

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT TOLEDOT

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

THE GREAT CRY OF EISAV AND THE GROOMS ATONEMENT

Picture this scenario: You ask a friend for a £3 cup of coffee, promising to repay him upon delivery. He graciously heads to the counter, purchases the coffee, and patiently waits. When he hands it over, you discover he has added some toxic waste to it, yet he still requests the £3.

How would you respond? Would you offer the money and perhaps even a blessing?

A parallel unfolds in this week's Parasha. Yitzchak, unknowingly, blesses Yaakov, thinking it's Eisav. The Midrash Tanchuma (11) reveals the reason for Eisav's delay; each animal he trapped was set free by angels. Frustrated, Eisav resorts to serving his father non-kosher dog meat (Targum Yonatan). When Eisav entered the room to receive the blessing from his father the Torah tells us that Yitzchak trembled. He felt the doors of Gehinnom opening. He understood something was not right here. He had sent Eisav for deer's meat but received a toxic substitute.

Eisav, realizing the consequences of his actions, pleads with his father, who eventually grants him a blessing.

The Sages are perplexed. Eisav wanted to trick his own father into sinning and eating dog meat. He was essentially bringing him coffee with poison. How is it that Yitzchak eventually gives him a Beracha?

The answer lies in one of the most potent sentences in the Torah. A sentence that we do not see again until the times of Mordechai.

Eisav lets out a great and bitter cry - ויצעק צעקה גדלה ומרה עד מאד

When Eisav realised what he had done, when he had a moment to think, he was able to sincerely do Teshuva. Even though the Teshuva didn't last, nevertheless Yitzchak felt it and was able to give him a blessing. That cry was so powerful its ramifications are felt until today.

We see this concept of slight Teshuva a few more times in Eisav's life.

When a groom gets married our sages tell us that he is absolved from all his previous sins (according to many, brides are also included).

This is learnt from our Parasha.

Eisav's respect for his father was well known. He had married at the age of 40 to mimic his father who had done the same. But alas his first two wives from among the daughters of Heth caused anguish and pain to his parents. According to the Sages, these women spent all their days in adultery and idolatry. His first wife Adah adorned herself with jewellery (Adayat) for harlotry. Eisav's second wife, Yudit the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, was an illegitimate child resulting from an adulterous union (Tanchuma, Vayeshev 1). Yudit was also named Oholibamah, a name she was given because she built places for idolatry. (Bamot).

Yitzchak and Rivka were not happy with these wives.

When Yitzchak commanded Yakov to go and find a wife, he made sure to ascertain that she should not be from the daughters of Canaan. Eisav seeing this decided to take on a third wife, this time one that would obey his father's command, someone not from Canaan, but rather from the immediate family. He married Machalat, the daughter of his uncle Yishmael. The Talmud Yerushalmi (Bikkurim 3:3) states that by merit of this



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marriage, the Holy One, blessed be He, forgave Eisav for all his sins. The name Machalat indicates that G-d pardoned (mahal) Eisav. It is from here that we learn that every groom that gets married merits to have his sins pardoned.

However, it seems that Eisav's repentance was short lived. In fact he had ulterior motives when marrying Machalat.

The Midrash Bereishit Rabbah (67:8) offers a fascinating insight:

Eisav said: 'If I kill him (Yakov), there are Shem and Ever who will sit in judgment over me, and say to me: "Why did you kill your brother? Instead, I will go and marry into Yishmael's family, and he will come and dispute with him [Yaakov] over the birthright and kill him, and I will stand against him [Yishmael] as a blood redeemer and kill him, and I will be the heir of two families".

Eisav wanted to marry into Yishmael's family to encourage Yishmael to kill Yaakov. Eisav would then kill Yishmael and inherit all the blessings.

His plan was not fruitful. Our Sages explain that soon after getting engaged to Machalat, Yishmael died. Now Eisav was left with Machalat but not for the reason he married her.

Nevertheless he stayed with her and at the time of his wedding was forgiven for his sins.

Nowadays in conjunction with this idea of forgiveness it's common for individuals to observe the tradition of fasting on their wedding day.

In fact, at many weddings, we enjoy singing the verse in Yeshayahu (62:5) 'Yasis alayich Elokayich kimsos Chatan al kalah'.

"...And like the rejoicing of a bridegroom over his bride shall your G-d rejoice over you".

Rimzei Harokeiach (Parashat Nitzavim) makes a fascinating insight into this: The word Chatan-groom has the numerical value of 458; the word AL-on= 100, and Kala-bride= 55. The total numerical value of the three is 613, to hint that because their sins are absolved, the bride and groom are considered to have fulfilled all 613 mitzvot.

Why does a groom receive atonement on his wedding day? The Eshel Avraham (Orech Chayim 573:1) explains (quoting the Pasuk in Mishlei 16:6 "With loving-kindness and truth will iniquity be expiated") that by committing to building a family, the groom atones for his sins.

The Ktav Sofer (Vayishlach) writes

that a woman is called a "Choma" - 'wall', because she saves her husband from sin and assists him. In improving his ways after his marriage, a man proves that the reason he sinned before his marriage was only because he was lacking a wife to assist him. Therefore, his sins are absolved.

Applying this perspective to Eisav's narrative, it becomes apparent that he too was presented with an opportunity to seek atonement for his past misdeeds through his marriages. Regrettably, he failed to fully grasp and capitalize on this chance, highlighting the importance of recognizing and utilising opportunities for spiritual growth and redemption.

Life often unfolds as a series of spiritual awakenings, each providing a chance to elevate ourselves and refine our character. The objective is to maintain a spiritual high and continually strive for self-improvement. By embracing these opportunities, whether through the support of a life partner or other means, we can navigate the journey of self-discovery and growth with resilience and purpose. In the game of spiritual elevation, the key lies in our commitment to perpetual improvement and the pursuit of higher ideals.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT TOLEDOT

On the Pasuk ויתרוצו הבנים בקרבה brings Rashi: Our Rabbis explain that the word ויתרוצו has the meaning of running, moving quickly. Whenever Rivka passed by the doors of the Torah, Yaakov moved convulsively in his efforts to come to birth, but whenever she passed by the gate of a pagan temple Eisav moved convulsively in his efforts to come to birth.

It seems that even before birth, in the womb of their mother, Yaakov was gravitating towards Torah, and Eisav was gravitating towards evil. We can see this in their nature, so, why do we call him עשוי הרשע the wicked Eisav? Is that fair?

The רמב"ם, says that there are two types of people. The first is החסיד

המעולה, the good pious person, the moral, ethical person. And the other one is יצר הרע, the person that conquers their inclinations. These are two different figures. The things that each one of them is gravitating towards are not their choice. This is how G-d created them. This is the path that G-d chose for them. Some of us are like Yaakov. Everything comes easy, no struggles, they wake up in the morning and all they want to do is to dwell in the house of G-d. Some of us have challenges, difficult challenges. They can't control it, but they can choose how to deal with it, how to channel and navigate it. The key is not to try to be like anybody else. But to ask yourself what G-d wants from me. What is my path in השם?

Eisav wasn't called רשע, wicked, because he wanted to go to עבודת זרה. This wasn't his choice. השם created

him like this. This is the path that G-d chose for him; to overcome his challenges, not to surrender to the addiction and not to fall prey to his impulses. But instead of seeing his challenges as a spiritual calling to reach the space only he can reach; he saw it in a way that was more superficial, easier, and more comfortable. He couldn't see that his temptation to evil was not evil, but his path to holiness.

The Torah teaches us that in our lives we have times of 'Yaakov' and times of 'Eisav', and these times of 'Eisav', sometimes, are very difficult, very challenging. By overcoming the challenges that G-d wants us to overcome, we will merit the blessings of Yitzchak and will be on the path to holiness. May G-d give you the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth and abundance of new grain and wine.



RABBI DANNY FISHER

Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

PARSHAT TOLEDOT

Two seemingly contradictory situations appear in the פרשת תולדות, one in פרשת בראשית and the other in פרשת תולדות.

In פרשת תולדות the פסוק begins "ואלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק" explains the reason the following is reiterated: "אברהם הוליד את יצחק" is because the mockers of the generation would say that יצחק was not in fact אברהם's son. Therefore, Hashem caused יצחק to look like אברהם so there would be no doubt, as to whose son he was.

In פרשת בראשית it says "נעשה אדם", in plural, it's a well known משה רבינו questioned Hashem whether to write "נעשה" in the plural. If written in the plural it will give the apikorsim reason to argue that in fact it wasn't only Hashem who created man, rather there were many powers involved in the creation. Hashem answers that anyone who is looking for

excuses not to believe will find those excuses, no matter what the Torah says, and it is not necessary to change the Lashon. Rav Yerucham asks the following question, why is it necessary to refute any potential questions posed by the leitzonei hador regarding the lineage of יצחק but not necessary to refute the apikorsim regarding who created אדם in בראשית.

Rav Yerucham explains, the difference is dependent on the situation. If the questioner is willing to listen to the answer, then it is worth discussing the truth. In this case, one should explain the truth and give over the correct information. However if the questioner is mocking, and doesn't want to find the truth, no matter what one says he won't accept it, then it is not worth discussing anything with him. As it says in גמ' שבת "נעשה אדם" and sometimes it says "נעשה אדם" and sometimes it says "נעשה אדם".

The Midrash brings the following story. An atheist once challenged Rabbi Akiva: "who created the world?" Rabbi Akiva

answered "Hashem." "Show me a clear proof!" demanded the skeptic. Rabbi Akiva said to him, "Who made your garment?" The atheist responded, "A weaver of course." Now Rabbi Akiva turned to his students and said, "Just as the garment testifies to the existence of the weaver, the door to the carpenter, and the house to the builder, so does the world testify to Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who created it."

We see from this Midrash, two important points. Firstly, Rabbi Akiva does not go in to detail explaining his point of view to the atheist, because the atheist is not interested in the answer. Secondly, since his students were listening to the discussion, he felt the importance of explaining in detail to them his view, so that they would understand the truth.

A huge Mazel Tov to my son Yitzi on his Bar Mitzvah, you should be zoche to give Hashem, and all of us true Yiddeshe Nachas!

Good Shabbos!



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

OWNING A BUSINESS THAT OPERATES ON SHABBAT

Halacha forbids buying or selling on Shabbat. If one did make a transaction on Shabbat, even though the sale is legally binding, one may not derive any benefit from money earned through that transaction. Jewish business owners must therefore close their businesses on Shabbat; it is forbidden to allow the business to continue operating during Shabbat. Even if the person remains at home and performs no Melacha (forbidden activity), he may not allow his business to run during Shabbat.

There are, however, arrangements that could be made to allow a business to run on Shabbat if the Jew co-owns the business with a gentile partner. Namely, as discussed by the Shulchan Aruch and Mishna Berura (commentary to the Shulchan Aruch by Rabbi Yisrael Kagan, Lithuania, 1839-1933) in the Orah Hayyim section (245), a Jew may arrange that his gentile partner receives all profits earned from the business on Shabbat. For example, the partners could

agree that the gentile receives all profits earned on Shabbat, and the Jew will receive all profits earned on Tuesday. Once they agree to this arrangement, they may then divide monthly or annual revenues equally, even if the Shabbat profits exceed the Tuesday profits, as the excess revenue received by the Jew is legally considered a gift given to him by his partner.

This provision applies only to gentile partners; if one co-owns a business with another Jew, then the business may not remain open on Shabbat regardless of whether the partner observes Shabbat. Even if the partners arrange that the non-observant Jew will receive all the Shabbat profits, and the observant partner will not work on Shabbat, the business may not remain open on Shabbat.

This prohibition applies to shareholders, as well. If a Jew owns enough shares in a company that he exerts decision-making control over the company's operations, then he is considered a "partner" with respect to the aforementioned Halacha. It is therefore forbidden for a Jew to become a controlling shareholder in a company that runs on Shabbat, unless he can arrange that the gentile partners will receive all profits earned on Shabbat. One may, however, own

stock in a company that conducts business on Shabbat if his holdings in the company do not afford him decision-making control in the company's operations.

Of course, in all such situations one is urged to consult with a competent Halachic authority for guidance.

Summary: It is forbidden to conduct business on Shabbat or to derive benefit from profits earned from business conducted on Shabbat; Jewish business owners must therefore close their businesses on Shabbat. If one co-owns a business with a gentile partner, the business may remain open on Shabbat if they arrange that the gentile will receive all profits earned on Shabbat. They may then share all revenue equally, with the understanding that the Jew receives a share of the Shabbat profits only as a gift from his partners. This applies as well if a Jew owns shares in a company that affords him decision-making control; he must arrange that the other controlling shareholders receive all profits from the business' operations on Shabbat.

See the book- "Pure Money" by Dayan Cohen, pages 193-194.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Toledot

After 20 years of marriage, Yitzchak's prayers are answered, and Rivka conceives twins. The pregnancy is extremely painful. Hashem reveals to Rivka that the suffering is a microcosmic prelude to the worldwide conflict that will rage between the two great nations descended from these twins, Rome and Israel. Esav is born, and then Yaakov, holding on to Esav's heel. They grow, and Esav becomes a hunter, a man of the physical world, whereas Yaakov sits in the tents of Torah, developing his soul.

On the day of their grandfather Avraham's funeral, Yaakov is cooking lentils, the traditional mourner's meal. Esav rushes in, ravenous from a hard day's hunting, and sells

his birthright (and its concomitant spiritual responsibilities) for a bowl of lentils, demonstrating his unworthiness for the position of firstborn.

A famine strikes Canaan and Yitzchak thinks of escaping to Egypt, but Hashem tells him that because he was bound as a sacrifice, he has become holy and must remain in the Holy Land. He relocates to Gerar in the land of the Philistines, where, to protect Rivka, he has to say she is his sister. The Philistines grow jealous of Yitzchak when he becomes immensely wealthy, and Avimelech the king asks him to leave. Yitzchak re-digs three wells that were dug by his father, prophetically alluding to the three future Temples. Avimelech, seeing

that Yitzchak is blessed by Hashem, makes a treaty with him.

When Yitzchak senses his end approaching, he summons Esav to give him his blessings. Rivka, acting on a prophetic command that the blessings must go to Yaakov, arranges for Yaakov to impersonate Esav and receive the blessings. When Esav in frustration reveals to his father that Yaakov has bought the birthright, Yitzchak realizes that the birthright has been bestowed correctly on Yaakov and confirms the blessings he has given Yaakov. Esav vows to kill Yaakov, and so Rivka sends Yaakov to her brother Lavan where he could find a suitable wife.

Rabbi Sinclair, Seasonsofthemoon.com



1 Why was it important that Yitzchak look like Avraham?

25:19 - So everyone would agree that Avraham was indeed his father.

2 What are the two differences between Tamar's pregnancy and Rivka's pregnancy?

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.

3 How did Esav deceive his father?

25:27 - Esav deceived Yitzchak by asking questions that suggested that he was very strict in mitzvah observance.

4 Why are lentils a food for mourners?

25:30 - They are round like a wheel and mourning is like a revolving wheel that eventually touches everyone.

5 Why was Yitzchak not permitted to go to Egypt?

26:2 - Through the akeda he had attained the status of a korban and was forbidden to leave Eretz Canaan.

6 What fragrance did Yitzchak detect on Yaakov's garments?

27:27 - The scent of Gan Eden.



"... and Rivkah his wife became pregnant. And the children struggled inside her ..." (Bereishis 25:21-22)
When she passed a place of Torah study Yaakov struggled to get out. When she passed a place of idol worship Esav struggled to get out. (Rashi)

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