



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

Sponsored by the Cypess Family Foundation

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Two Brothers, Two Mindsets

Presented by Rabbi Yitzchak Kaminetsky, Kollel Scholar

In Parshas Toldos, we confront an enduring question: How can two children, Yaakov and Esav, who were shaped by the same home and the same parents, grow into such different people? The Torah itself hints at the answer through the names they are given at birth. Esav is so named because he appeared fully developed – “*asuy*” complete. Rashi notes that he looked like an adult even as an infant. Many understand this physical description as a window into his inner world. Esav always felt he was already complete, and therefore, self-transformation and growth were never on his radar.

Yaakov, however, embodies the opposite orientation. His name, rooted in “*eikev*,” the heel, suggests someone who begins from a place of humility – aware that he stands at the beginning of a long journey. Yaakov’s greatness emerges not despite this low starting point but because of it. Throughout his life – whether navigating the complexities of his family, engaging the challenges of exile, or wrestling with those who oppose him – he remains a seeker. His identity is not fixed; it is forged.

Each of us carries the same choice. We can settle into the comfort of feeling “finished,” or we can cultivate the mindset of a *mevakesh* – one who remains open, curious, and eager to grow.

Becoming a *mevakesh* begins with how we approach the everyday tasks of Jewish life. When we open a Chumash, do we think, “I already know this,” or do we ask, “What more can I discover?” Do we look for opportunities to deepen our Torah and *mitzvos*, or do we feel content with where we are?

The growth of Yaakov Avinu reminds us to embrace the never-finished journey – to keep asking how we can grow, refine ourselves, and draw closer to Hashem with every step.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

Point to Ponder

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

So now, my son, heed my voice to which I command you. (27, 8)

Even though what I am telling you to do is going to involve *geneivas da'as* (misleading someone), still heed my voice. Meaning: besides for the obligation to listen to one's mother, she was also a prophetess, and one is obligated to listen to a prophet/ess (Devarim 18:15). Therefore, Rivka said, "heed my voice." As I wrote previously (Lech Lecha 16: 5-6), one must listen to a prophet, even to transgress a command of the Torah, if it is a one-time occurrence. (Ohr HaChaim)

Why isn't Rivka counted among the seven prophetesses in the Gemara Megilla 14a?

What is the connection between Avraham's death and Esav?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What halacha is learned from the way Rivka provided water to Eliezer and his camels?

Answer: Even though, when it comes to food, one must ensure that one's animals are fed before a person partakes, when it comes to drinks, a person comes before animals. (Magen Avraham O.C. 167 s.k. 18)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Toldos* (25:27), the Torah relates: "And the youths grew up, and Esav was a man who understood hunting, a man of the field, whereas Yaakov was an innocent man, dwelling in tents." Rashi (citing the Midrash) explains: "As long as they were young children, they were not distinguishable in their behavior, and people did not closely examine their character, but once they became thirteen years old, this one left to halls of study and this one left to idolatry."

R. Samson Raphael Hirsch understand this midrash to be hinting that Yitzchak and Rivka had failed to pay sufficient attention to their sons' internal differences during their childhood:

Their parents forgot the great principle of *chinuch* (education): "Train a child according to his way, etc." (*Mishlei* 22:6) ... A form of *chinuch* that places a student like Yaakov and a student like Esav on the same school bench, with the same daily schedule and the same pedagogical approach, and raises both of them to a life of study and thought, will eventually ruin one of them. ... Had (their parents) asked themselves at an early stage, how can even someone like Esav – with all the strength, talents, and courage that were dormant within him – turn his shoulder to the service of Hashem, then the future *gibbor* (mighty individual) would not have turned into a "mighty hunter" (*gibbor tzayid*) but rather to a true "gibbor before the L-rd" (see *Bereishis* 10:9).

In a famous letter, R. Eliyahu Dessler contrasts the "the pedagogical doctrine of Frankfurt" (i.e., Hirschian *Torah im Derech Eretz*) with "the pedagogical doctrine of the (Eastern European) *yeshivos*" explaining that the latter insisted upon maintaining a single-minded focus on the study of Torah to the exclusion of all else and rejected the "Frankfurt" approach of "permitting (secular) knowledge and including university study into the "le-chatchilah" (ideal) category of *chinuch*" due to its utter unwillingness to pay the price that the Frankfurt school had paid for its approach: the relinquishment of the ability to produce great Torah scholars, as a consequence of the enticing competition offered by secular studies (*Michtav me-Eliyahu* 3 pp. 355-60). As we have seen, however, R. Hirsch considered the correctness and necessity of his approach to be a fundamental lesson of our *parashah*. (See R. Shimon Schwab's response to R. Dessler in *Tradition* 31:3 (1997) pp. 72-76.)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was for the first.
2. I ended up for the third.
3. Watch your drinking.
4. Esav rejected me.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was made.
2. I was red.
3. I was not bald.
4. I was a fielder.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Maaras Hamachpeila (I have four sets, I am in Calev's lot, I am also 'ahead,' I am the 'double'.)

#2 400 (I was the price of a cave, I was the time in a foreign land, I am "tough," I was for Esav's men.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

FRIDAY NIGHT DRASHA
Rabbi Menachem Winter

ONEG SHABBOS - 8:30pm

Join us for uplifting singing, delicious food,
and inspiring divrei Torah presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps
Kedushas Shabbos: Me'ein Olam Haba and the Secret of the Neshama Yeseira

SHABBOS
with
GWCK

Shabbos Parshas Toldos - Nov. 21 22
at Kehillas Ohr Hatorah

BREAKOUT SESSIONS FOLLOWING MUSSAF

For Men (approx. 10:45-11:00am)
Were the Avos Chassidim or Misnagdim? R. Kaminetsky
Yitzchak's Tefillah: The Meaning Behind Mincha R. Shaps
The Dreamscape: Prophecy, Revelation, or Nonsense? R. Winter

Kiddush: 11:00am

AFTERNOON WOMEN'S SHIUR - 3:15pm

Are You a Rachel or a Leah?
Mrs. Sara Malka Winter