



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

טולדות - תולדות - 10th November 2018 - Volume 11 - Issue 18

## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Dr & Mrs Michael Wilks on the wedding this week of their grandson Shloimy Saperia.

### 20th Anniversary Kiddush

We look forward to welcoming all members to a celebratory Kiddush next Shabbos to celebrate our Kehilla's 20th anniversary.

### Ovos uBonim

The new season of Ovos uBonim starts in the Shul this Motzei Shabbos an hour after Shabbos.

## Butter Battles

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

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

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

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

Vice President Al Gore tells a story about outgoing Senator Bill Bradley. Senator Bradley once attended a dinner at which he was a guest speaker. The waiter set down a side dish of potatoes, and placed a pat of butter upon them. The Senator asked for an extra portion of butter.

"I'm sorry sir," the very unyielding server replied tersely, "one pat per guest."

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

The waiter looked down at the Senator.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked.

"I am the one in charge of the butter."

Yitzchok understood the great contrariety between his children. However, he felt that Esav, the hunter-child, understood the mundane world much better. So it was only fitting that Esav be gifted with the blessings of a mundane world. Esav would then supplement Yaakov's needs, and a true symbiosis would emerge. Rivka, on the other hand,

was pragmatic. She felt that putting Esav in charge of the material world would lead to selfish hoarding that would hardly give Yaakov a portion.

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

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

## Continually Worthy of the Blessing

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

And Eisav said to his father, "Have you [but] one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father." And Eisav raised his voice and wept. 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. And you shall live by your sword, and you shall serve your brother, and it will be, when you grieve, that you will break his yoke off your neck." Breishis 27:38-40)

and it will be, when you grieve: When Israel transgresses the Torah and you will have cause to grieve about the blessings that he took, and you will throw off his yoke... (Rashi from Targum Onkeles) and it will be, when you grieve: [תגיד] is an expression of pain, as in (Ps. 55:3): "I will lament (אגיד) in my speech"; i.e., when the Israelites will transgress the Torah, and you will have cause to grieve about the blessings that he took, "you will break his yoke," etc. [From Targum Onkelos]

This cry of Eisav and his demand to be blessed would have far

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת תולדות

זמן שבת	4.06pm
Mincha	4.11pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.38am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.23pm
2nd Mincha	3.53pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following
Motzei Shabbos	5.13pm
Ovos uBonim	6.13pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.00pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

reaching consequences. Yitzchok did not just throw his bitter son Eisav a bone to chew on and quiet him down for the moment. He gave him a reason for being. Eisav's "blessing" wasn't just a door prize for showing up but rather it would serve as an insurance policy for the blessing that he had just given to Yaakov. How so?

Of course, Yaakov deserved the blessing. Eisav bitter tears were too little and too late. Even Yitzchok realized immediately that the right man got the brocho. So what was left for him to give to Eisav? What Yitzchok did, what a stroke of prophetic genius. Eisav could not be satisfied without a blessing. Yet it was too late to switch it back to Yaakov, and Yaakov was truly deserving. What did he do?

He made Eisav in charge making certain that Yaakov remained deserving of the blessing. He is to be the all time watchdog. As Rashi explains, "When Israel transgresses the Torah and you will have cause to grieve about the blessings that he took, and you will throw off his yoke..."

Eisav finds himself in the position of watching carefully for any slight misstep or transgression that the nation of Israel might make.

I remember the frustration I felt as a young college senior trying to explain to my "buddies" that the Israelis were acting out of self defense in Lebanon. I read to them accounts about booty trapped babies left in the road for Jewish soldiers to be blown up by. I showed them the stadium filled cache of armaments that they captured before it was used on them and still they insisted that Israel has no right to defend itself. I asked why other hotspots on the planet did not capture their interest or ignite their righteous indignation. Just this!

I came to understand clearly that not only were we being judged on a double standard but we were being looked at under an electron microscope. I even tried to show them there was a disparity in standards and that too fell upon deaf ears. I was baffled. These were "the best and brightest" and yet they had this huge blind spot and hyper-focus on the faults of Israel.

I could only conclude that this was the reverse, perverse miracle of sublimated anti-Semitism, manifest in the most tolerant of everything and everybody else. This was a gift that eventually led me to realize that I am better off joining spiritual forces with my people. Rather than curse the darkness, to light a light or ten.

Maybe this is not what John Paul Sartre had in mind when he said it but it certainly applies here as well. "More than the Jews are the cause of anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism is the cause of the Jews." Eisav's progeny having been playing a rugged game of "gotcha" for almost 3600 years now and it has forced Yaakov-Israel, that's you and me, to be continually worthy of the blessing.

## Worth The Cost

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Ya'akov said, "[First] Sell me your first-born birthright." (Bereishis 25:31)

ONE OF THE things that has always impressed me about Torah—not that Torah needs to impress me, or that I need to be impressed to accept its authority—is the way it is not afraid to relate stories in a way that can easily be misconstrued by those with their noses out of joint. It could easily leave out such stories, or adapt them for a wider audience, but Torah instead just seems to tell it like it was.

For example, when Eisav came home exhausted and on the verge of death, Ya'akov used the opportunity to "extort" the birthright from him. True, Eisav had worked himself to that point by murdering lots of people, as Rashi notes, but did Ya'akov know that? Perhaps he did.

Even so, how many people have looked at Ya'akov's actions with contempt? A lot. Personally, I have been asked several times over the years, "How could Ya'akov have acted so cruelly to his brother at such a time of need?" When I told them the Rashi, they looked at me suspiciously, as if Rashi was just a cover-up.

It doesn't help that Ya'akov later dressed up as Eisav and stole his brochos by deceiving his own father. Wasn't that a profanation of the Name of G-d? After all, Jews and gentiles have read the Bible throughout the ages, and the latter have often used the Chumash itself to indict the Jewish people.

Before dealing with that question, there is another matter. As Rashi

points out, Ya'akov was the real firstborn anyhow. He was conceived first, just born second. And, as the title states, the right of the firstborn belongs to the one born first.

Okay. Then why didn't G-d just cause the babies to flip-flop before birth and cause Ya'akov to be born first as well? According to the Torah, they were constantly in movement anyhow, so, at the last second Ya'akov could have been maneuvered into position to be born ahead of Eisav. Think of all the logistical problems it would solve after birth!

No need to buy the birthright.

No need to steal the blessings.

No need to run to Lavan's house.

Etc.

Well, since G-d does not make mistakes, He obviously wanted Ya'akov to have to buy the birthright, and to do it the way he did. He obviously wanted Ya'akov to have to "steal" the brochos, and to have to run to Lavan's house to avoid the revenge of Eisav. Whatever Ya'akov went through, it was what G-d planned for him from the start. The question now is, WHY?

There are a lot of reasons on various different levels of Torah understanding. One of them, though, is not discussed much at all, at least not directly.

It has to do with something we learned from last week's parsha, when Avraham went out of his way to BUY Ma'arah Machpelah, in order to bury Sarah, just as Ya'akov would later buy Shechem, and Dovid HaMelech, Har HaBayis.

As was explained back at Succos time, regarding the obligation to actually OWN one's lulav and esrog on the first day of the chag, something mystical happens when we purchase something. A connection is made between the purchaser and what is purchased, on a soul level.

Now, one might argue that Eretz Yisroel, like all inanimate objects, doesn't HAVE a soul. That's not entirely true, but it does not matter in this case. People become VERY attached to objects because it is possible to invest oneself in them to a very large degree.

We become sentimental about things because of what they come to represent to us, and that itself is like an aspect of life. When we give up money to buy something, especially if we earned it, then we give up an aspect of ourselves.

The same thing is true with respect to relationships. When people lose a spouse after many years of a happy marriage, they feel as if they lost a part of themselves. They did. Over the years, each spouse invested more of themselves into the relationship, and once it ends, it takes that investment with it. It's the price we pay for years of happiness and growth.

This is why Avraham insisted on buying Ma'arah Machpelah. It was about more than just securing the land. It was about investing himself in it, about building a spiritual connection to what is effectively the portal to Gan Aiden, so that he and his descendants would remain spiritually attached to it forever.

Likewise, Ya'akov HAD to buy the birthright. Only then could he TRULY own it, and therefore, make it a part of him. Only with such a strong spiritual connection to such a strong spiritual responsibility could Ya'akov Avinu take full advantage of the right of the firstborn.

We see this dynamic again when the tribe of Levi, at the time of the golden calf, inherited from the firstborn when they put themselves on the line to avenge G-d. Their self-sacrifice made them fitting to be leaders of the Jewish people, something they acquired when they responded to the call, "Who is for G-d, come to me!"

People sometimes joke about how Jews are always looking to get the best deal, maybe even get what they want for free. But the best things in life are NOT for free, because if they were, we could never really enjoy them, or use their spiritual potential to our spiritual advantage. And, if the Torah teaches us anything, it is how to use life to our best spiritual advantage.