



TAL

TOLDOT
5775

THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

Shabbat Begins 15:49 Shabbat Ends 16:54

Rising From The Dead

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



Last week, an interesting story happened in Poland.

A lady by the name of Bogumila arrived home one day to find her elderly aunt Janina Kolkiewicz, 91, (who is in the late stages of dementia) not breathing or having a pulse. She called their doctor - Dr Wislawa Czyz- who arrived and after a while declared her dead and wrote out a death certificate. She was then taken to the morgue.

After 11 hours, staff in the morgue spotted Janina moving within the body bag that she was placed. They were shocked and quickly removed and treated her. She is now back home alive and well.

Wow – she really came back from the dead! Not only had the doctor looked at her, but he was so certain she was dead that he wrote her a death certificate!

Sometimes , things are not as they seem.

And in this week's Parasha, we have a fascinating encounter where Yitschak tells his son Eisav to go out and prepare him some food so that he can give him the ultimate blessing before he dies. In the end, Rivka hears about this and sends in Yakov to get the blessing instead.

Eisav was hairy and dressed differently to Yakov, so in his ploy to get the blessing, Yakov had to add goats hair and wear Eisav's clothes

in order to 'deceive' his father and receive the blessing. The whole episode is remarkable and I can only advise you read more into the commentators on this historical event.

However, I would like to share with you one short wonderful idea on this episode.

On the verse: "And he smelled the scent of his garments – B'Gadav (Bereishit 27:27), the Talmud (Sanhedrin 37a) comments: "He smelled the scent of his traitors – BoGDov." This was a critical moment before Yitschak historically blesses his son. What is the Torah teaching us by mentioning he smelt his clothes?

Yitschak through his high spiritual level 'smelt' or internalised the clothes of Yakov.

The Gemara learns homiletically that it is referring to the future sinners amongst us.

Why should he smell the sinners and then bless?

He realised that this was only the outer smell, but on the inside there lay a very beautiful odour.

There would be future sinners, but their sins would only represent clothing from the outside. The real true essence on the inside would always remain pure.

It's at that moment that Yitschak was able to bless his son.

The Midrash Bereishit Rabah (65:22) further elaborates with a fascinating story of Yossi Mashisa. During the destruction of Jerusalem, the Romans sought to enter the Temple. "Let one of the Jewish traitors themselves enter," they said, p.t.o.

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"and be the first to desecrate their sacred vessels." They told Yossi Mashisa that, if he went in, he could keep whatever he found. He entered and came out with the golden Menorah. "This is not for the likes of you," the Romans told him, and took it away. "Go in again, and take whatever you want." However, he refused to enter a second time. They promised him the taxes of the entire city for the next three years if he would re-enter, but he still refused. "Isn't it enough that I angered G-d once," he said, "must I anger Him again?!" So the Romans tied him to a thick plank and sawed him through. "Oy! Oy! Oy!" he cried, "that I angered my G-d!"

How powerful is the inner spark of a Jew that even a sinner like Yossi Mashisa, wicked enough to enter the Temple and remove the Menorah, did such complete repentance that he cried out with his last strength, "Oy, that I angered G-d!" The Talmud tells an amazing story about how Rebbe Yehuda HaNasi brought Reb Yossi ben R. Eliezer back to the path of repentance (for he had fallen very far). What did Rebbe do? He ordained Reb Yossi and gave him the title "Rabbi". This

was meant to encourage him (Bava Metzia 85a). Rav Tzaddok HaKohen writes: "It was not a lie to call him Rabbi because, when Reb Yossi's greatness was eventually revealed, it became obvious that it had existed there from the beginning, only it had been hidden. (Tzidkot HaTzaddik 113)



Why was it that Hashem orchestrated things that Yakov had to dress up like Eisav in order to receive the blessing? Was there no other way for Yakov to have received the blessing directly?

If Yitschak would have given the Beracha to Yakov directly, then there could have been a claim against future generations. You are not as good as Yakov so you don't deserve the blessing. Now that Yakov was dressed like Eisav, he represented a new type of person. One that on the outside would be sadly affected by Eisav and the nations of the world but one that on the inside was oozing with spirituality and yearning for connection with G-d.

One of the toughest lessons to comprehend in life is that what's in front of you is not the whole package. We look at someone and within seconds have formed an opinion of that person. He or she deserves much more time and understanding. After all, each one of us is an individual world.

At a time when people are wondering about our nation's spirituality as a whole, we take pride and encouragement from Yitzchak's blessing – the smell might be bad, the body might look dead, but on the inside it's alive and kicking – attend to it and don't dismiss easily!

There's an episode which is very hard to understand in this week's Parasha. Our forefather, Yaakov Avinu, is referred to as an *Ish Tam Yoshev Ohalim* – a simple man dwelling in the tents of Shem v'Eiver. 'Ish', man, is mentioned only once. But with regards to Eisav, the Passuk describes him as an *Ish Yodeah Sayid...Ish Sadeh* – a man who knows how to hunt ... a man of the field. This time, 'Ish' is mentioned twice. Why? The Torah is implicitly describing Eisav's character – that he was double faced. In the field he was one person, he knew how to attack people, how to question them and in the Bet Hamidrash, he was another – very cunning, always asking difficult questions. As the Midrash says, famously, Eisav asked his

father how to take maaser from salt & straw – he didn't care about the answer but rather wanted to appear like a tzaddik in front of Yitzchak.

Yaakov wasn't two faced. He was a simple man inside and outside, but he knew how to fool Eisav by buying the Bechurah – birthright – from him for a mere bowl of lentil soup. It seems inconceivable that something as important as the Bechirah could be purchased for something so insignificant. How can we understand this? Isn't this a *mekach ta'ut* – a transaction which was misled? If so, then the Halacha is that the item

must be returned, so how does it work in this case?

We can understand through a story about the Chofetz Chaim (ztsl). Before the war, a man came to him whose life was fraught with problems – no money, trouble with the children etc -and so he asked the Chofetz Chaim to help him pray to Hashem to give him the reward of one mitzvah now in Olam Hazeih (instead of receiving the reward in Olam Haba) and by being granted that reward now, it would end all his troubles. The Chofetz Chaim answered back with

p.t.o.

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a warm smile and said 'My friend, you remind me of somebody who goes to the market and he gives the man a cheque for £1,000 to buy just one sweet. The shopkeeper couldn't give the change for such a vast sum of money for only one small sweet. The same thing with this reward in this world; it doesn't matter how much Hashem gives you in this world, it's just like the sweet, comparing it to the reward you get in Olam Haba. Therefore, Hashem is not going to give it to us in this world, only the next world! It's not even worth asking.'

If this is the case, why does the Torah say about the reshaim, wicked people, that Hashem rewards them in this world for their mitzvot and then they go to Gehinom directly, without Hashem owing them anything? The answer is a very simple one. Hashem pays each person according to the level of importance and attitude they attach to mitzvot. If a person learns Torah and this is the most important thing to them, it's appropriate

for such a person to receive their reward in Olam Haba as they are fully aware that this is where the true reward lies.

However, with regard to wicked people, since their attitude towards Torah and mitzvot is met with indifference and contempt and, as a result, they believe that only Olam Hazeh is important, Hashem likewise

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rewards them in this world for the few mitzvot they've done and punishes them with Gehinom. If someone is learning in a kollel for the whole day, and he stops his learning at 10 o'clock to go to the bank to sort out a cheque that has bounced for which he has been charged £5,

he spends half an hour trying to sort it out, just for this small amount of money. In other words for him, the Torah is worth only £5. However if he is immersed in Torah study and a business opportunity comes his way worth £1 million and he refuses to interrupt his studying, it shows that the Torah is worth much more than a million pounds! It all depends on the importance that you give to the Torah and mitzvot. If you give it a lot of importance, then it's worth a lot, but if not, you get nothing!

The same thing applies in our Parasha. The Torah is testifying that when Yaakov Avinu bought the Bechorah from Eisav, first he gave him some bread and then he gave him the soup. Then Eisav ate and drank. In other words, Eisav was starving and about to die, so Yaakov first fed him bread to save his life and only then did he give him the soup to build up his strength.

When the Chatam Sofer was a young boy, he was sent to the city of Mainz to learn Torah. In Mainz, he lived with a family. Living in the same house was a soldier named Paull de Montfort. The soldier had the Chatam Sofer teach him to speak German. The soldier liked the Chatam Sofer because of his good Midot and came to respect the Jewish people because of the Chatam Sofer. Although the Chatam Sofer liked the soldier, he always felt bad

that he had to take time from his Torah learning to give him German lessons. Many years later a number of Jews in Pressburg were arrested. The police also arrested the Chatam Sofer. They said that he was responsible because he was the Rabbi of these men. They wanted to kill the Chatam Sofer. When the Chatam Sofer entered the court, the judge took one look at him and said he

Our Chachamim



Halachot Of Shemita

Rabbi Dov Levy



The Bet Din is then able to distribute it and charge to cover their costs.

could go free. The judge was the Chatam Sofer's old friend, the soldier Paull de Montfort. The Chatam Sofer learned an important lesson from this event. Many times we do not understand why Hashem has things happen to us. Sometimes we even feel bad. Only later do we see that Hashem was really preparing something that is very good for us.

Is it okay to buy food from Otzar Bet din?

Otzar Bet Din should not be relied upon if possible, however a Rabbi should be consulted. If you do buy Shemita produce with Otzar Bet Din written on it, remember that it has holiness of Shemita.

Leniencies of Shemita Produce

There are two main leniencies with respect to growing produce in Israel during Shemita. They are 'Heter Mechira' and 'Otzar Bet Din'. Otzar Bet Din is a system wherein Bet Din takes charge of Shemita produce.

What are the restrictions of Otzar Bet Din?

This produce has holiness of Shemita and therefore has to be treated appropriately. According to many authorities food sold under this system

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"And the children struggled together within her... And she went to inquire of the G-d... And the G-d said to her: 'Two nations are in your womb.' " (25:22-23)

QUESTION: Rashi explains: When Rivkah passed a house of Torah learning, Yaakov struggled to emerge. When she passed a place of idol worship, Eisav struggled to come out. This perplexed her, and she went to inquire about it. A message was conveyed to her through Shem that she was carrying two children.

Why did this information calm her?

ANSWER: The prophet Eliyahu held a debate with the false prophets of Ba'al during which he challenged them: "How long will you waver between two opinions. If Hashem is the G-d, follow Him! And if it is the Ba'al, follow him" (1 Kings, 18:21). One may wonder, how Eliyahu was able to utter such an option?

Eliyahu realized that before confronting a person, it is important to know what his convictions are. As long as a person is ambivalent, it is impossible to deal with him and guide him to the right path. After having his views clarified, then one can debate and endeavour to convince him.

At the outset, Rivkah thought she was carrying one child who was confused, unable to distinguish between right and wrong, and thus, G-d forbid, capable of running in a different direction each day. Informed that she would give birth to two children, she was relieved, because she could now hope to convince the other child to emulate his righteous brother.



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