Yaakov so he can pose as Eisav to receive the brachos from Yitzchok?

Rav Shlomo HaKohen answers, in the name of his father, that this pasuk was to teach us of the hidden miracle that was made for Yaakov. Eisav, a professional "outdoorsman" was physically bigger and stronger, than his younger, and smaller, brother, Yaakov. When

Rivka gave Yaakov, Eisav's clothing, it miraculously fit Yaakov's smaller frame.

Separately, the **Malbim** writes, "It is well known that worldly wealth and delights are symbolically referred to in the holy writings by 'garments.' For these things are merely external garments, not directly attached to the person and of secondary importance. The characteristics of the soul, on the other hand, are man's essence, not departing from him as does the body. Hence, the external garments — worldly wealth and delights — were fit for Eisav, and were called the garments of Eisav, while the voice, the power to speak which emerges from the soul, was fit for Yaakov. Rivkah, who wanted Yaakov to acquire the garments of Eisav, material wealth, instructed this act to be symbolically performed. She alluded to this by having Yaakov put on the clothes of Eisav, so that his inner voice would be of Yaakov, while his external garments, the good of this world, would be that of Eisav."

Perhaps, with both Rav Shlomo HaKohen and the Malbim, we see that Hashem not only approves material wealth for those who use it properly but is showing that it is proper that such people should have it and use it well.

Rabbi Michael Kaplan - Heavenly Reversal

This week, the Torah gives us a single word that can transform the way we understand the mechanics of *tefillah* (prayer). The Pasuk states, "*Vaye'atar Yitzchak la'Hashem lenochach ishto, ki akarah hi*— And Yitzchak entreated Hashem opposite his wife, for she was barren" (*Bereishis* 25:21). Chazal (*Yevamos* 64a) immediately note something unusual. The Torah does not say, "*Vayitpalel*," he prayed, or,"*Vayitzak*," he cried out. It uses the rare, evocative word *vaye'atar*.

What does *vaye'atar* mean?

Chazal explain that the word denotes *a reversal,* a flipping of the natural order. And that nuance matters profoundly, because the Torah emphasizes, "*Ki akarah hi*—Rivkah was barren." She was unable to conceive not merely in circumstance, but literally. Her body itself lacked the natural capacity for conception. Yet Yitzchak's *tefillah* rose to such heights that it transcended built-in limitations and overturned them. His prayer did not move within nature; it rewrote nature.

Rav Baruch Sorotzkin elaborates. Most prayers flow through the world as Hashem designed it. We ask the Ribbono Shel Olam to send *beracha* through the channels He formed. Only on rare occasion does a *tefillah* emerge so genuine, so elevated, that it bends reality itself.

But Chazal (*Vayikra Rabbah* 10:5) add a puzzling idea: "Tefilah accomplishes half." What does that mean?

The Maggid of Trisk offers a beautiful interpretation. Before a person prays, his list of "needs" feels endless. But true *tefillah* brings clarity, and half of what we thought we needed simply falls away. Authentic prayer does not only change reality; it changes the person. And once a person is transformed, even slightly, his *tefillah* can ascend to the level of *Vaye'atar*, a prayer capable of overturning nature.

With that in mind, the principle becomes clear: when a person changes, the world around him begins to change as well.

If there is one truth that emerges from our Parsha, it is this: Hashem is not asking us to be perfect. He is asking us to be willing.

Yitzchak's *tefillah* overturned nature because it was honest.

What moves the world is not brilliance, nor strength, nor drama, nor grand gestures. It is the courage to shift even one degree closer to who we are meant to become.

Because the moment a person changes, even slightly, Shamayim changes everything around him.

Do not seek perfection. Seek movement. One *mitzvah*, one habit refined, one moment of genuine *tefillah* that clarifies what truly matters, and you will uncover the secret hidden that when we change, the story changes.



Rabbi Chaim Gross - Honoring Your Parents

Today, in 2025, life expectancy is more than double what it was a century ago. It is no longer unusual to find children in their seventies caring for parents nearing one hundred. Science attributes this dramatic rise to improved hygiene, nutrition, and medical advances. But **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman *zt"l*** saw something more.

Why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu choose now, in our time, asked Rav Shteinman, to bring about such an exponential increase in longevity? What is the spiritual purpose behind this shift?

Coming from Rav Shteinman, the question is profound. Born in 1914 and raised in Brisk, he grew up next door to the Brisker Rav and learned under Rav Aharon Kotler in the 1930s. In 1937, fleeing the Polish draft, he escaped to Switzerland, only to be interned in a labor camp. The Swiss authorities quickly released him from heavy work; he was too frail, too thin, too physically weak to bear a load.

That frailty, however, became part of his greatness.

Arriving in Eretz Yisrael in the 1940s, he emerged as a towering Torah figure, becoming a *rosh kollel* of Ponovezh, head of the Ponovezh Yeshiva Ketana, and later the guiding light of the Torah world. Yet despite his position, he lived with breathtaking simplicity. His daily food intake was a cucumber, a boiled potato, and a few spoonfuls of oatmeal. For six decades he slept on the same wooden board and thin mattress given to him by the Jewish Agency upon his arrival in Israel.

I once visited him on Chazon Ish Street 5 in Bnei Brak. The scene was unforgettable. The walls had not been touched, perhaps not even painted, in over thirty years. The old furniture, the peeling plaster radiated utter simplicity. There was not a trace of *gashmiyus*. Had gravity not insisted on a floor, I am not sure the apartment would have had one.

When he once came to London to speak and was offered a modest upholstered chair, he immediately declined. "Please," he said gently, "a simple chair is enough." He lived as pure spirit in a frail vessel, yet what a spirit it was.

Until his nineties, Rav Shteinman scarcely left the Beis Medrash. His *sefarim—Ayeles HaShachar*, his commentary on Chumash and Shas—reveal the depth of his mind. But then, in his 90s, something changed. He decided to travel the world to give *chizuk* to Jews everywhere. And so, with a body that seemed to defy its own limits, he journeyed to Mexico City, Berlin, France, Gibraltar and beyond, encouraging, advising and uplifting. Until his hundredth birthday, he continued these travels, and even afterward, his home was open day and night, receiving Jews from every walk of life.

So what was his answer? Why did Hashem orchestrate this massive rise in longevity?

To understand, we need to turn to this week's Parsha.

Chazal (*Devarim Rabbah* 1:15) praise Eisav's unparalleled excellence in the mitzvah of *kibbud av va'em*. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel testified that he served his own father his entire life yet never reached even one percent of Eisav's devotion. **The Zohar** states that no human being ever equaled him in this *mitzvah*. Even Yaakov Avinu observed that Eisav never once angered their father Yitzchak.

But why was Eisav so extraordinarily gifted in this area?

The Maharal explains that Eisav's *sechel*, his human intellect, was extremely strong, and *kibbud av* is a mitzvah that aligns perfectly

with *sechel*. Parents bring a child into the world, nurture him, protect him and it makes sense to honor them. A Torah Jew, however, faces the complication of knowing there is a third partner in creation: Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Awareness of Hashem's role can subtly lessen the exclusive focus placed on parents. Eisav, who lived entirely within this-worldly logic, had no such challenge and therefore excelled beyond all others.

With this, Rav Shteinman offered his breathtaking insight.

As we draw closer to the end of days, the long spiritual struggle with Eisav approaches its climax. Eisav's unparalleled strength in the *mitzvah* of honoring parents must be counterbalanced within Klal Yisrael. Therefore, Hashem has extended human life, so that we, the Jewish people, have the opportunity to perform the mitzvah of *kibbud av va'em* in a way that rivals Eisav's greatness. Longevity, therefore, is not merely biological. It is spiritual strategy, giving us more time to fulfill this foundational mitzvah.

And indeed, nurses and doctors in hospitals across Britain report that no one tends to their elderly parents with the devotion, patience, and dignity that Jewish families do. Klal Yisrael is rising to the challenge.

Rav Shteinman himself, tragically, did not have the opportunity to fulfill this *mitzvah* in its fullest form. His parents were murdered in the war, and he alone survived. Once he was invited to speak at a gathering in Bnei Brak about *kibbud av*, and he refused. When pressed for a reason, he said: "When I was ten years old, my mother once prepared food for me, and I refused to eat it. I do not feel worthy to speak about this *mitzvah*."

One imagines, from their vantage point in the World of Truth, that his parents are overflowing with nachas. At 104, his pure soul returned to its Creator, a journey he had prepared for his entire life. In his will, he left instructions reflecting the staggering humility that defined him:

No hespedim. No articles in newspapers. No announcements over radio or loudspeaker. Ten people are enough for the *levayah*. Do not call me "God-fearing," he said, lest I be embarrassed in the World of Truth. And finally: "Many people are mistaken about me. I advise them not to name children after me, but I do not forbid it."

What a towering giant. What a humble heart. May his memory be a blessing.



On the day Avraham died, Esav had gone astray, committing the three cardinal sins. In His mercy, Hashem took Avraham from this world so he would not see his grandson turn wicked. After his death, Yaakov was preparing a mourners' meal, and in walked Esav. Seeing the pot of red lentils, Esav refused to acknowledge the loss of the saintly Avraham. Instead, he told Yaakov to fill him up with the "red stuff," in an urgent demand. Esav wanted to recline as Yaakov poured the food down his gullet.

Many renderings for children indeed show pictures of Yaakov with a ladle, shoveling food into Esav's mouth. But that's not what the Torah says. It says that Esav asked for this, and then, "Yaakov gave Esav bread and a portion of lentils." Though Esav came with this outlandish request that the food simply be poured down his throat, Yaakov refused to go along with it. "You will sit at the table like a civilized human being," Yaakov declared. He gave Esav a bowl of lentils; a spoon; some bread. He set his a place at the table where he could partake of the meal respectfully, like the tzelem Elokim he was, not like the animals he hunted.

When this concept was presented before **R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv z"l**, he exclaimed, "Certainly, this must be the basic explanation of what happened there." Just because people have unusual ideas about which they feel very strongly, it doesn't mean we have to go along with them. We have an obligation to live up to what Hashem wants of us, not what society decides is the flavor of the month.

Abraham Lincoln is quoted as asking, "How many legs does a dog have, if you call the tail a leg?" He answered, "Four. Just because you call the tail a leg does not make it so."

This is what Yaakov answered Esav. "You may have your animalistic desires, and your misconceptions of what people are allowed to do, but I will not play along."

What a powerful message for us in today's world. And the Torah records it thousands of years ago.

Why Korban Pesach? – Rabbi Jeremy Golker

בראשית פרק כז

5*. 'And Rivka heard when Yitzchok spoke to Esav his son. And Esav went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.* ***6*** *And Rivka spoke to Yaakov her son, saying: 'Behold, I heard your father speak to Esav your brother, saying:* ***7*** *Bring me venison, and make me savoury food, that I may eat, and bless you before Hashem before my death.* ***8*** *Now therefore, my son, hearken to my voice according to that which I command you.* ***9*** *Go now to the flock and fetch me from there two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury food for your father, such as he loves;* ***10*** *and you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death.'*

Why **שְׁנֵי גְדָיֵי עִזִּים**? Rashi explains: **הָאֶחָד הִקְרִיב לְפִסְחוֹ וְהָאֶחָד עָשָׂה מַטְעַמִּים** - he sacrificed one as a Korban Pesach, and one he made into tasty foods.

Rav Elyakum Schlesinger says fascinatingly in his sefer **בית אב**:

Why did Yitzchok especially send Esav to go out to and get for him a korban Pesach? If it was seder night, he could have brought other korbonos such as the Shalmei chagigah or Olas Reiyah. Why did he specify that it was for a korban Pesach?

Perhaps the answer is as follows: There is something special about the Korban Pesach in that through it Klal Yisrael merit from it, even though they are not worthy. Bringing the Korban Pesach is a gift from Hashem, even though we are not ready – as it says in Yechezkiel **(יחזקאל פרק טז פסוק ז) "וְאַתְּ עֵרֹם וְעֶרְיָה"** – '*but you (Klal Yisrael) were naked and bare.*'[of Torah and Mitzvos]. Klal Yisrael didn't have any merit. And therefore, Hashem gave them the mitzvah of Korban Pesach so they would have that zechus.

And this is what Yitzchok understood, because he knew that Esav didn't have any merits, and therefore he sent Esav specifically to get a Korban Pesach so that it would be a merit of bracha for Esav.

This fits in with the premise that on the night of Pesach, on seder night, a person can be catapulted to a level that is beyond him.



וַיָּזֵד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד וַיָּבֹא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיֵף (25:29

Rashi cites a Midrash which explains "ayeif" means that Eisav was exhausted after having committed murder.



Rashi generally follows the literal interpretation of the verse, relying on the Midrash only when it supports the simple reading. Where in the verse do we see that "tired" does not simply mean physically exhausted? Furthermore, why does the act of murder cause a state of exhaustion?

A person can be either physically exhausted due to an expenditure of energy, or emotionally exhausted as a result of being involved in something that leaves him feeling completely unfulfilled. A person who mans a store all day long, without any customers entering may

be completely drained at the end of the day; this is not because of any physical strain, but because he did not accomplish anything.

Murder is an act which is completely destructive and cannot offer a person any true sense of accomplishment. Therefore, the Torah connects exhaustion to murder, for ultimately this is the feeling that the murderer experiences.

What must still be resolved is the question of where in the verse Rashi sees that the exhaustion is an emotional one, rather than a physical one.

The answer lies in the continuation of the narrative. Eisav comes home exhausted and requests to be fed. A person who is physically exhausted desires sleep, not food. Wanting to eat is very often a manifestation of emotional exhaustion. When a person feels emotionally unfulfilled, he turns to food to satisfy his craving for fulfilment.

Parshah Thoughts - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

עֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמַרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקּוֹתַי וְתוֹרֹתָי. - When Hashem spoke to Yitzchak, He mentioned that Avraham guards that which Hashem guards, meaning that Avraham has the same priorities as Hashem (26:5).

Sforno explains that Hashem's personal concern is doing kindness and helping the wayward find their way. Avraham took this as a personal initiative as well, by offering an open house and teaching people about Hashem.

These are two concepts which we can all try to incorporate, even in small ways, into our lives, and thereby join the elite guard of Hashem.

Parsha Points to Ponder by Rav Ozer Alport

When Rivkah heard that Eisav wanted to kill Yaakov for taking Yitzchok's blessings, she told Yaakov to travel to her brother Lavan and remain there for "yamim achadim" until Eisav's wrath subsided (27:44). - How long did Rivkah intend for Yaakov to stay there?

Yaakov offered to work for Lavan for seven years in exchange for permission to marry his daughter Rochel (29:18). **Rashi** explains that these seven years were the yamim achadim for which Rivkah told him to stay with her brother.

The **Chizkuni** says that Rivkah wanted Yaakov to go away for two years, which is the shortest length of time that could be called achadim (plural).

The **Ibn Ezra** writes that the term achadim (ones) refers to a period of less than 10 years, at which point it is no longer considered ones.

The **Chasam Sofer** questions how Eisav could have the gall to expect to receive the berachos that Yitzchok got from Avrohom (Ramban 27:4) when Eisav's transgressions caused Avrohom to die five years prematurely at the age of 175 so that he would not have to witness his grandson's sins (Rashi 25:19). Rashi says (27:2) that Yitzchok was 123 at this time, so he thought that he may die soon, as he was approaching the age of 127 at which his mother passed away.

Eisav reasoned that if Yitzchok's lifespan was 52 years shorter than his father's, Avrohom did not die before his time. He therefore said (27:41), "May the days of mourning for my father draw near," meaning that if Yitzchok dies soon, then Eisav was not responsible for Avrohom's early demise, in which case he was entitled to the berachos and Yaakov stole them from him. On the other hand, if Yitzchok outlived Avrohom by even one year, Eisav would have to acknowledge that he caused his grandfather to die prematurely and he did not deserve his blessings, which rightfully belonged to Yaakov.

The only way to resolve this issue was to wait 53 years, at which point Yitzchok would be 176, one year older than Avrohom's age when he passed away. Thus, Rivkah told Yaakov to remain with Lavan for yamim achadim – 53 years, at which point Eisav's anger would subside as he would be forced to admit that Yaakov deserved the berachos.

Meah Shearim



In 1874 Meah Shearim was founded by members of the Yishuv Hayashan and was among the first neighborhoods established outside the walls of Yerushalayim's Old City.

Living on the outskirts at that time was considered dangerous, as such areas were especially vulnerable to attack. Indeed, there were numerous incidents of robbery and even murder carried out by marauders.

To address these security concerns, the neighborhood was constructed in the style of a medieval fortress. The outer walls were thick and unbroken, with no doors or windows facing outward, providing protection for the residents within. In 1948, during Israel's War of Independence, the area was heavily bombarded, and many homes were destroyed.

The name **מאה שערים** is derived from a pasuk, (Breishis 26:12.) which describes how Yitzchak planted an area and was blessed with extraordinary success. **וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק בָּאָרֶץ הַהִוא וַיִּמְצָא בַּשָּׁנָה הַהֻוא מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים**. Rashi explains that the land yielded one hundred times more than expected. The name was chosen because the neighborhood was founded during the week of Parshas Toldos, in which this pasuk

appears. The name also alludes to the fact that the community originally had one hundred gates, giving the name Meah Shearim an additional layer of meaning.

UK*for*TORAH @gmail
Authentic Hashkofa from Gedolei Yisroel

Insights Into The Torah Perspective From Great Personalities Of The Last Generation & Beyond

These articles were sent out over the last two years in the weekly UK for Torah email updates, each one for the yahrtzeit of the subject of the article and sometimes accompanied by pecies written by him. It goes without saying that each Torah personality warrants full length books detailing his accomplishments and presenting his legacy.

The articles in this collection are simply snippets of insights into hashkofa which were taken to give ourselves chizuk, but do not represent even a fraction of what there is to write.

In general, we do not elaborate on the lives of those Torah luminaries who already have books written about them or who are well-known, and instead limit ourselves to presenting some of their insights. Articles about Torah luminaries who are less well-known (particularly to the English-speaking readership) usually include some historical and biographical information.

2 Kislev: Rav Aharon Kotler

Rav Aharon and His Battle

The towering greatness of Rav Aharon Kotler illuminated the Torah world. From his modest home in Lakewood, New Jersey, his influence spread across America and extended to Eretz Yisroel and Europe. Through tireless effort he demonstrated that, contrary to common belief, it was possible to build a genuine Torah-centered life in America.

Although the results during his lifetime seemed modest, the remarkable growth of today's Torah communities, yeshivos, and

kollelim in America owes a great deal to his vision, sacrifice, and the work of his talmidim.

It is impossible to summarize the many facets of Rav Aharon's life in a brief essay. Much has been written about his Torah leadership, his efforts to rebuild Torah after the war, his rescue activities during the war years, and his work for Torah in Eretz Yisroel. Here we will briefly focus on one crucial aspect of his leadership: preserving the separation between authentic Torah Judaism and the heterodox movements.

Judaism is founded on the belief that HaShem gave the Torah at Har Sinai and that we are obligated to keep it. A movement that does not accept the binding authority of the Torah as given cannot be considered authentic Judaism. Even if it shares certain beliefs, cultural ties, or practices, it represents a fundamentally different theology.

Beginning with the rise of the Reform Judaism and later Conservative Judaism—and continuing with other movements such as Reconstructionist Judaism or Masorti Judaism—these groups argued that the Torah needed to be adapted to modern conditions following emancipation and the industrial revolution. They sought to preserve the "spirit" of Judaism while altering or abandoning many of its commandments.

From the Torah perspective, however, the Torah cannot be altered. It is Toras HaShem and not subject to human modification.

After the Second World War, Torah-observant communities in America were a small minority, while the non-Orthodox movements were large, wealthy, and influential. Jewish federations, major philanthropists, newspapers, and communal organizations were largely under their control. Their well-funded seminaries produced polished leaders, while the few yeshivos struggled simply to survive.

Under these circumstances there was enormous pressure on Orthodox Jewry to cooperate or compromise with them. Yet faithful Jews understood that Torah principles cannot be compromised. What was needed was a clear and authoritative statement of the Torah position.

The Landmark Psak

Recognizing the urgency of the issue, Rav Aharon worked to formulate a clear psak halacha. He corresponded with leading gedolim in America and Eretz Yisroel, including Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik, the Brisker Rov of Yerushalayim.

The Brisker Rov responded with astonishment that the matter required discussion at all: how could those who believe in the Torah contemplate forming alliances with anti-Torah movements?

In 5716 (1956), leading gedolei Yisroel in America issued a historic ruling addressing the practical question of joining rabbinical organizations that included Reform or Conservative clergy. The psak ruled that it is forbidden to join such bodies—including organizations such as the New York Board of Rabbis or the Synagogue Council of America—either individually or communally.

The ruling was signed by Rav Aharon together with Rav Moshe Feinstein and many leading roshei yeshivah of the time, including Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky, Rav Yitzchok Hutner, Rav Gedaliah Schorr, Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz, and others. Later, many gedolim and chassidishe rebbes in Eretz Yisroel also endorsed the ruling.

This landmark psak established a clear boundary and helped preserve the integrity of Torah Judaism in America for generations to come.

A Crucial Step For Survival

The landmark ruling of the gedolim created significant controversy. Many people—even respected and learned figures—failed to

appreciate the necessity of publicly distancing Torah Judaism from the non-Orthodox movements.

Two major objections were raised. First, critics argued that such a ruling would damage relations between the different "streams of Judaism." What about *achdus* and *ahavas Yisroel*? Would Orthodox Jews not lose influence and communal power by refusing cooperation?

The second concern was financial. Much of the funding for yeshivos came from Jews affiliated with heterodox movements. Even Rav Aharon Kotler himself relied on such support for his yeshiva in Lakewood, New Jersey. If Orthodoxy openly rejected the legitimacy of Reform and Conservative movements, would donors withdraw their support?

Despite these concerns, the gedolei Yisroel dismissed such calculations. According to the Torah there are not multiple "streams of Judaism." The obligation to uphold the truth of the Torah cannot be compromised for the sake of influence, unity, or funding.

The Nature of the Psak

Rav Yitzchok Hutner later clarified the nature of the ruling. Throughout history, rabbinic decrees often considered whether the public could realistically accept them. However, when the issue concerns *ikkar hadin*—a fundamental principle of Torah law—such considerations are irrelevant. If a core principle is endangered, the obligation of Torah leaders is to state the truth clearly.

He therefore emphasized that the ruling was not a new prohibition or policy decision, but simply a declaration of existing Torah law: forming religious partnerships with Reform or Conservative clergy undermines the very essence of Klal Yisroel.

Rav Moshe Feinstein reiterated this point in later responsa. The ruling, he explained, was not a communal enactment but an intrinsic

prohibition. Even if some chose to ignore it, the halachic status remained unchanged.

The Long-Term Impact

Rav Aharon regarded this ruling as essential for the survival of Torah Judaism in America. In hindsight, it played a crucial role in allowing a strong and independent Torah community to develop.

Not all Orthodox communities accepted the ruling. Some rabbis continued participating in joint organizations with non-Orthodox clergy. Over time, this became one of the dividing lines between what later became known as "Modern Orthodoxy" and the yeshivah world. In many such communities the boundaries between Orthodox and heterodox ideology gradually blurred.

Later Controversies

Decades later, similar issues resurfaced when the political group "Eretz Hakodesh" joined the World Zionist Organization. Critics argued that participation in the WZO implicitly legitimizes Reform and Conservative groups that are also partners in the organization.

Although proponents claimed they joined in order to combat Reform influence, opponents noted that similar arguments had been rejected decades earlier. The gedolim had ruled that even if cooperation might bring practical benefits, granting legitimacy to heterodox movements in a joint Jewish framework is prohibited.

Clarifying the Principle

In another responsum, Rav Moshe Feinstein clarified an important distinction. Cooperation with non-Orthodox individuals in purely practical contexts—such as working in the same company or dealing with secular government bodies—is not inherently problematic. Governments represent all citizens regardless of religious belief.

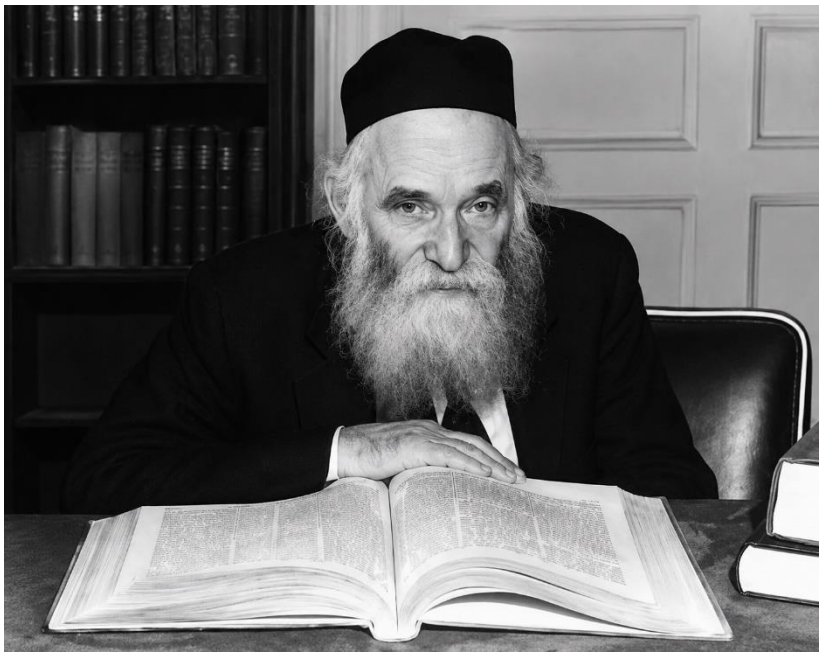
However, a Jewish communal body that deals specifically with Jewish religious or cultural affairs must operate according to the

Torah. In such contexts, forming a joint framework with those who reject the authority of Torah is not permissible.

Upholding the Legacy

The yahrtzeit of Rav Aharon—2 Kislev 5723—serves as a time to reflect on his legacy. Beyond his immense contributions to Torah learning and the rebuilding of yeshivos, he also established a clear principle: authentic Judaism is defined by complete commitment to the Torah as given at Sinai, without modification to suit contemporary pressures.

His firm stand helped ensure that Torah Judaism in America could grow independently and remain faithful to its foundations.



(Rav) Aharon Kotler's זצ"ל mother passed away when he was three. And his father passed away when he was when he was nine. He was taken in and raised by his uncle. - Rebbe Aharon went to learn in Slobodka yeshiva.

His older sister, who was religious but "secular educated," would write to him in yeshiva to try to persuade him to forsake yeshiva for the glories of the outside world!!

She once wrote to him, 'if you stay in Yeshiva and don't get a secular education and make something of yourself, then in fifty years from now no one will ever know that an Aharon Kotler ever existed in the world'.



יִקְרְבוּ יְמֵי אֵבֶל אָבִי, וְאֶהֱרְגָה, אֶת-יַעֲקֹב אָחִי (כז/מא)

How can it be that **עשו** who was so careful not to upset his father and therefore didn't want to kill **יעקב** while **יצחק** was alive, could fall so low to kill his brother?

עשו knew that as long as **יעקב** is learning **תורה** there is no chance of killing him, since his **תורה** will not let the **מלאך המות** have any power over him. Therefore **עשו** said I will wait until my father dies, then **יעקב** won't be able to learn **תורה** since it is forbidden for an **אבל** to learn **תורה**, and even that which an **אבל** may learn won't be learned **בשמחה**. Then I will be able to kill him.

It was not his father's feelings that kept him from killing his brother during his father's lifetime. Rather, **עשו** was simply waiting for an interruption in his brother's learning! (**שער בת רבים**)

Once the **בית הלוי** entered shul and saw that a fist fight had broken out between two people, both of whom had yahrzeit and both claimed that they had the right to daven at the amud. The **בית הלוי** said, 'now I understand the meaning of **עשו**'s words **יִקְרְבוּ יְמֵי אֵבֶל אָבִי, וְאֶהֱרְגָה, אֶת-יַעֲקֹב אָחִי (כז/מא)**. Of course, **עשו**, who pretended to be a fine and respected person could not just go and kill his brother. Rather, he planned, 'I will wait until our father dies and both of us will have a **חיוב** to daven at the amud, and there will be an opportunity to get into a fight with **יעקב** and then I will kill him and it will not look bad for after all it was all done in the honour of my father.'

When you are davening in deep concentration and thought, know that prayer is accepted with the same amount of concentration it is said with. ~ Rabbeinu David Ben Yosef Avudraham zt"l

The Meat That I Love – Rabbi Dr. Sholom Springer



Yitzchak asks Esav: **הָבִיאָה לִי מַטְעַמִּים כַּאֲשֶׁר אֲהַבְתִּי** '***Bring me the delicacies the way I love them***.'

This becomes the central question: What exactly is "the meat that Yitzchak loves"?

Because the psukim present several difficulties:

- Yitzchak is extremely old and nearly blind — yet insists on a specific flavour.
- Barzillai HaGiladi at age 80 says he can no longer taste food; Yitzchak is far older.
- Rashi says goat meat tastes identical to venison — so why send Esav hunting?
- **The Ramban** intensifies the puzzle: Yitzchak *longed* for Esav's meat all day.

This does not fit our image of Yitzchak Avinu. So what is really happening?

Taste and meaning — טעם

Rabbi Morderchai Miller highlights a crucial linguistic truth:

- **טעם** means *taste*.
- **טעם** also means *meaning*.

When something loses meaning, it loses taste. He illustrates this with the story of two businessmen who loved Sunday golf — because it refreshed them for meaningful weekday work. Once they retired and played daily, golf lost all meaning and therefore all "taste."

This becomes the foundation of the shiur: Taste comes from purpose. Purpose comes from mitzvah.

The Midrash of Rebbi and Antoninus

A midrash describes Antoninus eating Rebbi's cold Shabbos food and finding it more delicious than hot weekday dishes.

Rebbi explains: **"שבת — תבלין אחד חסר." - *This meal is missing one spice — Shabbos.*** Shabbos itself is a spiritual flavour. Food can carry spiritual taste beyond physical taste.

This is the key to understanding Yitzchak.

Esav's meat: saturated with mitzvah

The Torah says: **וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו** - '***Yitzchak loved Esav because of the game in his mouth.'***

The Ramban explains: Yitzchak constantly longed for Esav's meat — not because of gourmet taste, but because of what it *contained*.

Esav excelled in **kibbud av**:

- He hunted with effort.
- He prepared the food meticulously.
- He wore special honour-clothes when serving his father.
- Yitzchak repeats **לי, לי, לי**— *do it for me*, infusing the act with mitzvah-intent.

Even if Esav's motives were flawed, the **maaseh** was perfect. And a perfect mitzvah leaves a spiritual imprint. The meat carried the flavour of mitzvah. That is the "meat that Yitzchak loved."

Rivka's brilliance: matching mitzvah with mitzvah

Rivka understands this completely. She quotes Yitzchak's three **לי** instructions — and adds her own: **"לֵךְ נָא... וְקַח לִי"** *Go and take for me.*

Yaakov's act requires enormous mesirus nefesh:

- He is **איש תם**, the embodiment of honesty.
- Deception is against his nature.
- Yet he obeys his mother — performing a supreme act of **kibbud eim**.

This emotional and moral struggle equals Esav's physical exertion. Thus, Yaakov's food carries the same mitzvah-flavour.

Therefore:

- Yitzchak cannot tell the difference between goat and venison — not because of tastebuds, but because **both dishes contain identical spiritual טעם**.
- The mitzvah-taste is what he detects, and Yaakov's matches Esav's.

The deeper message

The entire drama of the blessings hinges on one idea:

Yitzchak tastes mitzvah, not meat.

The "meat that I love" is the spiritual flavour of **kibbud av / kibbud em**, infused through effort, intention, and devotion.

Rivka ensures Yaakov's act carries equal mitzvah-power, allowing him to receive the blessings.

- This teaches a profound truth: Spiritual taste never fades.
- What Yitzchak loved was not venison — but **the mitzvah embedded within it**.
- Meaning gives taste.
- Mitzvah gives meaning.

And when our actions carry mitzvah-purpose, they become the "meat that Hashem loves."

TORAH TAVLIN

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

וימשהו ויאמר הקול קול יעקב והידים ידי עשו וגו' (כז-כב)

Rashi explains that Yitzchok perceived the difference between Yaakov and Esav, because Yaakov always spoke softly and solicitously to his father, while Esav spoke harshly and impolitely.



The question is asked: Just as Yaakov changed the feel of his hands to withstand recognition, why didn't he also change the tone of his voice and speak as Esav would have?

The Shearis Menachem answers that we see from here that Yaakov was able to imitate everything - touch, taste, etc., to be similar to Esav, but under no circumstance could he bring himself to speak in contempt and in the vile manner of Esav. So too, the descendents of Yaakov should never fall prey to the traps and pitfalls that lay in our way, so as never to talk and act in the contemptuous and vile manner of the other nations.

A great Chassidishe Rebbe once said:

"Those whose piety amounts to reciting the entire Tehillim after davening, do not impress me. It took King David 70 years to compose the Tehillim, and they can go through the whole thing in just one hour!"

Torah Gems

ויתרוצצו הבנים בקרבה ותאמר אם כן למה זה אנכי וכו' (כה-כב)

When Rivkah was pregnant with Yaakov and Esav, she suffered much discomfort. Rashi quotes **חז"ל**, that when she would pass the doors of the Yeshiva of Shem and Aver, Yaakov would struggle to emerge, but when she passed temples of idol-worship, she would feel Esav struggle within.

The Sefer Mayanos Hanetzach comments that many crucial factors in a child's development depend upon the mother. If a mother is accustomed to coming to the doors of Torah and Mitzvos and she shows an appreciation for a Religious way of life, the "Yaakov" within the child strives to emerge, but if she prefers a culture alien to our heritage, the child's "Esav"-like tendencies will struggle to dominate the child's life.

We see this further from **Harav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ZT"L** who writes that the Hebrew word for mother "**אם**", is spelled with the same letters as the Hebrew word for If - "**ואם**". The mother is the "**אם**" - the "If" - a crucial factor in child rearing. If the input of the mother is consistent with her goals, the child will very likely follow in her ways.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ויעתר לה' לנכח אשתו כי עקרה היא וכו' (כה-כא)

Chazal tell us that Yitzchok and Rivkah stood in opposite corners of their room and silently poured out their hearts to Hashem, to bless them with children. These **תפילות שבלב** - prayers of the heart were only answered in Yitzchok's case, because he was the son of a Tzaddik, even though Rivkah's **תפילות** were no less heartfelt.

R' Chaim Soloveitchik ZT"L once noticed a man praying, shouting the words at the top of his voice. Indeed, sometimes a person's

fervour and emotion in prayer become so intense that one is overwhelmed and the words emerge with a loudness characteristic of someone who screams in pain or emits a shout of joy. In this instance, however, R' Chaim detected that this performance was nothing more than an act with much noise, but nowhere near the **כוונה** - concentration, that was appropriate.

He felt it necessary to rescue the man from his own improper intentions, so he gently approached him with the following question. "The Torah states that on the vestments of the Kohen Gadol, there were bells, so that when he entered the **בית המקדש** - the holy sanctuary, his movements would be heard by all those present.

The question is: What need was there for these bells and this particular method to herald the presence of the Kohen Gadol? Would it not have been sufficient for the High Priest to daven in a loud voice, and thereby alert everyone that he was present?"

The man looked at R' Chaim with a poor excuse for a hurt look. "But I could not contain myself, Rebbi," he blurted out defensively, not daring to miss the point, "I was so deeply engrossed in my davening that I didn't even realize I was crying in my prayer!"

R' Chaim smiled as he softly took hold of the man's arm and led him away. "Look at the way our great forefathers davened to Hashem. Learn from the manner in which our father Yitzchok and our mother Rivkah davened." R' Chaim stopped and looked intently at the man who had bowed his head. "What the Torah is telling us, is that we must learn how to cry in silence!"

"Why didn't Yaakov kick in protest when his brother Esav tried to get out, as their mother passed a house of idol-worship? - Because a Ben-Torah does not waste time involving himself in* הפגנות *- useless demonstrations!" ~ R' Chaim Shmuelevitz ZT"L.

ויזד יעקב נזיד ויבא עשו מן השדה והוא עיף וגו' (כג-ח)



This is the first time the *Torah* uses the word "**עיף**" - "tired". When a word is introduced in the *Torah*, for the first time in a certain context, we must learn from that usage. What can we learn here?

R' Nissan Alpert ZT"L tells us. Avrohom was a busy man. He traveled from place to place, serving guests, being tested and passing those tests successfully, and we never find that he was tired. He lived for 175 years and had a full and very involved life and yet the *Torah* never describes him as tired. We know from our own experiences of great people who are very busy, involved in a million things, and we never perceive them as tired.

The lesson here is that someone who is involved with a spiritual dimension to his life has the energy for many more things than someone who is just existing a mundane life. Esav was busy doing sins on the day he sold his birthright and he was not rejuvenated by anything spiritual of any meaning. Therefore, he was "*tired*."

If we fill our lives with meaning, with spiritual contact in the things we do, we will have the spice and sparkle which will keep us from getting stale. Only someone who lives a life of materialism, without letting *Hashem* into his world, will become "*tired*". Let us be like Avrohom and have the energy for much more in our lives.

The greatest pleasure a person can have is the pleasure of connecting with Hashem ~ Steipler Gaon.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ואלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק וגו' (כה-יט)

Many years ago, there lived a wealthy man in the town of Dubno, by the name of Yitzchok. He was referred to thus, without the customary title of "Reb" before his name, because he was far from a respectable citizen of the city. Although he had much money and owned a large, vibrant business, he was universally regarded as closefisted and even miserly. No one had ever succeeded in squeezing out even a few pennies for tzedakah from this rich man; no one that is, until the famous **Dubno Maggid, R' Yaakov Krantz ZT''L** approached him for a worthy cause.

As expected, the wealthy miser turned him down and refused to part with any money. All the Maggid's requests were in vain. When the Maggid realized that his conventional methods of persuasion were not working with Yitzchok the miser, he changed tracks and tried a different approach.

"If you do not give tzedakah," R' Yaakov called out in a loud voice, hoping to attract attention, "The world will think you are a Mamzer! Is that what you want? That the world should consider you a mamzer!?"

Naturally, this comment got everybody's attention, including the now outraged Yitzchok. How dare anyone call into question his lineage? What right did the Maggid have to say such words, which Yitzchok knew, were obviously not true? He had to know what the Maggid was talking about.

R' Yaakov explained. "In Parshas Toldos, Rashi states that the scorners of that generation, would say that Sarah conceived Yitzchok, her son, from

Avimelech, and not from Avrohom. Hashem, therefore, formed the image of Avrohom onto Yitzchok's face, so as to dispel all doubt. The gemara (**בבא קמא צז**) tells us that Avrohom went a bit further and

created a coin with the image of Yitzchok on one side and Avrohom on the other, so that even people who were unable to see father and son in person, would be able to acquire this coin and see for themselves that Yitzchok was truly the son of Avrohom - and not, G-d forbid, a mamzer from Avimelech."

The rich man was still smarting from the Maggid's comment and was still unconvinced. "So, what does that have to do with me?" he asked.

The Dubno Maggid looked at him sharply. "When Yitzchok would take the coin out of his pocket, only then everybody could see that he wasn't a mamzer. But if Yitzchok never takes a coin out of his pocket, how could anyone know the truth and not think he's really a bastard?" The rich man understood the Maggid's intention and gave a sizable donation.

הוא היה אומר

R' Yeshaya Halevi Horowitz ZT"L (Shel"ah HaKodosh) would say:

"Of all the superior character traits possessed by our ancestor Yaakov, the *Torah* chooses "*an honest man*" as the highest praise, to teach us that nothing is more worthy of our respect and admiration than a life lived with honesty and righteousness."

R' Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin ZT"L (The Netzi"v) would say:

"The *P'lishtim* were jealous of Yitzchok and his fabulous wealth because although there were many rich *P'lishtim*, none could approach the wealth of Yitzchok. And most rich people are jealous of someone who has more than them especially when that person is a Jew."



I'm going to tell you something: there is a decision that every child makes, often subconsciously.

If a child decides, "*My parents don't understand me,*" then somewhere inside, the child also decides, "*I don't need to understand my parents.*" If my parents don't make an effort to understand me, why should I make an effort to understand them?

Let me show you perhaps the greatest *mekor* for this concept.

The Torah says, **"וְיִצְחָק אֲהַב אֶת עֵשָׂו כִּי צַיִד בְּפִיו"** — Yitzchak loved Esav because he brought him food.

How can that be? Yitzchak Avinu was the ultimate **תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך**. **The *Sifrei*** describes his extraordinary level of *mesirus nefesh* — he was prepared to be slaughtered at the Akeidah, and he took no credit for it. The Gemara even associates the letter **כ'**, which is bent over, with *anavah*. Yitzchak represents the ultimate humility and *temimus*.

And yet the Torah tells us that he loved Esav because **"ציד בפיו"** — because Esav brought him meat.

Yitzchak Avinu was a man who cared about meat? Did he really love his son because Esav could give him a good steak?

And then, when Yitzchak wants to give Esav a *bracha*, he tells him, "Go out and bring me some meat first."

How does that make sense?

Imagine going to a Rebbe for a *bracha* and the Rebbe says, "No, no, first bring me some lamb chops, and then we'll talk!"

Obviously, Yitzchak Avinu did not care about the meat.

But Yitzchak knew that Esav cared about the meat.

And that is the incredible lesson.

Yitzchak understood that if this was something Esav cared about, then Yitzchak was going to show an interest in it too. He wanted to connect with his son through something that mattered to his son.

That is what made Yitzchak Avinu such an incredible father. He understood that parenting means trying to enter your child's world — even when that world is not necessarily your world.

And if, *chas veshalom*, you have a child who is struggling, or whose direction in life is unclear, this becomes even more important.

Your first instinct may be to say, "What are you doing? Why are you listening to this? Why are you interested in that?"

But imagine instead saying:

"Tell me about it. What do you like about it? What interests you? You're into sports? Tell me why. I want to understand. I want to get a *geshmak* in what you enjoy."

You don't have to agree with everything your child likes. You don't even have to approve of everything. And if, *chas veshalom*, something is genuinely *treif*, that is a different discussion.

But for all the things in between, sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is simply show a little interest.

Because when your child feels, **"My parent wants to understand me,"** it opens the door to something much deeper:

"Maybe I can understand my parent too."

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

Heroic Silence - Rav Michel Aharon, the son of the Yesod Ha'avodah of Slonim, heroically keeps his lips sealed, in a very challenging situation.

Welcome back to **מדרש ומעשה**, sharing a story for this week's **פרשה, פרשת תולדות**.

The past week was the **יארצייט** of someone named **ר' מיכאל אהרן**, who was the son of the **יסוד העבודה** of **סלאנים**. The **יסוד העבודה** was the first **סלאנימער רבי**, and the next **סלאנימער רבי** was his grandson, the **דברי שמואל**. In between was his son, **ר' מיכאל אהרן**.

ר' מיכאל אהרן was a great **תלמיד חכם, צדיק**, but he was a **נסתר**. For his living, he made wine, and sold wine. Now, one of the customers for his wine was the **יסוד העבודה**'s **בית מדרש**, his father's **בית מדרש**. They would buy it for **שבת**, for the **טישן**, for the different times there was wine.

At one point, a competitor popped up, and he was selling wine, presumably for cheaper, and even the **בית מדרש** itself started buying that wine. The first time the **יסוד העבודה** tasted that wine, he was able to tell that it was diluted with water. It was at a **טיש**, and he turned to his son, and he said, "What happened to the wine?"

His son didn't answer. And the **רבי** said, he was upset, he said with what's called **קפידה**, he says, "Do you think just because you're my son, you're allowed to steal?"

Once again, **ר' מיכאל אהרן** didn't say anything.

Only afterwards did some people come to the **רבי** and explain that it wasn't **ר' מיכאל אהרן**'s wine, that they hadn't been getting that wine for a while.

The **רבי** said at that point that that was when he was able to realize the greatness of his son. He said, "Especially because my son understands how serious it is for me to get upset with him, that

קפידה, that upsetness, would have affected his life in this world and the next, and despite that, he didn't say a word."

In this week's **פרשה**, we have the phrase **הקול קול יעקב והידים ידי עשו**. And **חז״ל** said, when the voice of **יעקב** is learning **תורה**, is **דאוועגען**, so then **אין הידים ידי עשו**.

That dismantles the weapons that are the hands of **עשו**. Now, **מדה טובה** we know is always **מרובה**, and **לשון הרע**, speaking evil about someone, in the introduction to the **חפץ חיים**, he brings from the **זוהר הקדוש**, that it can cause **חס ושלום** death to Jews even far away from where the **לשון הרע** is spoken. So **מדה טובה מרובה**, someone who doesn't say something, and here, even a **מדת חסידות** to not say anything, and one isn't supposed to put the blame on someone else, but he didn't even say it wasn't me. So a power like that of keeping silent at such times has a huge amount of power, the **טוב** even more than **לשון הרע**.

So just as **הקול קול יעקב**, what **יעקב** says has tremendous power to enable us to be victorious over our enemies, so too we have to remember the tremendous power of heroic **שתיקה**, of keeping quiet at a time where something negative could be said, even in the face of tremendous consequences, as **ר׳ מיכאל אהרן** did.

That's a form of heroism that can add strength to **עם ישראל**'s army, and to enable us hopefully to be victorious over those who oppose us. Have a wonderful week and a wonderful **שבת**.