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Parshas Toldos in a Nutshell
(Genesis 25:19–28:9)

Isaac and Rebecca endure twenty childless years, until their prayers are answered and Rebecca conceives. She experiences a difficult pregnancy as the “children struggle inside her”; G-d tells her that “there are two nations in your womb,” and that the younger will prevail over the elder.

Esau emerges first; Jacob is born clutching Esau’s heel. Esau grows up to be “a cunning hunter, a man of the field”; Jacob is “a wholesome man,” a dweller in the tents of learning. Isaac favors Esau; Rebecca loves Jacob. Returning exhausted and hungry from the hunt one day, Esau sells his birthright (his rights as the firstborn) to Jacob for a pot of red lentil stew.

In Gerar, in the land of the Philistines, Isaac presents Rebecca as his sister, out of fear that he will be killed by someone coveting her beauty. He farms the land, reopens the wells dug by his father Abraham, and digs a series of his own wells: over the first two there is strife with the Philistines, but the waters of the third well are enjoyed in tranquility.

(Continued next column)

If the human eye were allowed to see the spiritual vitality flowing from the utterance of G-d’s mouth into every creation, we would not see the materiality, grossness and tangibility of the creation, for it would be utterly nullified in relation to this divine life-force.

--Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi

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Esau marries two Hittite women. Isaac grows old and blind, and expresses his desire to bless Esau before he dies. While Esau goes off to hunt for his father’s favorite food, Rebecca dresses Jacob in Esau’s clothes, covers his arms and neck with goatskins to simulate the feel of his hairier brother, prepares a similar dish, and sends Jacob to his father. Jacob receives his father’s blessings for “the dew of the heaven and the fat of the land” and mastery over his brother. When Esau returns and the deception is revealed, all Isaac can do for his weeping son is to predict that he will live by his sword, and that when Jacob falters, the younger brother will forfeit his supremacy over the elder.

Jacob leaves home for Charan to flee Esau’s wrath and to find a wife in the family of his mother’s brother, Laban. Esau marries a third wife, named Machalath, the daughter of Ishmael. ❖

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Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, November 21
Eastern Standard Time
Earliest Tallis 5:51 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:14 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:07 PM
Plag Hamincha 3:37 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 5:04 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Nov 20 / Kislev 4

Candle Lighting 4:16 pm

Mincha 4:20 pm

Shabbos Day – Nov 21 / Kislev 5

Shacharis..... 9:30 am*

Torah Reading..... 10:30 am

Rabbi Drasha..... 11:05 am

Mincha 4:20 pm

Rabbi’s Drasha 4:40 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 5:17 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:14 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs) 1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) 9:15 pm

Bulletin

*This week’s Bulletin
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the Shul.*

Chassidic Masters

"The Stolen Blessings "

From the Chassidic Masters

The story of the stolen blessings is often understood as a contest between the two brothers for the legacy of Abraham and Isaac, with Isaac mistakenly taking Esau to be the worthy heir, and Rebecca, knowing the true nature of her elder son, devising the plan that would place Jacob at Isaac's bedside at the crucial moment.

However, a closer reading of the Torah's account indicates that Isaac was well aware of the difference between his two children. Jacob almost gave himself away when he said, in reply to his father's question about how he managed to find game so quickly, "The L-rd your G-d sent me good speed"; Isaac knew that Esau did not speak that way, and immediately suspected that the son before him was Jacob rather than Esau.

In fact, by the time we reach the end of the story, it is quite clear that Isaac never intended to bequeath the spiritual legacy of Abraham—the Divine promise to make his seed a great nation and to give them the Holy Land as their eternal heritage—to Esau.

When Esau discovers that Jacob has received the blessings, he begs Isaac, "Bless me, too, my father!" "But I have made him your master," says Isaac, "I have given him [the blessings of] grain and wine. What can I do for you now, my son?"

"Have you only one blessing, my father?!" sobs Esau. "Bless me too, my father!" Finally, Isaac blesses Esau that "Of the fatness of the land shall be your dwelling, and of the dew of heaven above" (the fat of the land and the dew of heaven themselves having already been granted to Jacob), and promises him that should the descendants of Jacob sin and become unworthy of their blessings, they will forfeit their mastery over Esau's descendants in material affairs. This is the best he can do for his beloved elder son.

But in the very next chapter we read how Isaac summons Jacob to him, and... blesses him. "May G-d Almighty bless you," says Isaac, "make you fruitful, and multiply you, and you shall become a populous nation. And may He grant you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants, that you may inherit the land of your dwelling, which G-d has given to Abraham"—blessings which had not been included in his earlier benedictions to either son.

So Isaac never intended to make Esau the father of the people of Israel, never thought to bequeath the Holy Land to him, never considered him heir to "the blessing of Abraham." There were two distinct blessings in Isaac all along (Esau seems to have sensed this when he cried, "Have you only one blessing, my father?!"), intended for his two sons: Jacob was to be given the spiritual legacy of Abraham, while Esau was to be granted the

the blessings of the material world.

Isaac desired that a partnership should be formed between his two sons: that the scholarly, unworldly Jacob should devote himself to spiritual pursuits, while Esau should apply his cunning and worldliness to the constructive development of the material world, in support of and in harmony with Jacob's holy endeavors.

Rebecca disagreed: both worlds must be given to Jacob. There cannot be "two departments," for the material world cannot be entrusted to materialists. Only one who is steeped in the Divine wisdom can know how to make proper use of G-d's world. Only one who possesses a spiritual outlook and value system will be able to master the physical reality rather than be mastered by it. ❖

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**Join us each
weekday morning
Mon-Fri as we delve into
the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am
followed immediately
by Shacharis.**

**Thank You to:
The Baal Korei,
Chazzanim, and the
Security Volunteers**

From Our Sages

... Isaac the son of Abraham; Abraham fathered Isaac (Genesis 25:19)

The cynics of that generation were saying that Sarah had become pregnant from Avimelech, since she had failed to conceive in all the years she was with Abraham. What did G-d do? He formed the countenance of Isaac to resemble that of Abraham, so that all might attest that Abraham had fathered Isaac. This is the meaning of the repetitious wording of the verse: "Isaac (is certainly) the son of Abraham, (since there is proof that) Abraham fathered Isaac."

-- (Rashi)

There are children who are embarrassed of their parents, and there are parents who are embarrassed by their children. With Abraham and Isaac it wasn't like that: Isaac prided himself in that he was "Isaac the son of Abraham," and Abraham prided himself in that "Abraham fathered Isaac."

-- (Midrash Tanchuma; Midrash HaGadol)

Jacob was an innocent man, dwelling in tents (Genesis 25:27)

The academy of Shem and the academy of Eber.

-- (Midrash Rabbah)

Isaac loved Esau because [his] game was in his mouth (Genesis 25:28)

Esau would deceive him with his mouth. He would inquire of him: "Father, how does one tithe salt? Father, how does one tithe straw?" And Isaac would muse: "This son of mine, how diligent he is in the fulfillment of the commandments!"

-- (Midrash Tanchuma; Rashi)

G-d appeared to him, and said: "Do not go down into Egypt; dwell in the Land" (Genesis 26:2)

G-d said to him: "You are a burnt offering without blemish; as a burnt offering becomes unfit if it passes beyond the Temple enclosure, so will you become unfit if you go out of the Holy Land."

-- (Midrash Rabbah)

He said: "Because the L-rd your G-d sent me good speed" (Genesis 27:20)

As soon as Jacob said these words, Isaac said to himself: "I know that Esau does not mention the name of the

Holy One, blessed be He; since this one does mention Him, he is not Esau but Jacob." Since Jacob spoke thus, Isaac said to him: "Come near, please, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not."

-- (Midrash Rabbah)

The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau (Genesis 27:22)

"The voice is the voice of Jacob"—no prayer is effective unless the seed of Jacob has a part in it.

"The hands

are the hands of Esau"—no war is successful unless the seed of Esau has a share in it.

-- (The Talmud)

Haftorah Toldos in a Nutshell

Malachi 1:1-2:7

This week's haftorah opens with a mention of the tremendous love G-d harbors for the children of Jacob, and the retribution He will visit upon the children of Esau who persecuted their cousins. This follows the theme of this week's Torah reading, whose two protagonists are Jacob and Esau.

The prophet Malachi then rebukes the kohanim (priests) who offer blemished and emaciated animals on G-d's altar: "Were you to offer it to your governor, would he be pleased or would he favor you? . . . O that there were even one among you that would close the doors [of the Temple] and that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain!"

The haftorah ends with a strong enjoiner to the kohanim to return to the original covenant that G-d had made with their ancestor, Aaron the High Priest. "True teaching was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. In peace and equity he went with Me, and he brought back many from iniquity." ❖

[The king of Philistia and his entourage] said [to Isaac], "We have seen that G-d has been with you, so we said: Let there now be a solemn oath between us, and let us make a covenant with you."

-- "Parshas Toldos – Genesis 26:28

At first, the Philistines seized the wells that Isaac dug, but in the end they actively sought him out to make peace with him.

Similarly, even our most well-intentioned efforts or spiritual labors can sometimes boomerang, actually strengthening the forces that oppose holiness. However, we learn from Isaac to not be discouraged in the face of such unexpected setbacks. Rather, we should continue our endeavors, which are certain to eventually succeed.

-- Likutei Sichos, vol. 1, pp. 29–31

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

