



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ה כסלו תשפ"א – תולדות – 21st November 2020 - Volume 13 - Issue 19

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to the Kehilla on our 22nd Anniversary. We are working on a Covid safe way of marking it in time for Channukah, details to follow!

Mazel Tov to Benjy Rodrigues-Pereira and his parents Petra and Adrian on his Bar Mitzvah which took place last Tuesday Rosh Chodesh Kislev.

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this week:

Mon, 7th Kislev, Zacky Graff for his mother

Mon, 7th Kislev, Charles Bursk for his mother

Mon, 7th Kislev, Mark Duman for his mother

Wed, 9th Kislev, David Newman for his mother

Fri, 11th Kislev, Petra Rodrigues-Pereira for her mother

From Soup To Nuts Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Two different brothers. Two different attitudes. Two different worlds. This week we learn about Yaakov and Esav, two brothers whose demeanors 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 than 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, he was 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, Labor Secretary in the Reagan Administration was exonerated on charges of connections to organized crime. After months of hearings, hours of testimony in various rooms in the Congressional Houses, 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. It was not even the flaming color 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.

Eisav & The World-To-Come Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Eisav said, "Behold, I am going to die; so why do I need this birthright?" (Bereishis 25:32)

THE TALMUD RECOUNTS a dialogue that took place between Rebi Yehudah HaNasi, the compiler of the Mishnah, and the Roman leader, Antoninus:

Antoninus said to Rebi Yehuda HaNasi: "Will I enter the World-to-Come?"

Rebi Yehuda HaNasi said to him: "Yes."

Antoninus asked him: "But isn't it written: 'And there shall not be any remaining of the house of Eisav' (Ovadia 1:18)?"

Davening Times

פרשת תולדות

Zman Shabbos & Lighting	3.49pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.54pm
Shacharis - Hashkomo	7.30am
2nd Shacharis	9.30am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.52am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	3.49pm
Motzei Shabbos	4.59pm
Ovos uBonim	5.59pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha	1.15pm
Mincha & Maariv	3.45pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Rebi Yehuda HaNasi explained: "The verse applies to those who perform actions similar to those of the wicked Eisav, not to people like you."...

[But] Antoninus [further] said to Rebi Yehuda HaNasi: "But isn't it written in the description of the netherworld: 'There is Edom, her kings and all her leaders (Yechezkel 32:29)?"

Rebi Yehuda HaNasi answered him: "The verse states: 'Her kings,' but not all of her kings...some of them will merit the World-to-Come." (Avodah Zarah 10b)

Antoninus was a Roman leader. Being of Roman descent, he was also a descendant of Eisav, which, apparently, he took quite seriously. He was seemingly capable of quoting verses from Tanach, in this case, one from the prophet Ovadiah, an Eisavian convert to Judaism. It seems to indicate that Eisav's descendants will not go to the World-to-Come, and that had Antoninus understandably concerned.

But Rebi set Antoninus straight by distinguishing between descendants of Eisav who carry on his approach to life, and those who depart from it and pursue a more Ya'akov-like way. Clearly Antoninus, by virtue of his relationship with Rebi and the way he acted respectfully to him, put him in the latter category. As for the rest of Eisav's billions of descendants all around the world and throughout history, that remains to be seen or decided.

What are we talking about? What does it mean to walk in the ways of Eisav? Let's start with:

And the children struggled within her... (Bereishis 25:22)

When she passed by the entrances of [the] Torah [academies] of Shem and Eiver, Ya'akov would run and struggle to come out; when she passed the entrance of [a temple of] idolatry, Eisav would run and struggle to come out. (Rashi)

Eisav doesn't have a problem with the idea of G-d. He just has a problem with the idea of the real G-d. So, He rejects the real G-d and instead makes up his own one to worship. In one generation it might be stone and metal, in another, money, and in others, it is himself. Kick G-d out of society and you prove yourself a loyal fan of Eisav.

And the first one emerged ruddy... (Bereishis 25:25)

That is a sign that he will be a person who sheds blood. (Rashi)

Let's face it, Ya'akov's descendants have included some scary killers over time. But it has usually been the exception, and not the rule. Besides, as the halachah shows, even embarrassment is considered a form of murder. It's not called character assassination for no reason, and it is quite Eisavian to be willing to shame or falsely incriminate a person just to reach one's own goals.

But then again, if G-d is not your thing, then truth isn't either. It's not called being truthful when it is to your advantage to stick to it. It is called being truthful when it is not to your advantage to stick to it and you do anyhow. That requires a greater sense of right than feelings of selfishness. But if a person does not believe that there is a negative consequence for lying, i.e., they will have to answer to G-d for it, then what is to stop them from changing the truth to avoid a consequence they do believe will cause them loss?

Nothing.

Without G-d, "all is fair in love and war." Once upon a time, the people who ran the news media believed in G-d and therefore, had a conscience. Their desire to sell newspapers was tempered by their fear of Divine punishment for having lied. We relied on this for many years when giving credibility to the news they delivered.

But the concept of G-d aged faster than mankind did, and basically died for many decades ago. What is to stop people from lying when it is to their disadvantage to tell the truth? If life is no longer about right-and-wrong, but about those who get ahead and those who get left behind, then what is there to inspire noble behavior and personal sacrifice for the good of others?

Nothing.

Eisav had many telltale things that summed up his weltanschauung, but perhaps this one after he sold his birthright for some food is the most revealing of them all:

Eisav said, "Behold, I am going to die; so why do I need this birthright?" (Bereishis 25:32)

Eisav [to Ya'akov], "What is the nature of this service?"

He told him, "There are many prohibitions and punishments and death penalties involved with it..."

He said, "Behold, I am going to die because of it (i.e., the birthright); if so, why should I want it?" (Rashi)

Ya'akov gave Eisav bread and a pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank and arose and left, and Eisav despised the birthright. (Bereishis 25:34)

The Torah attests to his wickedness, that he despised the service of G-d. (Rashi)

What Rashi means to say is, it wasn't enough for Eisav to just be secular and forget about G-d. Many people do that and as bad as it may be, it is still not the worst. Eisavians go further, even hating G-d and the people who believe in Him and insist on telling His truth. They go to war against them and the truth they stand for, regardless of any logic in doing so. For some people, the battle against truth IS life itself, and they do not go to the World-to-Come.

The Talmud brings another example of a descendant of Eisav who got it right and earned his place in Eternal Life:

There was a certain Roman emperor who hated the Jews. He said to the important members of the kingdom: "If one had an ulcerous sore rise on his foot, should he cut it off and live, or leave it and suffer?"

They told him: "He should cut it off and live."

(The ulcerous sore was a metaphor for the Jewish people, whom the emperor sought to eliminate as the cause of harm to the Roman Empire.) Ketia, son of Shalom, said to them: "It is unwise to do so for two reasons. One is that you cannot destroy all of them, as it is written: 'For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, says G-d' (Zechariah 2:10). What is it saying? Shall we say that the verse means that G-d has scattered them to the four winds of the world? If so, this phrase: 'As the four winds' is inaccurate, since it should have said, 'to the four winds.' Rather, this is what the verse is saying: Just as the world cannot exist without winds, so too, the world cannot exist without the Jewish people, and they will never be destroyed. Furthermore, if you attempt to carry out the destruction of the Jews, they will call you the severed kingdom, as the Roman Empire would be devoid of Jews, but Jews would exist in other locations."

The emperor said to Ketia: "You have spoken well and your statement is correct. But they throw anyone who defeats the king in argument into a house full of ashes to die." (Avodah Zarah 10b)

What? Ketia was right in what he said, which was a great service to the Roman Empire, and he was to be...executed? Yup, and he was. But not before first converting to Judaism and becoming a kodesh on his way out. The Talmud even finishes the story by saying a Heavenly Voice called out that Ketia bar Shalom was indeed on his way to the World-to-Come.

Unlike the Roman emperor who had Ketia executed, though. What kind of society makes a rule like that, that the one who contradicts the king dies even if he told the truth? One that does not care about the truth, but only about winning, about getting his or her way. Beg, borrow, or steal... whatever it takes to get what you want. And anyone who wants to win even at the cost of the truth is as Eisav-like as it gets, and certainly gets his or her "reward" as well for being that way.

After all, the Talmud says that the seal of G-d is truth. So, anyone who walks all over the truth walks all over G-d, in a manner of speaking. There's no room in Heaven for people like that, and quite frankly, not down here either. That's why, as the Talmud says, every 70 years or so G-d brings disaster to the world just to clean it of such undesirables.