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“And it was, when Yitzchak had finished blessing Yaakov, and Yaakov had scarcely left from the presence of Yitzchak his father, that Esav his brother came back from his hunt” (*Bereishit* 27:30).

The Torah tells us that just as Yaakov left Yitzchak's presence after receiving his blessing, Esav entered the house with the game he had hunted for Yitzchak. Rashi explains, “This one went out and this one came in.” And since there is no such thing as happenstance in the world, the fact that Esav entered at exactly the moment Yaakov finished being blessed by his father teaches us Hashem wanted Yaakov to receive these blessings, otherwise He would have caused Esav to enter the house earlier, before Yitzchak had finished blessing Yaakov, thus denying Yaakov the merit of being blessed.

The Midrash tells us (*Bereishit Rabba* 67:2) that when Esav went to hunt game for his father, he tied the animal to a tree so he could slaughter it according to Jewish law as his father had instructed him. However, a few moments later an angel came and untied the bond, allowing the animal to escape. Hashem purposely sent this angel so Esav would linger in the field and thus Yaakov could be blessed by his father.

Hashem delayed Esav in the field with great precision, so Yaakov's departure from his father's house would be before Esav's entry into the house, in order to prove that Yaakov did not err in taking the blessings, but was destined by Heaven to receive them. Otherwise this would have been an opening for accusers to claim

## maskil Le'David The Perfection of Deeds



that the blessings did not come to Yaakov justly and honestly since his father intended to bless Esav. Rather Yaakov and Rivka tricked Yitzchak by Yaakov disguising himself as a hairy man and hastening to present game to his father.

Chazal long ago instructed us (*Devarim Rabba* 33:1) that man should fight his enemies with the very weapons the enemy uses, as David Hamelech said (*Tehillim* 18:27), “With the pure You act purely, and with the crooked You act perversely.” And since Esav ‘hunted’ mankind with his mouth and acted with great cunning, Yaakov received the blessings through using the same warfare.

And even though it seems as if Yaakov used trickery with both Lavan and Esav, this behavior was reserved only for those wicked people who treated him cunningly. But about Yaakov himself it says, “And Yaakov was a wholesome (honest) man, abiding in tents.” And as the prophet says (*Micha* 7:20) “Grant truth to Yaakov,” for indeed he was the pillar of truth.

Yaakov merited great *siyata d'Shmaya* that Esav did not enter the house before Yitzchak finished blessing him (Yaakov), and that his father blessed him even though he realized it was Yaakov standing in front of him and not Esav. This shows us that the path Yaakov sought to follow was desirable before Hashem, and therefore Hashem was with him and helped him on his way, as we are told, “A person is led on the path he wishes to take.” Yaakov's entire aim was to ascend and sanctify himself spiritually.

2 Kislev 5783  
26 November 2022

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## Hilula

- 2 Kislev – Rabbi Aharon Kotler, Rosh Yeshiva Lakewood
- 2 Kislev – Rabbi Avraham Hakohen of Saloniki, author of *Taharat Hamayim*
- 3 Kislev – Rabbi Eliezer Sofino, master of the Chida
- 3 Kislev – Rabbi Shilah Refael, Av Beit Din Yerushalayim
- 4 Kislev – Rabbi Eliyahu Kobo, Av Beit Din Salonique
- 4 Kislev – Rabbi Yaakov David Kalish of Amshinov
- 5 Kislev – Rabbi Baruch Ber of Kaminetz
- 5 Kislev – Rabbi Refael Chakak, author of *Likutei Refael*
- 6 Kislev – Rabbi Yosef Gerji, author of *Eidut Bi'hosef*
- 6 Kislev – Rabbi Yechezkel Shraga Halberstadt, Admor of Stropkov
- 7 Kislev – Rabbi Yechezkel Moshe HaLevi, Av Beit Din Bavel
- 7 Kislev – Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlap, author of *Beit Zevul*
- 8 Kislev – Rabbi Mordechai Tzahalon, author of *Metzitz U'melitz*
- 8 Kislev – Rabbi Avraham HaKohen Yitzchaki, author of *Mishmerot Kehunah*





## WORDS OF THE SAGES

### Is External Appearance Really Unimportant?

When Rivka planned the giving of Yitzchak's blessing to her son Yaakov it says, "Then Rivka took her older son Esav's precious garments which were with her in the house, and clothed Yaakov her young son" (*Bereishit* 27:15). What were these precious clothes? The Midrash says these were special clothes which Esav wore when serving his father. When he took care of his father's needs he would put on royal attire. "He said, it is not honorable to serve my father in anything other than royal clothes."

From this, the gaon Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Margalit shlit"z points out, we can derive a fortiori (*kal v'chomer*): If concerning one's parents it is so important to dress in clean and pleasant clothes, all the more so when standing before the King of kings – surely one should do so wearing respectable clothing. Indeed, the Ramchal (*Mesilat Yescharim* 19) derives the following principle from this Midrash: "It is fitting for one who stands before the King of kings to wear honorable clothing and sit as if he were sitting in the presence of a great king."

The Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez condemns those who come to pray in simple attire. "How do they dare appear before Him and ask for mercy and kindness, while standing clothed in unfitting dress!? As if standing and talking to their young friend to whom they are not embarrassed to talk like that!? And if you contemplate this carefully, you will realize this is comparable to *avoda zara*, G-d forbid, for it shows disrespect towards Heaven, that this person is not in awe of the Master of the World. For certainly no one would dare appear informally dressed in front of a great man. Therefore the Torah takes care to write that Yosef changed his clothes when he appeared before Pharaoh. Apparently it does not seem important that we be told this fact. However, it teaches us that one must dress in a respectable manner when praying."

The Ibn Ezra expounds on the verse, "Cleanse yourselves and change your clothes:" "Cleanse yourselves' – wash your body, 'and change your clothes.' From this we learn that when going to pray in one's fixed location every person is obligated to make sure their bodies and clothes are clean."

Harav Margalit related that he once noticed a chazzan in the *beit kneset* wearing sandals without socks. Once the prayers were over he approached him and asked if he thought it was appropriate to stand like this before Hashem. He answered without batting an eyelid: "Yes, of course! That's how I'm used to walking around." I asked, "Would you also go to a wedding like that? Or your son's Bar Mitzvah?" He answered with full confidence: "Yes. Absolutely! The outward appearance is not important! As good Jews say, 'The most important thing is what's in the heart...'"

Time passed and one day I received an invitation to his son's Bar Mitzvah. The memory of that incident remained engraved in my heart. I went to that event just to verify whether his words were true. Would he really go 'as he pleases' even on this festive occasion? And what do you think? Not in the slightest way! His entire appearance asserted honor and glory. He was dressed in a fancy suit, and maybe even a tie. And his feet – gone were the sandals! In their place was a pair of shiny black shoes, with socks of course.

When I approached to wish him "mazal tov," I couldn't hold myself back and said: "Do you see? When you feel the event is an honorable one, you dress fittingly! And standing by the *amud*, in front of the Almighty King of kings, is no less a significant event than your son's Bar Mitzvah..."

In conclusion, we quote the words of the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 68:4): "It is proper that a person have special fine clothes for prayer, just like the Priestly Garments." In other words, just as the Kohanim wore special clothes when serving in the Beit Hamikdash, so it is fitting for man to be dressed when standing in prayer, since prayers were established in place of offerings.



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

### Abandoning Sin – Abolishing Decrees

Two people once approached me in one week. They were the same age, had similar names, and suffered from the same ailment.

I instructed each one to strengthen himself in Torah and mitzvot, for it is only Torah that can protect a person from harsh decrees.

The first person accepted my words unquestioningly. He promised to try his utmost to follow the Torah's dictates. However, the second one tried to evade all forms of responsibility with various excuses and explanations. Subsequently, I heard what happened afterwards: the first person was completely cured; no trace was left of his illness. But unfortunately, the second one grew even sicker and eventually succumbed to his illness.

How mighty is the power of repentance! We have no idea of Heavenly accounts and cannot fathom the ways of Hashem. But there are instances in which we can rip asunder bad decrees. This can be done through *teshuvah*, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah* (repentance, prayer and charity), as well as fortifying ourselves in Torah and good deeds.

The wise man will do all in his power to remove the decree from himself. But the fool will remain rooted to his spot. He will stay sunk in the quagmire of sin, ignoring the opportunity to extricate himself through Torah and mitzvot. And unfortunately he will eventually drown in it, overpowered by the decree of death, R"l.



## FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

### The Attributes of Our Forefathers

Parshat Toldot brings together all three of our forefathers. The Parshah mentions Avraham, and provides much detail about the lives of Yitzchak, and his son Yaakov.

It could be that the Torah wanted to mention all three forefathers in the same Parshah since from each of them we absorb a certain attribute, the focal point of his life and through which he served Hashem. Avraham was the pillar of kindness, Yitzchak was the pillar of *avodah* (prayer), and Yaakov was the pillar of Torah. And even though each of our forefathers possessed all of these virtues, each one excelled in a certain attribute through which he was able to acquire the other virtues.

Esav is also mentioned in this week's Parshah. But while our forefathers are remembered favorably, Esav is referred to as being a wicked man of misdeeds, "His hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him." Esav was given the opportunity to learn Torah, morality and the correct way of life from each of the three forefathers, but he sought the path of evil and sin and did not want to open his eyes and ears to see and hear about the ways of Hashem and His Torah.

It seems that the beginning of Esav's downfall stemmed from the fact that he did not wish to acquire all the good virtues of the forefathers, but was satisfied with the one good attribute he had - the attribute of kindness which led him to honor his father. But it is not enough for a person to be satisfied with one attribute; he must constantly progress and elevate himself in other virtues and mitzvot too. And since Esav remained stagnant and did not seek to grow, he ended up staying on the path of wickedness and impurity, and his descendants too continued in his bad ways.

If we consider the matter, it seems Esav had a wonderful opportunity to repent and draw closer to Hashem's Torah through receiving the blessings from his father Yitzchak, who sincerely wished to bless him. Chazal say that on that very day Esav transgressed the three serious prohibitions; therefore he did not have the merit to be blessed first by his father. Esav also ended up also losing the rights of the firstborn, all because he was tired and hungry and did not pay attention to the fact that he was selling his rights in exchange for some lentils.

My ancestor Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto zy"l was known to say that when a person commits a sin, he loses all his mitzvot, except for the mitzvah of tzedakah about which it says, "His tzedakah endures forever" (*Tehillim* 112:3).

Because of this Esav also lost his mitzvah of honoring his parents and spoke to his father brazenly by saying "My father should rise" (*Bereishit* 27:31), in contrast to Yaakov who addressed his father with much more respect and said, "Rise up, please."

## a Day OF DELIGHT



### Playing a Musical Instrument

1. Chazal forbade playing any musical instrument on Shabbat. The reason for this is in case the instrument will break and one will come to repair it (*Makeh b'patish*). Included in this prohibition is a violinist who stretches the string so the sound will be sharper.

2. Regarding making sounds with the mouth, the Rama writes (*siman* 338:1), "Those who call their friends and whistle with their mouths like a bird, it is permissible to do so on Shabbat." Singing is permitted for Chazal did not forbade tunes created by the mouth. Maran the Chida writes: The countries of Ashkenaz and Poland rely on this ruling; they permit whistling and making other sounds with their throats when singing, even though it sounds like they are playing real musical instruments. The holy sages and pious ones also used to sing like that, and listening to their voices appears to be like the playing of real musical instruments.

3. Chazal also established (*Beitza* 36b): One should not clap (hands) or clap by slapping one's thigh with one's hand, or dance. This is a decree to assure one won't come to repair musical instruments. Clapping in a different manner than normal (*shinui*), such as with the back of one's right hand onto one's left palm, is permitted.

4. Clapping and dancing is permitted in honor of Simchat Torah, even if it falls on Shabbat. But one must not jingle bells or play trumpets.

5. One may not clap or dance even in honor of a bride and groom.

The Yerushalmi relates a story about Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi who married off his son Rabbi Shimon. They clapped with a *shinui*, using the back of their hands, on Shabbat. Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes passed by and heard the clapping. He said: "Gentlemen, does Shabbat permit this?" (because in his opinion it is forbidden even with a *shinui*). Rabbi Yehuda heard and said, "Who has come to tyrannize us inside our house?!" (Rabbi Meir heard his voice and ran away. The talmidim ran after Rabbi Meir to bring him back, and because he was running fast his scarf fell off which enabled Rabbi Yehuda to see Rabbi Meir's neck from the window. Rabbi Yehuda said, I only merited Torah by virtue of seeing the back of Rabbi Meir's neck.) This teaches us that clapping to delight a bride and groom is only permitted with a *shinui*.

6. One may not bang on the table or on a bottle while singing. Rabbi Chaim Plaji zt"l writes that it is a great mitzvah to abolish the practice of those who are lenient in this matter and do so.

7. One may clap one's hands to wake someone up or for applauding after a lecture. One may also snap one's fingers to wake someone up, as long as one does not create a tune.

*For any questions in practical application of these halachot, please consult a rabbinical authority.*



## Introspection

Principles in Service of the Heart and Rectification of Middot

### The Consequence of Causing Another Distress

Chazal avoid specifying the Heavenly reward of mitzvot and punishment for sins, as it says (*Avot* 2:1) “Be as careful with a minor mitzvah as with a major one, for you do not know the reward of mitzvot.” The reward for mitzvot performed in This World is hidden from the human eye so we will be particular about observing all the mitzvot, regardless of their reward and punishment.

But there is one topic about which Chazal describe at length, bringing many examples of Heavenly punishment, and that is hurtful words and causing others distress. The Gemara (*Baba Metzia* 58b) says, “All those who descend to Gehinom

ascend; except for three who descend and do not arise. And these are: One who has relations with a married woman, one who embarrasses another in public, and one who calls his friend a derogatory name.” Out of the three most serious sins for which one does not leave Gehinom, two are connected to causing others distress.

In particular, deception is one of the things people treat lightly. Very serious prohibitions in this area are carried out every day by many people, and most of them do not even think they have done something incorrect.

The sefer *Lapid Ha'esh* relates that the management team of the Laniado hospital in Netanya once convened in the presence of the founder the esteemed Admor of Kloisenberg, Rabbi Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam zt”l, to discuss various medical issues, among them the issue of needles used in the hospital for medical injections. They described the options; two types of needles were available, both of good quality, but with a price difference of a whole shekel the two types.

Of course the management wanted to save on expenses (which would amount to millions of shekels), and pointed out that other medical institutions use the cheaper needles.

But here the Admor intervened, asking why the second type of needle is more costly.

One of the doctors explained that the expensive needle are more refined and therefore cause the patient less pain. The Admor did not allow the debate to continue and immediately declared they should purchase the expensive type. He did not ponder his decision for even a fraction of a second. As, he explained, no price was too expensive in his eyes if in this way the pain and distress of a Jewish person could be reduced.

Someone present mentioned the Gemara (*Makot* 22b): “How foolish are the people who stand up in honor of a Sefer Torah but do not stand up in honor of a great Rabbi. For although the Torah writes, ‘Forty shall he strike him,’ the sages came with the power of their Torah and reduced it from forty to thirty-nine.” “A great Rabbi,” say the commentaries, “is one who is capable of lessening the pain of a Jewish person! To reduce somewhat his sorrow and suffering!”

And here we have with us the “Great Rabbi” of our generation! See how he devotes himself to reducing even the distress of a ‘needle stab’ of so many patients, who can count them...

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