

# THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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## RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

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### PARASHA INSIGHTS

Truth is one of the pillars of the world. (Avot 1:18). The Gemara stresses the importance of speaking the truth by relating that it was due to a lack of honest men that Jerusalem was destroyed (Shabbat 119). Furthermore someone who distorts the truth is considered to be like an idol worshipper (Sanhedrin 92). Our sages define Yaakov's character as that of a man of truth. As we read in Micha 7:20 Titen Emet LeYaakov (Hashem gave truth to Yakov). Yet it would seem that throughout this Parsha, and later on in his life (when he dealt with Lavan), the torah seems to portray a way of deceit about Yakov.

If Yakov was so truthful, and always cherished the truth how is it possible that he "stole the Bechora - birthright from Eisav. How could he walk into his fathers room and state that he was Eisav? Furthermore, later on, we are told that Lavan made a business deal with Yaakov, that all the cattle that would be spotted would go to Yaakov and all the rest would be Lavans. Yet we find that Yaakov ends up taking a rod and placing near the sheep at mating time, and seems to manipulate the sheep that would be born, in order for him to profit.(37:40)

In order to understand Yaakov's Midah of truth we shall delve briefly into the commandment

not to lie, and to tell the truth. Rabenu Yona (Shaarei Teshuva 3:178-186.) lists nine different categories of lies. A careful analysis of these nine categories shows that all of the lies are told either for the purpose of cheating another person, or for no apparent reason. R' Yona, however, does not list those who lie for a "good" purpose or for a "good" reason. It would seem that in such circumstances perhaps that lying might be permitted. Chazal tell us that Hashem Himself acted in a similar manner. When informed that she was to have a child, Sarah responded ".... my husband is old (Bereishit 18:12). Hashem, relayed to Avraham that Sarah had said "I (Sarah) have aged" (ibid. 13). Why did Hashem feel the need to alter the facts? Because "great is peace for even Hashem altered the facts for its sake" (Baba Metzia 87a). If relaying Sarah's precise words would have somehow harmed even ever so slightly the great love that Avraham had for Sarah, this falls under the category of lying for the sake of peace. "Yaakov was an "Ish Tam", a wholesome man, abiding in tents" (Bereishit 25:27). Rashi explains the term "Ish Tam": "as is his heart, so is his mouth, one who is not sharp in deceiving is called "tam".

Yet we see that Yakov seemed to deceive his father. Let us take a closer look at the events.

When Yitzchak spoke to Eisav and informed him of his plans to bestow upon him the special blessing, this conversation occurred in a private room. The torah tells us that Rivka heard what Yitzchak said to Eisav, how did she hear if she was not there? Targum Yonatan Ben Uziel writes that Rivka learned about this conversation through Ru'ach Ha'kodesh, through prophecy. She beheld a prophetic vision informing her of Yitzchak's plans to bless Eisav. ►

1 KISLEV 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 4:02 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:12 PM

> MAZAL TOV

JOANA & ABRAHAM COHEN  
on the birth of a boy



### THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"Tears come from the heart  
and not from the brain"

### > UPCOMING EVENTS

- 12<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2018  
101 Judaism Series Learning
  - 16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2018  
Student Dinner at Kinloss
  - 5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2018  
Childers Chanukah Event
  - 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2019  
International weekend for Young Professionals
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019  
Young Professionals Ski Trip
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#### DVAR TORAH

Parasha Insights  
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

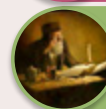
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When Rivka instructed Yaakov to disguise himself as Eisav and deceive his father, she acted not as a mother, but as a prophetess. She understood through prophecy that it was her duty to ensure that the blessing reaches Yaakov, and not Eisav.

Rivka received a prophecy that Yitzhak's blessing must be bestowed upon Yaakov, and not Eisav. Yaakov thus had no choice but to heed his mother's instructions, and, despite his truthful nature, disguise himself as Eisav.

While "lying", Yaakov did his best to ensure that the words that came out his mouth were true. Yaakov's response to his father's asking "who are you my son" (Bereishit 27:18), was "it is I, Eisav your firstborn". The Zohar tells us that while saying these words, Yaakov was thinking "I am who I am and Eisav is your firstborn" (see Rashi for a similar interpretation).

When the commentators explain Yaakov's remark to mean, "Anochi; Eisav Bechorecha," they seek to emphasize the extent of Yaakov's commitment to Emet, to perfect truth. Even in a situation where he was required to speak

falsely, where he received prophetic instruction to disguise as somebody else, he could not bring himself to speak an outright lie. He did whatever he could to minimize the "charade." When Yitzhak asked Yaakov (thinking he was Eisav), "How did you find [game] so quickly, my son," Yaakov replied that God assisted him – something that Eisav would never say. Yaakov made no attempt to hide his true nature, to imitate Eisav's voice or manner of speech. So committed he was to speaking the truth, that even when he was required to disguise himself, he did so as minimally as possible.

Rav Dessler explains that when Yaakov said "It is I, Eisav your firstborn", he meant precisely what he said. He was "Eisav", but not the man going by the name of Eisav, rather the person who had the characteristics that Yitzhak thought present in Eisav, thereby rendering him deserving of the blessings. You my father Yitzhak think that "Eisav" is the righteous among your two sons, if so "It is I, Eisav your firstborn" – I am truly the righteous among your two sons, therefore I am the "Eisav" you are looking for. Had Yitzhak known the true nature

of Eisav, he would certainly have desired to bless Yaakov and not Eisav.

Hashem created the world with Truth. The word Emet is Hashem's seal or signatory. Truth therefore represents seeking purpose and peace for creation. That is what Hashem did when he appeared to Avraham and related what Sarah thought, and that is what Yakov by abiding to the prophecy of his mother and seeking the future peace of the world was doing here.

The permission we have to alter the facts for the sake of peace, however has its limitations, and even when permitted we must follow in the footsteps of Yaakov and lessen the lie as best we can. Our Sages teach that a habitual liar will not witness the presence of the Shechinah. [Sotah 42A].

May Hashem lead us always in the path of truth. ■ **Shabbat Shalom**

## RABBI DANIEL FRIEDMAN - SENIOR RABBI OF HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB SYNAGOGUE



### WAS YITZHAK A BLIND FOOL?

Yitzhak is getting old. Fearing that his final days are approaching, he calls upon his favoured son, Esav, desiring to bless him. Rivkah hears Yitzhak's instructions to his son and intercepts the call. She quickly commands their son, Yaakov, to imitate his brother and seize the blessings.

We know that Yitzhak was blind. But how could our wise patriarch be so foolish? How could he neglect to see which of his sons was worthier of the holy blessings? Surely, he could not have been so clueless as to the foibles of his elder son!

The Alshich hakadosh explains that Yitzhak knew exactly who his two sons were. He knew that Yaakov loved learning Torah and Esav loved a good piece of steak. However, he reasoned that if Esav enjoyed the pleasures of this world and

Yaakov enjoyed spirituality, the easiest solution to providing for both of his children was to offer Esav the bounty of this physical world and save the pleasures of Heaven for Yaakov. Therefore, first he called Esav to bless him with all the material wealth of this physical world. Later, he would call upon Yaakov to bless him with Heavenly wealth.

Nevertheless, Rivkah disagreed. She wanted Yaakov – as heir to the family's values – to receive the blessings of both this world and the World to Come. In her mind, the Children of Israel deserved abundant reward for all their righteous efforts. What's more, she reasoned, if we were to receive reward only in the next world, people would feel disenchanting with good behaviour. Imagine if all the good people, destined to be rewarded in Heaven, endured lives of misery in this world. Who would buy into such a system? Very quickly people would get the message that crime pays and that the wicked prosper! And so Rivkah decided that she would have to capture the blessings of both the physical and spiritual realms for her holy son, Yaakov.

Was Rivkah right or was Yitzhak?

Clearly, Yitzhak's subsequent warm interaction with Yaakov, as he blessed him and bid him farewell upon his departure to Aram, demonstrated his acknowledgment of Rivkah's wise determination.

Judaism is not an ascetic religion. We don't believe in living a life of physical and material deprivation. Hakadosh baruch hu wants us to derive pleasure from His wonderful universe. And that means all levels of creation, from the lowest physical plains to the highest spiritual realms.

But more importantly, enjoying this world is the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy and blessing. You are a great-grandchild of Yaakov! As a result of the cleverness of your mother Rivkah, your father Yitzhak blessed you with material, physical, and spiritual bounty! You are entitled to enjoy both this world and the next in unlimited abundance! May you be blessed with all the blessings of Heaven and Earth!

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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## OUR CHACHAMIM

### RABBI YITZCHAK ELCHANAN - THE RAV OF KOVNO

Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spector, who was known as the Rav of all Israel, was the Rabbi of Kovno. He was born in 1817 (5577) and died in 1896 (5656). He led various communities, amongst others the city of Novardok from 1851 to 1864 (5611 to 5624). Yet his renown in the Jewish world comes essentially from the last place where he served as Rav, the city of Kovno, where he remained for more than 30 years.

He became the leader of his generation, and regardless of the domain, be it communal good or individual life, nothing was done without his advice or his consent. Questions were asked of him from all corners of the world, and a great part of his thousands of responses were compiled in his books Beer Yitzchak, Nachal Yitzchak, and Ein Yitzchak.

The Natziv (Rabbi Naphtali Tzvi Judah Berlin) of Volozhin said that Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spector had merited all this because of his exception diligence in Torah study. "He is the greatest matmid [diligent one in Torah study] of our generation," said the Natziv, who was also known for his exceptional diligence.

Indeed, when we read the story of his life it is impossible not to marvel at the great work ethic that he demonstrated from his earliest age. To give an idea of the attention that he drew, even in the eyes of the greatest of matmidim, we shall give a few examples.

It goes without saying that from his earliest youth, Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan was plunged into study practically without any stop. Even when, for whatever reason, he had to leave the Beit Midrash, he would begin leaving the hall while still reading a book, continuing to do so until he approached the table closest to the exit. There he would lay it down open to the page that he had been studying. When returning to the Beit Midrash, he would pick the book up and once again begin studying where he left off, without the least delay.

When he arrived early at his father-in-law's for lunch and the meal was not yet ready, without losing a moment he would wash his hands and quickly eat a piece of dry bread left on the table. Even before those of the household had the time to ask him to wait for the meal, he was already off to the Beit Midrash.

At the end of Yom Kippur, he would leave synagogue running. He would then arrive home, perform Havdalah without waiting, and then eat something and run out once again to the Beit Midrash – even while the last of the faithful still hadn't had time to leave!

These are but a few examples that point to the nature of his study, which allowed him to become a great teacher in Israel.

Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan was the greatest authority of his generation. People the world over addressed themselves to him. One of the areas for which he was most sought was that of agunot (married women whose husbands had disappeared, and who could not remarry without proof that their husbands were dead), where he worked wonders. The pain of women in misery, whose husbands had disappeared without leaving a trace, shook the heart of the Rav of all Israel. In order to find a way to liberate these women in accordance with the law of the Torah, he invested all of his energy into every question brought before him, without leaving himself any time to eat or sleep. And when G-d allowed him to find a legal allowance to allow a woman to remarry, his joy was very great. In numerous cases involving agunot, the strength of his Torah demonstrated itself and everyone could see that Heaven was in agreement with him.

When he was still leading the community of Novardok, he was presented with a question concerning an agunah whose husband was presumed to have drowned in the Mediterranean ("waters without end"). He was asked to see if there existed any doubt as to whether the husband could have managed to reach the coast on the other side of the sea. He remained studying this question for days and nights, and came to the conclusion that the husband was in fact dead and that the woman had the right to remarry without hesitation.

It happened that on the following day, people found the body of a man who had been washed ashore. In carefully examining his clothes, a set of keys was found that definitely belonged to the missing man.

In another case, there was an agunah whose husband had disappeared, and the Rav of the city where this woman lived had not found a way to liberate her from her status. The question was brought before the Rav of Kovno, and he examined it for a long time. In the end he allowed the woman to remarry. When the Rav of the woman's town found out about this decision, he expressed many doubts. He even went to Kovno to challenge the decision itself. Rav Yitzchak Elchanan listened with great patience to this Rav, who himself was great in Torah, yet in the end he said, "I gave this woman complete permission, and I do not want to come back to it."

When the Rav returned back to his home, it happened that his city decided to excavate certain areas around town. During this operation, the body of a man was discovered at one of the excavation sites, and it was later identified by its clothing as being that of the missing man. ■



## HALACHOT

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### SOAKING ONE'S FEET IN HOT WATER ON SHABBAT TO INDUCE SWEATING

The Shulhan Aruch (Orach Haim 326:2) writes that although one may not bathe his entire body on Shabbat, even with water that was heated before Shabbat, it is permissible to bathe with "Hameh Teverya" – the natural hot springs in Tiberias. Since these springs are naturally heated, the Rabbis did not enact a prohibition against bathing in this water.

In the next passage (326:3), the Shulhan Aruch cites two views as to whether this is allowed even in an indoor area, meaning, if a building was built around such a spring. According to the first view cited by the Shulhan Aruch, going into this structure is forbidden because it will, invariably, cause a person to sweat, and the Rabbis forbade intentionally inducing a sweat on Shabbat (as the Shulhan Aruch discusses later, 326:12). The second opinion, however, rules leniently in this regard, asserting that the prohibition against inducing perspiration on Shabbat applies only in situations where it is forbidden to bathe on Shabbat. Since bathing in "Hameh Teverya" is allowed on Shabbat, intentionally inducing a sweat in the area of "Hameh Teverya" is also allowed. Therefore, even indoors, where a person will perspire, bathing in these springs is permissible on Shabbat.

The practical application of this debate is the situation of a person who has the chills and wishes to relieve his chills by soaking his feet in hot water, which will induce perspiration. Although Halacha forbids bathing one's entire body on Shabbat, it is permissible on Shabbat to wash a part of one's body, such as soaking one's feet. This, then, is a situation where a person seeks to induce a sweat in a circumstance where bathing is permitted. According to the second opinion cited above, therefore, it should be permissible to soak one's feet in hot water with the specific intention of inducing perspiration. Hacham Ovadia Yosef writes that the Halacha follows the second opinion cited by the Shulhan Aruch, since the Shulhan Aruch cites both views with the expression "Yesh" ("there are those"), and when the Shulhan Aruch presents two different opinions with this formulation, Halacha follows the second opinion cited. Therefore, Hacham Ovadia Yosef ruled that it is permissible on Shabbat to bathe one's feet in hot water – assuming, of course, that the water was heated before Shabbat – in order to induce a sweat.

Hacham Ovadia added that even if a person wishes to soak his feet for medicinal purposes – such as to alleviate his chills – this nevertheless does not fall under the category of forbidden medical procedures on Shabbat. Even healthy people soak their feet in hot water for warmth, and thus doing so does not overtly appear as a medical procedure. As such, it does not violate the prohibition of Refu'a (medical procedures) on Shabbat.

**Summary:** Although it is generally prohibited to intentionally induce perspiration on Shabbat, it is permissible on Shabbat to induce perspiration by soaking one's feet in hot water that was heated before Shabbat, such as in the case of a person seeking relief from the chills. ■

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## TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 Why was it important that Yitzchak look like Avraham?
- 2 Why does the Torah stress that Rivka was Betuel's daughter and Lavan's sister?
- 3 What are the two differences between Tamar's pregnancy and Rivka's pregnancy?
- 4 Why was Esav named Esav?
- 5 Who gave Yaakov his name?

### Answer

1 25:19 - So everyone would agree that Avraham was indeed his father. 2 25:20 - To praise her, that even though her family was evil she was righteous. 3 25:24 - Rivka gave birth at full term to two children, one righteous and one wicked. Tamar gave birth after seven months to two righteous children. 4 25:25 - He was born fully developed. The name Esav is based on the Hebrew word for "made," "made." 5 25:26 - Haschem.

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