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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON TOLDOS - 5773

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TorahWeb torahweb@torahweb.org
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date: Thu, Nov 15, 2012 at 7:41 AM
subject: Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky - Two Berachos that are One
Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky
Two Berachos that are One

The theme of berachos permeates the entirety of parshas Toldos. Yitzchak is blessed by Hashem, confirming that the berachos promised to Avraham would be transmitted through Yitzchak. The Torah highlights the fulfillment of these berachos by describing Yitzchak's financial success. Even his rivals, Avimelech and his nation, concede that Yitzchak is the one blessed by Hashem. Furthermore, parshas

Toldos culminates with Yaakov receiving two berachos. He is first blessed unknowingly by Yitzchak with the berachos that were intended for Esav, and he subsequently receives the birchas Avraham - the beracha assuring him inheritance of Eretz Yisroel and an eternal relationship with Hashem.

Upon analyzing the various berachos of parshas Toldos, it is clear that there are two distinct categories of berachos. First, there are berachos that focus on material property, like that gathered by Yitzchak during his days in Gerar and as expressed in the beracha of "v'yiten lecha." Second, in contrast with this material "abundance of grain and wine," there is also the spiritual beracha of being a forefather of the nation of Hashem that is bestowed upon Yitzchak at the beginning of the parsha and upon Yaakov at the end. The significance of the spiritual berachos is understandable, but, why does the Torah place so much emphasis on the seemingly mundane material success?

The Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva elaborates upon the significance of material blessings, as follows: reward for mitzvos is spiritual in nature and is received in the next world; the Torah promises us material beracha in this world not as a reward for mitzvos, but rather as a support and vehicle to enable us to continue on the path of mitzvos. Hashem will remove the physical obstacles of famine, war and other impediments to our proper service of Him. With this understanding of the role of material success we can appreciate the seemingly dual nature of the berachos of parshas Toldos. There are not two distinct berachos, but rather two sides of one beracha. Hashem assures Yitzchak, and subsequently Yaakov, that they will merit fathering the nation that will have an eternal relationship with Hashem. He will enable this by blessing Bnai Yisroel with the requisite physical gifts. Rather than serving as a distraction from their spiritual pursuits, Hashem's providing of their material needs will allow the Jewish People to focus wholeheartedly on their mission.

Every year on Yom Kippur, as the kohein gadol left the kodosh hakadashim, he would recite a tefillah. One would expect that this tefillah would be spiritual in nature - it is recited on the holiest day of the year by the holiest person in the holiest place. And yet, this tefillah appears to be anything but spiritual! The kohein gadol beseeches Hashem for a bountiful harvest, financial success, and many other worldly blessings. In fact, this tefillah is very much a spiritual one; this tefillah asks that our physical needs be met so we can focus on the spiritual goals we have set on Yom Kippur.

Many people have the custom to recite the tefillah of "v'yiten lecha" on motsaei Shabbos as we begin a new week. Just as the kohein gadol focuses on the necessary berachos of this world as he exits the kodosh hakadashim, so too, as we leave the spiritual realm of Shabbos, we ask Hashem for the material success necessary to continue pursuing our spiritual goals.

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date: Fri, Nov 9, 2012 at 9:22 AM
subject: Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger - Thoughts in the Wake of Hurricane Sandy

Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger
Thoughts in the Wake of Hurricane Sandy

Now that we are beginning to absorb the magnitude of the pain, destruction and displacement inflicted on so many of our communities, we are also aspiring to exercise the age old teaching of "nosei be'ol chavairo" - sharing the burden of the challenges and tribulations of others. The long and circuitous road ahead of us that must be traveled to make families whole again seems unending, and the hardships that will be met seem intolerable. Yet the response of our people has been and

will continue to be remarkable, and we pray that Hashem will reward these efforts with success that is greater than we dare to imagine.

Indeed it has been pointed out, most famously in recent times by the Rov z"tl, that the challenge to become more of a tzelem elokim, more of a giver, more of a participant in the trouble of others, and more of a connected community, are the primary, and sometimes only, take away messages from an episode that otherwise seems to be non-redemptive. It is often felt that to say more is arrogant and unfeeling.

That is why the devastating winds and punishing rains of last week brought to mind a braiso (Chagiga 12b), "Rabbi Yossi says: Woe to those who see but do not realize what they are seeing, who stand but do not realize upon what they are standing. The Earth stands on pillars as it says 'Who shakes the Earth from its place and makes the pillars tremble'...the pillars stand upon the waters...the waters stand upon the mountains...the mountain stands upon the winds...the wind stands upon the storm...the storm is suspended from the arm of the Holy One."

I felt that Rabbi Yossi speaks to many of us who have watched, similar to Eliezer of this week's parsha, macharish leda'as - in awe filled silence and stupor; only in our case, silenced by seeming meaninglessness. At first I thought Rabbi Yossi recognized us, pitied us and perhaps censured us for not finding meaning and positive direction in the tragic and terrifying storms of our people's life, much as Rambam (Hilchos Taaniyos 1:3) condemns one who is aware of suffering and remains unmoved to introspect and pray as a result.

Upon further thought, I understood that Rabbi Yossi is framing our experience and that of all thinking people. We are so often forced to see and yet held so far from understanding. To be sure, the aforementioned Rambam does not instruct us to probe and evaluate a tragedy trying to find its cause. Rather each of us individually probes and evaluates ourselves, and each community looks inward and, with renewed humility and awe, uncovers values on the decline and unseemly behaviors that require great thought and investment.

A more careful reading of Rabbi Yossi may suggest that the same frail, speechless onlookers dare not forget that they remain standing, extraordinarily erect and incredibly strong. In fact Rabbi Yossi is far more concerned with describing the depth of how we stand rather than the depth of how we suffer.

It is interesting that the gemara concludes that one of the pillars on which we stand are the twelve tribes of our people. Perhaps by studying the community standing as it pools all of its resources together, standing with hands-on help, standing in profound empathy, standing tall and taking responsibility for one another, and finally standing humbled in front of the A-mighty, we will find positive direction and even optimistic moments.

Let us pray that as we heard the furious winds last week we will all soon hear the song that Perek Shira attributes to the powerful winds as it forcefully carries Jews from every corner of the world back to our home.

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From: Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org date: Thu, Nov 15, 2012 at 9:35 PM Subject: Parshat Toldot - Shabbat Shalom from the OU

Between Prophecy and Oracle

Britain's Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Between Prophecy and Oracle Rachel, hitherto infertile, became pregnant. Suffering acute pain, "she went to inquire of the Lord" [vatelekh lidrosh et Hashem] (Bereishit 25:22). The explanation she received was that she was carrying twins who were contending in her womb. They were destined to do so long into the future:

Two nations are in your womb, And two peoples from within you will be separated; One people will be stronger than the other, And the older will serve the younger [ve-rav ya'avod tsa'ir]. (Bereishit 25: 23)

Eventually the twins are born – first Esau, then (his hand grasping his brother's heel) Jacob. Mindful of the prophecy she has received, Rebecca favours the younger son, Jacob. Years later, she persuades him to dress in Esau's clothes and take the blessing Isaac intended to give his elder son. One verse of that blessing was "May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you." (Bereishit 26:29) The prediction has been fulfilled. Isaac's blessing can surely mean nothing less than what was disclosed to Rebecca before either child was born, namely that "the older will serve the younger." The story has apparently reached closure, or so, at this stage, it seems.

But biblical narrative is not what it seems. Two events follow which subvert all that we had been led to expect. The first happens when Esau arrives and discovers that Jacob has cheated him out of his blessing. Moved by his anguish, Isaac gives him a benediction, one of whose clauses is:

You will live by your sword And you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, You will throw his yoke from off your neck. (Bereishit 27: 40)

This is not what we had anticipated. The older will not serve the younger in perpetuity.

The second scene, many years later, occurs when the brothers meet after a long estrangement. Jacob is terrified of the encounter. He had fled from home years earlier because Esau had vowed to kill him. Only after a long series of preparations and a lonely wrestling match at night is he able to face Esau with some composure. He bows down to him seven times. Seven times he calls him "my lord." Five times he refers to himself as "your servant." The roles have been reversed. Esau does not become the servant of Jacob. Instead, Jacob speaks of himself as the servant of Esau. But this cannot be. The words heard by Rebecca when "she went to inquire of the Lord" suggested precisely the opposite, that "the older will serve the younger." We are faced with cognitive dissonance.

More precisely, we have here an example of one of the most remarkable of all the Torah's narrative devices – the power of the future to transform our understanding of the past. This is the essence of Midrash. New situations retrospectively disclose new meanings in the text (see the essay 'The Midrashic Imagination' by Michael Fishbane). The present is never fully determined by the present. Sometimes it is only later that we understand now.

This is the significance of the great revelation of G-d to Moses in Shemot 33:33, where G-d says that only His back may be seen – meaning, His presence can be seen only when we look back at the past; it can never be known or predicted in advance. The indeterminacy of meaning at any given moment is what gives the biblical text its openness to ongoing interpretation.

We now see that this was not an idea invented by the sages. It already exists in the Torah itself. The words Rebecca heard – as will now become clear – seemed to mean one thing at the time. It later transpires that they meant something else.

The words ve-rav ya'avod tsair seem simple: "the older will serve the younger." Returning to them in the light of subsequent events, though, we discover that they are anything but clear. They contain multiple ambiguities.

The first (noted by Radak and R. Yosef ibn Kaspi) is that the word et, signalling the object of the verb, is missing. Normally in biblical Hebrew the subject precedes, and the object follows, the verb, but not always. In Job 14:19 for example, the words avanim shachaku mayim mean "water wears away stones," not "stones wear away water." Thus the phrase might mean "the older shall serve the younger" but it might also mean

“the younger shall serve the older”. To be sure, the latter would be poetic Hebrew rather than conventional prose style, but that is what this utterance is: a poem.

The second is that rav and tsa'ir are not opposites, a fact disguised by the English translation of rav as “older.” The opposite of tsa'ir (“younger”) is bechir (“older” or “firstborn”). Rav does not mean “older.” It means “great” or possibly “chief.” This linking together of two terms as if they were polar opposites, which they are not – the opposites would have been bechir/tsa'ir or rav/me'at – further destabilises the meaning. Who was the rav? The elder? The leader? The chief? The more numerous? The word might mean any of these things.

The third – not part of the text but of later tradition – is the musical notation. The normal way of notating these three words would be mercha-tipcha-sof pasuk. This would support the reading, “the older shall serve the younger.” In fact, however, they are notated tipcha-mercha-sof pasuk – suggesting, “the older, shall the younger serve”; in other words, “the younger shall serve the older.”

A later episode adds a yet another retrospective element of doubt. There is a second instance in Bereishit of the birth of twins, to Tamar (Bereishit 38:27-30). The passage is clearly reminiscent of the story of Esau and Jacob:

When her time was come, there were twins in her womb, and while she was in labour one of them put out a hand. The midwife took a scarlet thread and fastened it round the wrist, saying, “This one appeared first.” No sooner had he drawn back his hand, than his brother came out, and the midwife said, “What! You have broken out first!” So he was named Perez. Soon afterwards his brother was born with the scarlet thread on his wrist, and he was named Zerah.

Who then was the elder? And what does this imply in the case of Esau and Jacob? (See Rashi to 25: 26 who suggests that Jacob was in fact the elder.) These multiple ambiguities are not accidental but integral to the text. The subtlety is such, that we do not notice them at first. Only later, when the narrative does not turn out as expected, are we forced to go back and notice what at first we missed: that the words Rebecca heard may mean “the older will serve the younger” or “the younger will serve the older.”

A number of things now become clear. The first is that this is a rare example in the Torah of an oracle as opposed to a prophecy (this is the probable meaning of the word chidot in Bamidbar 12: 8, speaking about Moses: “With him I speak mouth to mouth, openly and not in chidot” — usually translated as “dark speeches” or “riddles”). Oracles – a familiar form of supernatural communication in the ancient world – were normally obscure and cryptic, unlike the normal form of Israelite prophecy. This may well be the technical meaning of the phrase “she went to inquire of the Lord” which puzzled the medieval commentators.

The second – and this is fundamental to an understanding of Bereishit – is that the future is never as straightforward as we are led to believe. Abraham is promised many children but has to wait years before Isaac is born. The patriarchs are promised a land but do not acquire it in their lifetimes. The Jewish journey, though it has a destination, is long and has many digressions and setbacks. Will Jacob serve or be served? We do not know. Only after a long, enigmatic struggle alone at night does Jacob receive the name Israel meaning, “he who struggles with G-d and with men and prevails.”

The most important message of this text is both literary and theological. The future affects our understanding of the past. We are part of a story whose last chapter has not yet been written. That rests with us, as it rested with Jacob.

To read more writings and teachings from the Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, please visit www.chiefrabbi.org.

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date: Thu, Nov 15, 2012 at 5:59 AM

subject: Parshat Toldot from Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

Train the Youth According to his Way

Rosh Hayeshiva **Harav Mordechai Greenberg**, shlita

“The lads grew up.” (Bereishit 25:27) R. Levi says: This is like a hadas (myrtle) and a rosebush that were growing one upon the other, and after having grown and flowered, each one gave its own fragrance. So too, all thirteen years, both went to school and both came from school. After thirteen years, this one [Yaakov] went to houses of study, and this one [Esav] went to houses of idol-worship. (Bereishit Rabbah 63:14)

Education is one of the primary goals of Judaism. This includes education for Talmud Torah - “You shall teach them to your children to discuss them” (Devarim 11:19) -- and education for proper character -- “He [Avraham] commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem, doing charity and justice.” (Bereishit 18:17) The Rambam (Hil. Avoda Zara 1:3) describes the manner of education practiced by the avot (patriarchs):

[Avraham] would go around, calling out and gathering the people from city to city ... instructing each and every one according to his understanding ... He instructed Yitzchak his son, and then Yitzchak began teaching and admonishing. Yitzchak instructed Yaakov, and appointed him to teach ... Yaakov Avinu taught all of his children ...

Avraham, the great educator, knew the secret of education -- to adapt it to the individual traits of each pupil, “each and every one according to his understanding.” King Solomon, the wisest of all, said, “Train the youth ACCORDING TO HIS WAY; even when he grows old, he will not swerve from it.” (Mishlei 22:6) The Gra comments on this verse, “It is necessary to train according to [the child's] nature. However, if you force him against his nature, he will listen to you now. Later, though, when your yoke will be removed from his shoulder, he will swerve from it [the teaching], because it is impossible for him to break his predetermined nature.”

Rav Kook, zt”l, explains that the basic sin of mankind was the loss of individuality (Orot Hakodesh, III, page 103)

The sin of Adam was that abandoned his individuality, that he listened to the serpent and lost his “self.” He did not know how to respond to the question, “Where are you?” because he had lost his true self ...

Learned educators come, and look at his [the student's] chitzoniut (exterior). Even they disregard the “I,” and add straw to the fire, water the plants with vinegar, fatten the minds and hearts with everything that is external to them, and the “I” is slowly forgotten. Since there is no “I,” there is no “he,” and certainly there is no “you.”

If we seek an answer to the obvious question: How could two children end up with such different natures, despite their equal and shared education? We will answer that, just the opposite, it is BECAUSE of their shared education. The uniform system of education used for both brothers, without consideration for their different talents and tendencies, caused that contrast which already existed in them naturally to express itself when they grew up and became men.

Rav Hirsch, as well, comments on our parsha (25:27):

One who educates Yaakov and Esav on the same bench, developing the same habits, and training them as one for a life of learning and meditation, is guaranteed to ruin one of them. Yaakov will draw from the spring of wisdom with an increasingly strengthened desire, whereas Esav will just look forward to the day when he will throw behind him the old books, and along with them the whole purpose of a life that he recognized from only one angle, and in a way that he abhors by his very nature.

Had Yitzchak and Rivka succeeded in directing the courage and strength dormant in Esav to the service of G-d, he would not have been a

mighty hunter, but a mighty warrior of Hashem. Esav's sword would have formed a covenant with the voice of Yaakov. Yaakov and Esav could have both upheld the covenant of Avraham had their parents discerned their different natures on time, in their youth, and would have trained each one of them according to his nature and tendencies. Each needs a different way of education, leading to one goal.

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subject: **Rabbi Frand on Parshas Toldos**

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #789, The Power of Your Own Words. Good Shabbos!

One Cannot Make Blanket Rules Concerning Telling The Truth

The story of Yaakov and Eisav and the "Blessings" in this week's parsha is one of the more difficult stories in Chumash. Yitzchak is about to give the blessings to Eisav. Rivkah feels that Yaakov is the son more deserving of the blessings, and she encourages Yaakov to disguise himself as Eisav. Yaakov listens to his mother and tricks his blind father into thinking that he is Eisav. Yaakov receives the blessings from Yitzchak. We know the rest of the story...

What is intriguing is a comment of the Gemara [Makkos 24a] in referring to Tehillim Chapter 15. This chapter, often read at funerals, lists the attributes of a person who may "dwell on G-d's Holy Mountain": One who walks in perfect innocence, and does what is right, and speaks the truth from his heart; who has no slander on his tongue, who has done his fellow no evil, etc., etc. The Gemara in Makkos takes each of these items and homiletically relates them to specific individuals. The expression "speaks the truth from his heart; who has no slander on his tongue" is identified with the patriarch Yaakov. The Gemara cites as proof the fact that Yaakov said "Maybe my father will touch me and I will be in his eyes like a liar." [Bereshis 27:12]

If we were told to pick a place in Chumash from which to prove that Yaakov was an honest person, this would not be our first choice. It would not even be our tenth choice! This is something which requires explanation: How did he do it? How did he say it?

If we had to cite a proof to the honesty of Yaakov, we would most likely pick the dialog he has with Lavan when he tells him he worked for him for 20 years and never cheated him once in all that time. "I put in an honest day's work. I worked in the night; I worked in the day; I worked in the heat; I worked in the cold." [Bereshis 31:37-42]

And yet, this incident, when he masqueraded as Eisav, is cited by the Gemara as the proof that Yaakov was the man of truth, par excellence.

A second observation: Rivka instructs Yaakov that this is what he must do. She tells him she knows by Divine Inspiration that this is what he must do and accepts the spiritual responsibility for any negative consequences of his action.

Yaakov follows his mother's instructions and he enters his blind father's tent dressed in Eisav's clothing, identifying himself as "It is I, Eisav, your first born son." Rashi re-parses the statement as "It is I (here to serve you)! Eisav is your first born son." Technically, then, Yaakov was telling the truth when his words are "parsed correctly."

Why didn't Yaakov make a statement that was totally false, regardless of how the statement is parsed? He had Rivka's assurance that no harm would befall him. Why play the game of "It is I. Eisav is your first born . . .?"

I once heard the following thought from Rav Kulefsky, zt"l, (who served for many years as the premier maggid shiur in Ner Yisroel and

subsequently became Rosh Hayehiva). We speak of "Give Truth (Emes) to Yaakov; Kindness (Chessed) to Avraham". It is no coincidence that the "tests" given respectively to both Yaakov and Avraham had to do precisely with the attribute in which they each excelled.

Avraham, the paradigm of Chessed is asked to slaughter his son. There could be nothing that is a greater anathema to the Man of Kindness than the command to slaughter his beloved son. The reason for this is that Avraham was called upon to purify his attribute of Chessed. It must not come from knee-jerk emotion or just because he is naturally a "nice guy". It has to be a Chessed that is purified and filtered until it is pure Chessed. The Almighty is teaching Avraham that there are times when it is necessary for him to go against that attribute, so that when he will exert it will be pure, unadulterated, pristine Chessed.

It is similar with Yaakov Avinu. Some people could be very honest simply because they have no cunning. They are poor liars and if they do say a lie, it is written all over their faces. Yaakov was not that type of person. The Torah does not say "Yaakov Tam" (Yaakov was simple), it says "Yaakov ish Tam" (he is a person that can apply his 'temimus'). But when the situation demanded, when he was dealing with a Lavan, he told Lavan "I am your match in trickery. You cannot pull a fast one on me. Mine is not knee-jerk 'Emes', it is 'Emes' that has been refined and filtered so that it is true 'Emes'". Sometimes the attribute of Truth requires its master to act in a way that is not 100% truthful. Some situations demand that even a master of Emes act in ways that appear not to be Emes.

Rivka assured Yaakov that for the good of Klal Yisrael, he must do this. He needed to sublimate his attribute of truth and act in the appropriate manner. He listened to her. Therefore, he became a bigger master of truth. But she did not give him a carte blanche to depart from the attribute of truth. So when he didn't have to lie he did not lie. If possible, he would not tell a "black lie" but would limit it to a "white lie," by saying something like "It is I. Eisav is your first born."

This is why the Talmud marshals from THIS incident that Yaakov was the embodiment of someone who did not have falsehood on his lips. He is the true man of truth because he knows when to say 'Emes' and how to say 'Emes' and when one must say something that is not 100% 'Emes'.

I saw an amazing insight in the work "Heima Yenachamuni" by the Tolner Rebbe of Jerusalem. The above-cited Gemara explains that the expression in Tehillim "who speaks truth in his heart" (dover Emes b'levov) refers to Rav Safra. Chazal describe the extent to which Rav Safra was a man of truth. Rav Safra was in the middle of Shmoneh Esrei and he had a precious stone in front of him. A non-Jew approached him while he was davening and said "That is a beautiful stone. I will pay you \$1000 for it." Rav Safra did not respond. The Gentile assumed he was playing tough to get and raised his offer to \$1500. Still, Rav Safra was silent. \$2000? \$5000? \$10,000! Finally, Rav Safra concluded Shmoneh Esrei, turned to the non-Jew and said "It is yours for \$1,000 – your original offer." Since mentally he had accepted the original offer when he first heard it, "in his heart" he had already committed to the sale at that price and he kept the words he spoke in his heart (dover emes b'lvovo).

The Gemara in Chulin relates that Mar Zutra was going from Sichra to Mechoza. Rava and Rav Safra were headed at the same time from Mechoza to Sichra. When they met near the outskirts of Mechoza, Mar Zutra mistakenly believed that Rava and Rav Safra had come out to greet him. Rav Safra corrected him immediately and told him that they had not come out to greet him but rather they were on the road out of town anyway. Rava asked Rav Safra, "Why did you do that. Why did you have to make him feel bad? Let him live with his mistake. Why did you have to pop his balloon?"

The Tolner Rebbe explains: This is the same Rav Safra from the Gemara in Makkos who excelled in 'Emes'. He was following his own opinion that one needs to be 100% truthful – even to the extent of "dover

emes b'lvovo". Rava corrected him and said: "Rav Safra, there are times when one should not always tell the truth. Sometimes, it is better to be quiet." True, Mar Zutra would have thought something that was false. But that is not tragic. It would have been his own mistake. Rava was teaching Rav Safra that there are two parts to the pasuk in Tehillim. There is "dover emes b'lvovo" (he speaks truth in his heart) but there is also "Lo asah l're-ayhu ra-ah" (not cause you fellow man evil). One must know when to say the truth and when to be quiet. It is not always necessary to say the truth. One is not allowed to deceive a person, but if the person is deceiving himself and there is no harm done by that, it is not always a mitzvah to "correct his error."

This is really what the Gemara says in Moed Katan [5a] as well. The Gemara expounds a pasuk in Tehillim [50:23]: "He who offers confession honors Me; and one who orders [his] way (v'sam derech) I will show him the salvation of G-d." The Talmud makes a play on the words v'sam derech (and orders his way) and reads "v'sham derech", meaning and he evaluates the situation. The person who truly wants to be a Jew of integrity cannot always go blindly even in following correct attributes. One cannot make blanket rules: It is not always appropriate to perform the Chessed. Sometimes the mitzvah is not to do the Chessed. And it is not always appropriate to speak every cold hard truth. One must evaluate (v'sham) and figure out when and how each (even) positive attribute is to be applied.

If you liked my lecture tonight, that is good. If you did not like the lecture do not come over and tell me "It wasn't a good lecture". Sometimes it is better not to say anything than to tell the truth, if it is going to hurt. One needs to Sham Orchosav, evaluate his ways and use common sense. One need always ask himself "What does G-d want me to do in this situation?"

Sometimes, even from the paradigm of truth (Yaakov Avinu) there is a demand not to go with a 100% accurate statement. This was Rava's response to Rav Safra. It can be a lesson to all of us.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Toldos Sarah are provided below: Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD RavFrand, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Join the Jewish Learning Revolution! Torah.org: The Judaism Site brings this and a host of other classes to you every week. Visit <http://torah.org> or email learn@torah.org to get your own free copy of this mailing. Need to change or stop your subscription? Please visit our subscription center. <http://torah.org/subscribe/> -- see the links on that page. Permission is granted to redistribute, but please give proper attribution and copyright to the author and Torah.org. Both the author and Torah.org reserve certain rights. Email copyrights@torah.org for full information. Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 250 Baltimore, MD 21208 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org (410) 602-1350 FAX: (410) 510-1053

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Parshas Toldos 5770

Chinuch – Connecting & Bonding with our Talmidim

Rabbi Avishai David

The Torah in the beginning of Parshas Toldos states "Ve'eyle Toldos Yitzchak Ben Avraham, Avraham Holid Es Yitzchak". The same terminology of Toldos is employed vis a vis Esav. "Ve'eyle Toldos Esav Hu Edom". Maran Harav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l distinguishes between two genres of Toldos. Regarding Esav and Yishmael, "Toldos" connotes biological continuity, generation after generation. Regarding the Avos, Toldos represents a totally different concept of bequeathing a spiritual legacy, not just of father to son but preeminently a masorah of Rabbi to Talmid. In that vein we would like to explore the nature of the Rabbi-Talmid relationship which the Rambam in Hilchos Avoda Zara indicates was at the heart of the

relationship between Avraham and Yitzchak and between Yitzchak and Yaakov.

The Zohar notes: "Ha'Torah Loveshes Tzurah U'Poshetes Tzurah". Our eternal Torah is timeless and not subject to the transient, fickle values of a constantly changing world. However, the aforementioned Zohar comments that we must always be on guard and sensitive to changing value systems and be ready to adopt new methodologies and tactics to confront a world that is overwhelming in its ability to draw many into its vortex – be it the latest ipod technologies or the host of other phantasmagoria that are gargantuan challenges to Torah values and ideas.

In previous generations, it was easier for Educators, Mechanchim and Maggidei Shiur to present a masterfully constructed shiur or lesson and more or less expect their audience to be impacted by it both intellectually and spiritually. Today, that has changed dramatically. It's a rare phenomenon to see someone with charismatic eloquence succeed purely based on an enthralling and inspiring lecture or shiur. We are so bombarded by a multifarious and multihued media, that there is very little that can really make an impression on us and penetrate our very inwards. Our computer/ ipod/ tweet a tweet on twitter/ google generation isn't easily imprinted upon, our abilities to impact on someone's life in a serious, substantive fashion has diminished considerably.

There is, however, one classic technique that is not only eminently successful but ultimately serves as the most desirable and ideal vehicle for success in Chinuch; and that is the cultivating and nurturing of a rebbi – talmid relationship. It's grounded and undergirded by both halachic principles and an existential framework that is embedded in the human personality. The human persona, according to Chazal, is a composite of Nefesh, Ruach and Neshama. The Zohar describes these three as being markedly different from each other; while the confluence of all three comprise to the harmonious personality. Nefesh is defined by the Zohar as "Nahora Uchma"- a dark light rooted in one's physical being. It relates to one's physical body and to biological, sensual life forces. Its goal is the pursuit of pleasure and is therefore, a dark black light.

Ruach is described by the Zohar as "Nehora Chivra" - an illuminating white light that in essence is the intellect of the human being that quests knowledge and enlightenment. My rebbi, Maran Hagaon Harav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l noted that a parallel to the Nefesh – Ruach dichotomy is evidenced in the Rambam's formulation of the Mitzvah of Emuna Ba'shem. In his magnum opus, Mishne Torah, the Rambam defines the Mitzvah of belief in Hashem in terms of "Leyda" (To have knowledge of and "to know" intellectually). In his Sefer Hamitzvos, he defines it as "Le'haamin" (to believe). Le'haamin, said Maran Harav, is rooted in Nefesh. It's founded upon one's senses, an experiential and visceral recognition. Jews throughout the millennia who were Moser Nefesh and gave up their lives for Kiddush Hashem were primarily impelled by this Emuna that emanated from Nefesh. It's a powerful and all- pervasive feeling that precipitates this kind of extraordinary sacrifice and other sundry acts of chesed towards those that are downtrodden, physically and psychologically.

Rav Soloveitchik zt"l underscored the fact that there is a double Masorah of Nefesh and Ruach that is at the core of cultivating a Rebbi-Talmid relationship. When the Torah depicts the ionic bonding between Yaakov and Binyamin it states Va'nafsho Keshura Be'nafsho (his Nefesh is intertwined with his Nefesh). On the other hand, when the Torah describes Moshe choosing as a successor, his disciple Yehoshua, it states Kach Lecha es Yehoshua Bin Nun, Ish Asher Ruach Bo (Take Yehoshua, the son of Nun, a man who has within him the Ruach (of Hashem). Clearly, both genre of Masorah, of Nefesh and Ruach are indispensable. However, there is a Seder; first Nefesh and then Ruach. I've always thought that the two articulations of Aseres Hadibros are founded upon these two principles. Parshas Yisro epitomizes the Ruach,

the cognitive, intellectual element of Maamad Har Sinai, while Parshas Va'Eschanan addresses (as the Ramban notes) the element of Eish Hatorah (the fire of Torah) or the Nefesh. Nefesh is therefore a Hargashah (a powerful internalizing experience) while Ruach is an intellectual realization. This duality of Nefesh and Ruach is also reflected in the two modes of the Taamei Hamikra: Taam Elyon and Taam Tachton.

The depth and profundity of davening on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is also ultimately a function of the merger of Nefesh and Ruach. One is ineluctably drawn into the powerful charisma of the day through the extraordinary Niggunim that penetrate one's bones, so to speak. This is what the Rav zt"l termed "the Masorah of Regesh". Utilizing our terminology, we would refer to this as the Masorah of Nefesh which is articulated by the Rama in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim (619:1) which says that one shouldn't alter the tunes and liturgy utilized by the Congregation during the High Holy Days. On the other hand, one is duty bound to thoroughly examine and analyze the conceptual beauty and symmetry of the Tefilos of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, for by doing so, one's Ruach will be catapulted to sublime intellectual heights of ecstasy and rhapsodic communion with the Almighty.

A successful Rebbi, Mechanech or teacher also has to address both the Nefesh and Ruach of his talmidim from a halachic perspective. The primary thrust of a teacher is to teach Torah in a didactic fashion utilizing all the strategies and methodologies that will effectively enable the student to grow and mature intellectually. This is the handiwork of Ruach. This enterprise is based on teaching strategies that can excite and inspire the students, while the emphasis is on developing critical thinking powers, acquisition of study skills and precise analytical tools, and the ability to read a text with exactitude. (See Maseches Baba Basra 21a/b regarding Yoav).

However, the enterprise of Ruach rests on the foundation rock of Nefesh. A Rebbi, Mechanech or teacher has to be genuinely concerned with the Nefesh of his student. The overriding attitude and gestalt of the Rebbi towards his student is one of a parent to a child. Chazal teach us: "V'Shinantam L'vanecha", "These are your students, for your students are deemed your children". A parent will do anything for a child, and a Rebbi, Mechanech or teacher must act in a similar fashion. A parent is focused on the Nefesh of a child, on all his various and sundry physical needs and so, too, a Rebbi has to have an overarching concern for the physical needs and psychological feelings of his charges. His mind and heart are constantly on the overall welfare of his students. The Talmud in Maseches Baba Basra underscores this with the following vignette. Rav Shmuel bar Shilas, a famous Rebbi, Mechanech and teacher was once walking in his garden. He was accosted by Rav who queried him, "Why have you abandoned your post?" Rashi there comments that he always taught his students with Emuna and was constantly teaching them and overseeing them. Rav Shmuel bar Shilas responded to Rav, "For thirteen years, I haven't seen my garden - and even now that I am walking in it, my mind is preoccupied with my students. In other words, the ideal Rebbi will never have a Hesech Hadaas (distraction) from his students - not even for a fleeting moment. Their Ruach and Nefesh are perpetually on his radar screen. How astounding is the level that every Rebbi and teacher should aspire to.

The Rambam accentuates this preoccupation of a Rebbi with the Nefesh of his students in Hilchos Talmud Torah (Chapter 5 Halacha 12) "Just as students are obligated to honor the Rav, so is a Rav obligated to honor his students and draw them close to him. Our Rabbis said: Let the honor of your student be as dear to you as your own. A person should be exceedingly careful with his students and love them for they are the sons who provide pleasure in this world and the next world". The love of a Rebbi for a talmid is without limitations, for the Talmud says in Maseches Sanhedrin "Jealousy is universally rampant except for a parent to a child and a Rebbi to his student".

A Rebbi who is totally devoted to his students will discover that his students will open up their hearts and minds to him as well. A Rebbi who utilizes every stratagem imaginable to connect to his students will engender an equal and opposite reaction in his students who will become Klei Kibbul, receptacles for his Torah. If they are indeed extremely worthy, they will merit serving and ministering to their Rebbi, thereby fulfilling the dictum of Chazal "Gedola Shimusha Shel Tora Yoser Mi'Limuda". At the ideal level, the personality of the Talmid will absorb so much from his Rebbi that their personalities will even merge to form a harmonious symphony to a certain extent. Such a Talmid who is totally subservient to his Rebbi, will merit absorbing the esoterica of his Rebbi, for he has entered the inner chambers where only few merit to enter.

A Rebbi, Mechanech or teacher who is unstinting in demonstrating uninhibited love for a Talmid by showing concern for the minutiae of his life will arouse the Nefesh component. From that foundation block, he will then proceed to build and develop the intellectual chassis of his student, the Ruach component. Ultimately, he will succeed in climbing the ladder of spirituality and ferret out the third most illustrious component of the tripartite structure of the personality, the Neshama which is Stima De'Kol Stimin, indestructible in its purity and wholesomeness. At that moment, the personality of the Talmid will emerge in all of its pristine glory and splendor to form the tripod of Naran (Nefesh, Ruach, Neshama) which is the "triple chord that cannot be easily rent asunder". The driving force for the aforementioned efflorescence of a talmid is a genuine, profound and heartfelt Ahava (love) that a Rebbi radiates to a talmid and with it one can climb incredibly formidable hurdles of all kinds and achieve the ideal and idyllic Rebbi-Talmid relationship. This constitutes a reenactment of the Maamad Har Sinai experience between Moshe Rabbeinu and the Almighty. In brief, a personal, heartfelt connection to Nefesh will engender a bonding between Rebbi and Talmid that will heighten the Ruach component of one's learning and ultimately result in the sparkling of the Neshama in all of its majesty and splendor, thereby engendering a Dveikus Bashem, our ideal goal and destination.

http://www.baltimorejewishlife.com/news/news-detail.php?SECTION_ID=1&ARTICLE_ID=5386

[On the **50th Yartzeit of the passing of Rav Aharon Kotler ztl**]

A Conversation With Rabbi Yosef Tendler - Early Years and Recollections of Lakewood in the Time of **Rav Aharon Kotler**

By BaltimoreJewishLife.com/Rabbi Elchonon Oberstein Posted on 04/10/11
Rabbi Yosef Tendler is the Menahel (Principal) of Ner Israel's High School and has had an impact on thousands of talmidim.

The following is his story, told in his words (the author has paraphrased a bit):

I was born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, as was my mother. She attended law school in the 1920s, certainly one of the few orthodox women to do so in those years. Her father was a shochet and a mohel who later went into business. When he could no longer shecht due to frailty, he stopped eating meat in America.

My father, Rabbi Isaac Tendler was a talmid of Radin in Europe. When he came to America, he learned in Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon, from which he received semicha. It was located at that time on the Lower East Side, near our home. He eventually took over as Rav of the Kaminetzer Shul, but did not take a salary for that position. This shul had been founded by people who came over from Kaminetz in Poland which was his hometown. He also gave shiurim for a group of young men who founded the Bachurei Chemed Shul.

When I was a young child, the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School was large and attracted boys from all over New York. I was a student at RJJ from first through 12th grades. In my days there were 1,300 students in the school. RJJ was located five blocks from our home. I walked to school from first grade on. Our schedule in first grade was, 9AM to 12 noon the first session of Hebrew Studies. Then we had an hour for lunch and recess. From 1 PM to 3 PM we continued our limudei kodesh. There was a one-hour break at 3PM. (During the 3PM break, mothers from the "Mother's Club," of which my mother was the president, came and prepared peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for all the boys.) Then we commenced our English Studies from 4 to 7 PM.

When my older brother, Rabbi Moshe Dovid Tendler, was in 8th grade at RJJ, the rebbe of his class became ill. The principal of the school knew that my father gave Gemara shiurim at his Shul and asked that he temporarily take over the class as a substitute. He stayed for 43 years.

RJJ was a major institution in Jewish life. It also had a summer camp, Camp Deal. I remember that the fee was \$12.50 a week and boys came for two-week sessions. There were no shiurim at Camp Deal. In those days, summer was for fun and the parents were just happy that their children identified themselves as Jews.

I asked Rabbi Tendler what has changed that today there is so much learning outside of school, including vacation time and in summer camps. He said that when the Holocaust survivors came to America, they brought with them a new attitude. He said, "I remember the Kamenitzer and Mirrer yungeleit who came from Shanghai who would come up to the mountains in the summer and were determined that no day should pass without a few hours of limudei kodesh. This was a chidush – a novelty – the idea that we have to learn Torah year round. It took a while for that to become the norm on the American scene. There was no chinuch for girls in those years. My sisters all attended Seward Park High School, as did the other girls from orthodox families."

After high school I went to Yeshiva University, which by that time had moved up to Washington Heights. I was placed in a level where one could aspire to enter the shiur of Rav J. B. Soloveitchik in the following year. In order to prepare myself I decided to do some "enrichment" during the summer. With two friends from YU, I went to learn in Lakewood. I had no intention of staying and, in fact had re-registered for the next term at YU.

When I came to take my leave of the Rosh Yeshiva at the end of the summer of 1950, Rav Aharon Kotler asked me to please come back to Lakewood for Simchas Torah, to which I agreed. I was so uplifted by the Ruach - spirit - of that Simchas Torah that I decided to stay for one year. I recall that, during the hakafos, Rav Elya Svei put me into a headlock and dragged me over to Rav Aharon. He asked the Rosh Yeshiva to tell me to remain in Lakewood.

(After my first year, a young man came over to me and asked mechila – forgiveness. I asked him why he was asking mechila and he told me that when he heard that Rav Aharon had accepted a bochur from YU into Lakewood, he went into the Rosh Yeshiva to protest. He asked forgiveness because he now realized that Rav Aharon had a better understanding than he.)

In 1950, Lakewood had approximately 40 bochurim, single students, and 20 yungeleit, married students. Many of the married ones were Europeans from Kletz. When I left Lakewood, eleven years later, there were approximately 60 bochurim and 40 yungeleit, many of whom were American born.

Rav Aharon Kotler was the founder and the major presence in the yeshiva. He also had an apartment in Boro Park and spent half the week in New York raising money and the other half in Lakewood teaching Torah. He was basically there from Thursday evening until Monday afternoon. He said a shiur either Shabbos afternoon or motzoei Shabbos, depending on the season. He gave another shiur on Monday afternoon and then he would return to New York. When I came to Lakewood, the shiur was one and a half hours long. The Rosh Yeshiva spoke rapidly and packed so much information into each shiur that some of the bochurim asked him to shorten the shiur to one hour, which he did.

Although the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Aharon, spoke rapidly - Rabbi Tendler said that he had no problem understanding him while listening to the shiur. He does, sometimes, have difficulty, today, deciphering the shiur as recorded on tape.

Rabbi Tendler recalls, when I was in Lakewood, I would go back once a year to New York, to hear the shiur of Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik, which he gave on the yahrtzeit of his father. These lectures lasted for four hours and were masterful. He devoted two hours to Halacha and two hours to Agadah, all dealing with a common topic. Everything was well organized and in great depth.

Rav Aharon, on the other hand, spoke for one hour, but in that hour, the Rosh Yeshiva said so much that we had to review it and strive to comprehend the full depth of his shiur.

A few hours before the shiur, he would prepare the shiur with five or six selected talmidim. Immediately after the shiur; all of us would break up into groups to review the shiur while the Rosh Yeshiva was still in the Bais Hamedrash.

Rabbi Tendler recalls that some of the other Lakewood talmidim in his time included: Rabbi Meir Herskowitz of Stamford, Rabbi Chaim Epstein of Zichron Meilech, Rabbi Yankel Schiff, the son in law of the Brisker Rav, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan and Rabbi Yitzchok Wasserman of Denver, Rabbi Yaakov Schnaidman and Rabbi Chaim Bressler of Scranton and Rabbi Yechiel Perr of Yeshiva of Far Rockaway, Rabbi Meir Stern of Passaic and Rabbi Moshe Hirsch of Slabodka and Rabbi Yitzchok Feigelstock of Long Beach

After my second year in Lakewood, I went to the Rosh Yeshiva to discuss leaving the yeshiva. I wanted to return to Yeshiva University to get a secular degree. It was

simply unheard of in those days not to get a college degree for reasons of parnassa – earning a living. Rav Aharon told me the following and it made a deep impression on me. He said to me "How can you rely on the sechel of a teenager to decide your future. I am older and have more experience in life, rely on me," and I stayed on.

There were two boys there in my time who some would label "bums." There were other students who felt these two didn't belong in Lakewood and they went to Rav Aharon to ask him to send them away. The Rosh Yeshiva replied that anybody who wants to be in a yeshiva such as Lakewood in that generation must have something in him or he wouldn't stay. Therefore, we have no right to expel them unless they are harming other students. One of these two eventually became a Rosh Yeshiva.

Now, we moved on to the shidduch scene in Lakewood back in the days when Rabbi Tendler was a bochur. He related that, at least in his circles, the boys and girls would socialize either at the local Mizrachi or at the Young Israel. The foundations for many marriages started there. Shadchonus (matchmaking), in my circles, was practically unheard of. When my relatives and the members of my father's Shul heard that I decided to learn in Lakewood, they asked me in all honesty, how would I ever find a shidduch? Who would want to marry someone who didn't go to college? The common perception in those days was that anyone who learned in Lakewood was not a candidate for marriage. I responded that I hope to find a girl like the kollel wives in Lakewood.

Rav Aharon was my shadchan. One day, I was sitting and learning in the Beis Hamedrash and I noticed a gentleman looking at me. This guest was walking around, but I sensed that he was observing me. That was my future father in law, Rabbi Menachem Perr, who was friendly with Rav Aharon and Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky from their days in Slabodka.

When he came to America, he continued learning in Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon on the Lower East Side under the Maiseter Illuy.

Kollel life in Lakewood was a little different than it is today, but then, it was a different world. The women had jobs teaching; there was the Bezalel Hebrew Day School and Afternoon Hebrew Schools. We were paid \$40 a week and that would not have been a bad amount if we actually had received the check every week. The joke was that we received \$40 a week, every four weeks. When I later left Lakewood, they were 16 weeks behind, but eventually I received all the checks. The Rosh Yeshiva was meticulous in keeping the yeshiva's commitment to its talmidim. Rent was \$80 a month, so a kollel check paid your rent and you had an equal amount left over for other expenses.

When I was in Lakewood, the yeshiva served regular milk and Breakstone sour cream. There was no cholov Yisroel. Recently, one of my grandsons was sitting in class in a school in Lakewood and the teacher was talking about Rav Aharon. My grandson raised his hand and said, "My grandfather says that Rav Aharon allowed non cholov Yisroel to be served in the yeshiva dining room." The rebbe said, "Rav Aharon would never allow such a thing". Evidently, that rebbe looks at Lakewood then as it is now.

Another difference is even more pronounced. When some of the yungeleit decided that they no longer wanted to send their children to the local community day school they founded their own Cheder that was run by Rabbi Leib Rotkin zt"l. In the early years there were very few students and Rav Aharon allowed the school to be co-ed in the lower grades.

At that time it was not that typical to spend many years in Kollel. I left Kollel after less than four years because I ran out of money. I went to the Rosh Yeshiva and he told me that I should apply to teach the 5th grade at Bezalel Hebrew Day School and that, if I were hired, I should still come learn in the yeshiva in the afternoon and receive the \$40 Kollel check. I applied but someone else was hired.

Then, Rav Aharon sent me to apply for a 6th grade position in Asbury Park with the same stipulation that I could continue in Kollel while teaching in the morning. That also didn't work out and I returned home and told my wife: I did my hishtadlus, I made the effort. Now I am sitting down to learn. A couple of days later Rav Dov Schwartzman, Rav Aharon's son in law at the time, came to me and said that he had gotten a call from Rav Yaakov Weinberg that Ner Yisroel was interested in a rebbe to teach 12th grade.

That was in 1961. The Mechina had been founded in 1957 and there had been a turnover of menahelim – principals - every year. After teaching 12th grade for one year, I was asked to teach the first shiur in the yeshiva. At that time, Rabbi Weinberg asked me to suggest someone to teach my 12th grade shiur. I called one of my chavrusas in Lakewood, Rabbi Moshe Heinemann. He told me that he had enough money to last one more year in Kollel and felt that he had no right to leave Lakewood, where he was gaining so much. Consequently I called another of my chavirim in Lakewood, Rabbi Nosson Nussbaum and proposed that he come to

teach the 12th grade in the Ner Israel Mechina. He came for a “probeh” and was given the position.

During the two years that I was saying shiurim in the Bais Medrash, I told Rabbi Weinberg that I preferred dealing with a younger age group. In 1964, having gone through seven menahelim (principals) from 1957 to 1964, Rabbi Weinberg, with the haskama of the Rosh Hayeshiva of Ner Yisroel, Rav Ruderman, zt”l acquiesced and asked me to become the Menahel of the Mechina and also to teach one of the 12th grade shiurim .

At that time, we needed to find someone to replace me in my position of saying the first year shiur in the Bais Medrash. Rabbi Ruderman asked Rabbi Nussbaum to give the shiur and this opened up a vacancy for the 12th grade. I then called Rabbi Heinemann and he told me, “I ran out of money and am now ready to come.” He came down for a “probeh” and the Rosh Hayeshiva offered him the position.

Although Rav Aharon Kotler was very warm, he was not someone who would call over a bochur for a shmooz. However if a talmid sought to have a relationship, he was there for him. Rav Ruderman used to tell me that even after I came to Baltimore, Rav Aharon was concerned about my welfare and always inquired about me.

Rav Aharon Kotler wanted America to produce devoted bnai torah that was his goal. He felt that American Judaism was watered down Yiddishkeit. In my youth, aspiring to know Shas was as strange and unimaginable as wanting to speak Chinese. Rav Aharon and the other European rabbis who came over changed the aspirations of their talmidim.

Today, Lakewood has thousands of bnai Torah. There are yeshivos all over that instill the aspirations that Rav Aharon taught us. His talmidim have talmidim and there are doros yeshorim who have come from the devoted few who clustered around Rav Aharon back in those early days.

About Rabbi Tandler's Father in Law, Rabbi Menachem Perr

Rabbi Tandler also talked to the author about his esteemed father in law:

My “shver” father in law, Rabbi Menachem Perr, was a rabbi in South Ozone Park, near Kennedy Airport. He was in a non-frum community and he operated an afternoon Hebrew School in the shul where he had a positive influence on the children. Presently, there are very prominent talmidei chachomim and even a Rosh Yeshiva who attended my shver’s Hebrew School in Queens. Many of these youngsters spent shabbosim in his home and he was totally devoted to them.

In addition to opening his home to these youngsters for meals, he also instituted a game room in the Shul. By playing in the game room, they could have fun on Shabbos and not be tempted to watch television, attend movies or go on family trips on Shabbos. He also influenced the parents to send many of these children to excellent yeshivos ketanos (as Day Schools were called at that time). Many of them grew up to become frum baalebatim.

My father in law once bemoaned the fact that one of the rabbeim in the yeshiva ketana, who did not understand the reason for the game room, scolded one of the boys for playing ping pong on Shabbos afternoon. It bothered him very much that this rebbe did not understand what the situation was in that boy’s home and community.

As soon as his members would become frum, he would advise them to move to a frum neighborhood.

When my son, Aharon, was born, the bris was going to be on Shabbos. I spoke with my father in law and assumed that he would certainly not miss the bris. He said that he could not come because he could not leave his Shul. At that time, the neighborhood had changed and he no longer had a minyan on shabbos. He usually had three Jews and one black fellow who wanted to convert. I said to him, who are you kidding, you have three Jews and they aren’t even frum. His answer was that as long as he is there and they are sitting in shul listening to him daven out loud and hear him read the parsha from the Torah without Bircas Hatorah then they are not violating Shabbos. “For three hours they are not mechalel shabbos.”

When Rabbi Perr passed away, there was a shloshim gathering addressed by Rav Henech Lebovit zt”l. When he finished, a woman arose in the balcony and said that she wanted to say something. She recalled that Rabbi Perr would go around on Rockaway Boulevard on Erev Shabbos and try to persuade people to close their stores and to come to Shul. The people who came did so only out of respect for the rabbi. Her relative refused to close his store on Shabbos. Rabbi Perr asked him to at least agree not to smoke on Shabbos and he complied. He did not smoke on Shabbos, out of respect for the rabbi, for the rest of his life. Because of the rabbi, he remembered that there is such a thing as Shabbos, this woman concluded.

It’s all a matter of perspective. We need to gain some understanding of the world that existed in America before today’s renaissance. It was not ideal but we need to appreciate those who did not succumb. In reality, they laid down the foundation for the Yiddishkeit that we enjoy today. They fought for Shabbos, Kashrus, Chinuch, things we take for granted today.

From: Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org date: Thu, Nov 15, 2012 at 9:35 PM Subject: Parshat Toldot - Shabbat Shalom from the OU

Parshat Toldot: Another Covenant?

Excerpted from **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin's 'Unlocking The Torah Text: An In-Depth Journey Into The Weekly Parsha- Bereishit**
<http://www.ou.org/oupres/ite/71067>

Questions How are we to explain Yitzchak’s strange behavior? Confronted with the request for a peace treaty with the Philistines, he abruptly ends the conversation and throws a party which lasts through the night. Why are the rabbis openly critical of Avraham’s treaty with Avimelech (see Vayeira 4, Approaches c), yet strangely silent when it comes to Yitzchak’s agreement with the same king? Is it possible that these two episodes, which seem so similar, actually differ in significant ways?

Approaches

A As is often the case, a straightforward reading of the pashut psat of the text before us is extremely revealing. Such a reading brings to light a subliminal dialogue between Yitzchak and Avimelech within this passage, a dialogue that explains the patriarch’s seemingly strange behavior and carries tremendous relevance for our own times.

B As soon as Yitzchak sees Avimelech and his entourage approach, he raises the following objection: “Why have you come to me? [It is obvious that] you hate me, for you exiled me from among you.” Avimelech responds by insisting that he has come to contract a covenant with the patriarch: “That you shall not do evil to us, just as we did not harm you, and as we did only good to you, for we sent you away in peace.” It is important to note that there is no disagreement between Yitzchak and Avimelech about the facts. They both acknowledge that during their past interaction Yitzchak was exiled from the territory of the Philistines. What they disagree about is, in fact, a much deeper issue. They are arguing about the definition of “peace.” To paraphrase the subliminal dialogue taking place between the patriarch and the king: Yitzchak opens the conversation with the following objection: How can you possibly suggest that we enact a peace treaty? Your intentions until now have been anything but peaceful. Did you not revile me and exile me from your land? Avimelech responds: How can you say that we hate you? If we hated you, we would have killed you. Our intentions were obviously peaceful because all we did was send you away. The patriarch and the king are, in effect, living in two different worlds. Avimelech defines “peace” as the absence of war and physical violence. As long as the two parties are not killing each other, in the king’s eyes, they are living in peace. To Yitzchak, however, “peace” means much more. For true peace to exist there must be both an absence of hostility and an effort towards cooperation. Anything less might be defined as mutual coexistence but cannot be considered true peace.

C At first glance what the patriarch does next seems abundantly strange. Instead of responding to Avimelech’s interpretation of past events, Yitzchak abruptly ends the conversation. Without another word, suddenly, Yitzchak “made for them a party, and they ate and they drank.” Armed with our understanding of the verbal interchange until this point, however, we can begin to understand Yitzchak’s unfolding strategy in his continued dealings with Avimelech. The patriarch recognizes that further conversation with Avimelech would be futile. You can negotiate with someone when you share the same reality and when the terms that you use are mutually understood. An unbridgeable chasm, however, separates Yitzchak from the Philistine king. When they each speak about “peace,” they are talking about two very different concepts. If you can’t agree upon the definition of peace, you certainly cannot contract a peace treaty. Yitzchak, therefore, ends the conversation. As a smokescreen, he throws a celebratory party that lasts through the night. Upon awakening the next morning, Yitzchak and Avimelech exchange promises with each other. The text, however, conspicuously fails to mention a brit, “covenant.” Unlike his father, Avraham, Yitzchak does not contract a full treaty with the Philistines. He recognizes that temporary agreements with Avimelech are possible, but a lasting covenant cannot be drawn. **D** Then, finally, Yitzchak executes the coup de grace. With brilliant irony, the text states: “He [Yitzchak] sent them away; and they went from him in peace.” Yitzchak turns the tables on Avimelech. In effect he says: I will operate with you according to your definition of peace. Just as you sent me away “in peace,” I now send you away from me “in peace.” The second patriarch learns from his father’s mistakes. Whereas Avraham was comfortable contracting a full covenant with Avimelech and continued to live in the territory of the Philistines “for many days,” Yitzchak understands the dangers of such an agreement and insists on physical separation. He recognizes that the Philistines can only be trusted in minimal fashion and, even then, only from afar. The rabbis are, therefore, silent concerning

Yitzchak's agreement with Avimelech although they had been critical of a similar agreement contracted by Avraham, a generation before (Vayeira 4, Approaches c). Their silence reflects acknowledgement of the lessons well learned by the second patriarch.

Points to Ponder

Once again, the Torah text speaks to us in eerily relevant fashion as we recognize that human experience has not changed much over the centuries. The definition of peace, which lay at the core of Yitzchak's interchange with Avimelech, continues to be at issue today as the State of Israel struggles to live in harmony with its neighbors. The failure of the "peace process" in the Middle East is directly traceable to the limited and hypocritical definition of "peace" in the Arab world. True peace cannot take root in countries where children are raised in hate and where the daily rhetoric lauds murderers and spews venom upon the Jewish nation.

Even those Arab countries that have treaties with Israel, such as Egypt and Jordan, fall frighteningly short in their definition of what those agreements should mean. Like Avimelech, they maintain that peace is defined by the current absence of war. Cooperation, support and mutual understanding remain far from their reality. We pray for the day when the world will embrace Yitzchak's vision of true peace.

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Peninim on the Torah

by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Toldos

PARSHAS TOLDOS Two nations are in your womb; two regimes from your insides shall be separated; the might shall pass from one regime to the other, and the elder shall serve the younger. (25:23) Rivkah Imeinu was informed of the reality: she was carrying twins. It was not one mixed-up child that she was carrying; it was two children: one righteous and one evil. Her unborn infants represented two powerful nations, each with his own individual, conflicting ideology. The turmoil within her womb was not the result of a single child who was lost and indecisive concerning his religious future. Should he gravitate to the bais ha'medrash, or should he follow his inclination which was pulling him to the house of idol worship? No, it was much simpler. Her two sons were mighty enemies from before their births, their natural tendency of each controlling his destiny. Eisav gravitated to idol worship, because that was where he felt most comfortable. Yaakov, however, found solace only in the bais ha'medrash. Chazal teach that the two will never be mighty simultaneously. When Eisav reigns, Yaakov is his subject. When Yaakov prevails, Eisav is the underdog. They each represent a theology and a moral posture which is incongruous with that of the other. Morality, justice and ethics cannot coexist with licentiousness, vulgarity and faithlessness. They are opposites and, thus, totally incompatible. Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita, comments that these two opposing values - the holiness dimension versus the dimension of impurity - have a similar frictional relationship within each and every one of us. This is the meaning of, u'l'ome mi'l'ome ye'ematz, "the mighty shall pass from one regime to the other." A person can ascribe to only one dimension. He cannot have it both ways. It is either kedushah, sanctity, or tumah, impurity. Just as fire and water cannot coexist within a single entity, neither can kedushah and tumah. One cannot have his mind on Olam HaBa, the World to Come, if his body is submerged in the lusts of This World. Rivkah Imeinu confronted this challenge via her two sons. Her choice was much easier than ours. She understood that Yaakov was a tzadik, righteous person, and Eisav was a rasha, evil person. It was clear - cut and dry. We, however, hear two voices; we are compelled by two gravitational pulls: To which one do we listen? Which one do we ignore? Perhaps, the mere fact that we understand that we cannot have it both ways, helps in our decision-making process. Once we ascribe to kedushah, the lusts and desires which would pull us down are quieted. If we give in to our base desires, however, there is no place for kedushah in our lives. We each have a little bit of Yaakov and a little bit of Eisav in our lives. To which one do we want to give ascendancy? If we would realize how daunting the question is, we would be able to acknowledge the simplicity of the answer. The might shall pass from one regime to the other. (25:3) Rashi explains that when this one rises, the other one falls. He supports this with a pasuk in Yechezkel 26:2, Imaleh hacharavah, "I will fill myself from the river." Chazal teach, "The city of Tzur, Tyre, a city inhabited by descendants of Eisav, was not filled, but from the ruins of Yerushalayim." We derive from here that one regime will derive its strength at the expense of the other. Rashi's proof from this pasuk presents a problem. He began with the statement, "When this one rises - the other one falls," and he proves this with a pasuk that implies, "When this one falls - the other one rises." This is not the same thing. Horav Yitzchak Dov

Koppelman, zl, explains that when Klal Yisrael rises, when they maintain a plateau of spiritual purity? becoming the holy nation which they are, Eisav falls. There is no place for Eisav in a world in which Klal Yisrael is spiritually progressive. The only way that Eisav can rise is when Klal Yisrael falls, when they fall off their spiritual perch. Otherwise, Eisav cannot climb to the top; he cannot prevail on his own. He needs Klal Yisrael's support, which comes in the form of their negative activity. Thus, when Rashi writes, "When this one rises - the other one falls," he refers to Klal Yisrael. When Klal Yisrael rises, it will mean the end of Eisav. The pasuk, however, addresses Eisav's rise, which can occur only when Klal Yisrael falls. We can rise on our own. They can rise only if we fall. A similar idea applies in our never-ending battle with the yetzer hora, evil inclination. It will prevail over us only once we have given in to depression or other forms of weakness. When we think that we cannot make it, the yetzer hora goes into full swing. Otherwise, it has no power over us. Whatever efficacy the yetzer hora has over us is the result of our weakness. We give it strength. The first one emerged red entirely like a hairy mantle; so they named him Eisav. After that his brother emerged with his hand grasping onto the heel of Eisav; so he called him Yaakov. (25:25, 26) Rashi teaches that Eisav was named by everyone present at his birth. In contrast, the "he" referred to in the phrase, "so he called him Yaakov," was actually Hashem, Who gave Yaakov Avinu his name. The name is a play on the word eikav, heel, a reference to Eisav's heel which Yaakov grasped at birth. The fact that Hashem named Eisav as a result of this incident, suggests that Yaakov's holding onto Eisav's heel has considerable cosmic significance. A number of questions present themselves. First, did Yaakov grasp Eisav's heel by design or by chance? Furthermore, is it not most appropriate for a righteous person to distance himself as much as possible from a wicked person? Why would Yaakov want to be in Eisav's proximity - let alone hold onto his heel? Last, we address the text of the Midrash Rabbah, Atun krisun l'chaziraschen shem, af ana l'beni bechori, "You gave a name to your pig; I will also give a name to my firstborn son." Hashem seems to be referring to Eisav as a pig. Why? As a result, He names Yaakov. Clearly, this Midrash alludes to a profound thought. Horav Pinchas Friedman, Shlita, tackles the above question in his inimitable manner. He quotes the Avnei Nezer, who explains the two kosher signs of accepted animals. They must have completely separated hooves and chew their cud. The Torah then goes on to list four animals. These include: the camel, hyrax and hare - all which chew their cud, but do not have split hooves. They are not kosher. The fourth animal is the pig, whose hooves are split, but who does not chew its cud. Chazal observe that the Torah has cited only four unkosher animals. They explain that each animal symbolizes one of the four galuyos, exiles, which we, as a nation, have experienced. The camel represents Bavel; the hare, Greece; the hyrax, Media; and the pig, Edom/Rome - or our present exile. In addition, Chazal teach that Galus Edom is equal to the other three exiles. Apparently, this is because the klipah, spiritual husk of the chazir, pig, equals that of the other three. The Avnei Nezer explains that Yaakov Avinu's middah, attribute, was emes, truth. The Patriarch personified absolute truth. He serves as the nation's briach ha'tichon, middle bar, which miraculously extended the full length of the karshei ha'Mishkan, planks of the Mishkan, keeping the walls braced and sturdy. Likewise, the Patriarch, symbol of truth, maintains the integrity of the Jewish People. The pig has one kosher sign which it thrusts forward, displaying its cloven hooves, as if to mislead onlookers into perceiving it as kosher.

We now begin to understand the incongruity between Yaakov, the symbol of truth, and Eisav/Edom, represented by the pig, the animal that defies integrity, presenting itself as kosher, when, in fact, it is treifah, unkosher. There is nothing as false as the pig, due to its misleading nature. This is like Malchus Edom, which arrogates itself as righteous and humane, when this is nothing but a ruse, as we have seen throughout the millennia by the Edomites of each generation. Rome reared its ugly head in Western Europe, specifically Germany, with its Crusades, which were nothing more than license to murder and plunder innocent people. It culminated with the Nazis and, regrettably, continues to this very day by those who present themselves as humane, honest people when, in fact, they are the heir apparents and modern-day successors to the Roman/Edom/Eisav tradition. Yaakov is Eisav's nemesis. The Patriarch represents the very foundation of emes, which has kept Klal Yisrael spiritually solvent. Eisav is worse than the other three representatives of evil, because, unlike them, he conceals his malevolence under the veneer of righteousness and piety. A quick perusal of world history supports this idea. Eisav lived a life of aspersion and subterfuge. He spent his time and expended his energy in deceiving everyone. Rather than make the effort to do it right, he looked for ways to cover up the wrong. He was by nature a liar, a swindler. Rav Friedman takes us further along on a journey through esoteric commentary. The Orach L'Chaim, Parshas Lech Lecha, quotes the Baal Shem Tov, who renders a passage in the Talmud Shabbos 75A, homiletically. Chazal question: "One who slaughters on Shabbos - what sin (which of the 39 Avos Melachos, main categories

of labor) does he transgress?" Rav says tzovea, dyeing. The blood which spurts out colors the skin of the animal. Tosfos adds three cryptic words: a shochet d'alma kai. He refers to the one who slaughters the world. This is the literal translation. Tosfos actually is explaining that the Talmud's question is concerning a regular shochet/ritual slaughterer, but, in a play on words, the word alma, which usually is translated as common, is homiletically translated by the Baal Shem Tov as "the world." This refers to the yetzer hora, who slaughters the inhabitants of the world, destroying their lives by inciting them to sin. The Talmud in Succah 52A teaches: "In the future (End of Days) Hashem will take the yetzer hora and slaughter it." We now understand the question posed by Chazal in the Talmud Shabbos: "When Hashem slaughters the yetzer hora, why does He do this? After all, the evil inclination is only 'doing his job.' His function is to seduce people into sinning, a job he carries out with great expertise and success. Why hold it against him?" To this (interpretation of the question) Rav answers: "Because of tzovea, dyeing." One who dyes a garment covers up its actual color. A hypocrite is an adam tzavua, a "dyed man," a faker, a deceiver. There are two ways the yetzer hora can "attack" a person. The first is a frontal attack, in which the yetzer hora goes openly and without embellishment, attempting to convince the individual to sin. While this yetzer hora is clearly dangerous, he can overcome it. The mere fact that it acts overtly allows a G-d-fearing person to perceive its attack and circumvent it. It is the other yetzer hora that gives us the greatest challenge and trepidation when it comes at us covertly, with subterfuge and cunning. "This" yetzer hora knows that, under normal circumstances, the person will not sin. Therefore, it presents the aveirah, sin, as a mitzvah, a good deed, something that will be good for the community. This yetzer hora is the one from which we have most to fear. This personifies Eisav in all his infamy. Hashem created the yetzer hora to seduce man to sin. There was, however, a precondition: man must be made aware of the pitfall; he must realize that he is about to transgress G-d's word. The yetzer hora has a mind of its own. It rebels against its Creator, because it takes its job seriously, with glee and vitriol combined. Thus, in the End of Days, Hashem will slaughter the yetzer hora - because this is what it deserves. Chazal questioned this: "After all, why? He is doing his job!" The immediate response is, "Tzovea! He fools people. That is not his job!" Eisav is the father of all this evil. Like the pig, it proudly displays cloven hooves as a ruse to fool people. Yaakov Avinu, the antithesis of Eisav, the father of Truth, attempted to prevent Eisav's subterfuge. Therefore, he grabbed for his heel - in order to pull back on his foot! Symbolically, Eisav, the "pig," was trying to fool him. I am making an attempt to call attention to his hypocrisy. It was Hashem Who gave Yaakov his name, because Hashem was thereby making a statement: "I support Yaakov in his battle against the pig, Eisav. Yaakov is truth - I am truth". Eisav must immediately be stopped, at all costs. The only way we will triumph in galus EDOM is by clinging to Yaakov's middah of emes. This can only be effected through the study of Torah. The Torah provides us with the spectacles to see through the sham of the outside world and its conveyors of falsehood. Yaakov simmered a stew, and Eisav came in from the field, and he was exhausted. (25:29) Yaakov Avinu was not cooking red lentil soup because he had a yen for eating legumes. Lentils are round, and hence, an appropriate food to be eaten in the house of a mourner. Round brings to mind the cycle of life. A circle has no opening - no beginning - no end. A mourner is cloaked in grief; thus, he has no mouth. They were mourning the passing of Avraham Avinu who had died that day. To Eisav, however, it was nothing more than a quick fix: grab a bite and go on his merry way. The world is mourning the passing of its great spiritual mentor. Eisav, his grandson, is busy going about his usual daily endeavor of evil in order to satisfy his base desires. Chazal teach that Avraham's passing was actually untimely. He had originally been destined to live five more years. His life was cut short, so that he would not witness his grandson's wicked ways. Five years is an incredibly long time. So much can be achieved in five years - especially if one is Avraham! Time is Hashem's greatest gift to man. When Horav Naftali Trop, the Rosh Yeshivah of Radin, became gravely ill, the yeshivah students made an appeal, requesting each student to donate part of his life to the Rosh Yeshivah. Together, the students donated a considerable amount of years to the Rosh Yeshivah. Although it was highly unusual to do this - Rav Naftali Trop was an unusual person. They even dispatched one of the students to the home of the Chafetz Chaim to ask if he would also participate. When the bachur, student, presented the request, the Chafetz Chaim replied that he would think about it. A short time later, the Chafetz Chaim asked the student to return. He then said that, after deep thought and thorough introspection, he was willing to contribute five minutes! To the Chafetz Chaim, five minutes was an eternity! He could achieve so much in five minutes, because he never wasted a second. Yet, for the Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Naftali, he would part with five minutes. Now, with this in mind, Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl, points out that Avraham Avinu's time was certainly no less valuable than that of the Chafetz Chaim. Indeed, a righteous

person's time becomes more valuable as he ages and his spiritual plateau becomes elevated. Thus, Avraham's service to Hashem at age 175 years old was more than anything we could imagine. During the next allotted five years of his life, he could have soared to spiritual heights beyond the scope of our ability to perceive. Yet, Hashem granted him a special favor by shortening his lifespan by five years. All this was just so that he would not see his grandson, Eisav, go off the derech, alienate himself from Judaism. Do we now have any idea concerning the suffering of a parent when their child turns away? We have just witnessed the pain of a grandfather. Certainly, the pain of a parent supersedes even that. We might take the above into consideration when we meet someone who has undergone such an experience. Perhaps a little empathy might be in order. Yaakov simmered a stew, and Eisav came in from the field and he was exhausted. Eisav said to Yaakov, "Pour into me, now, some of that very red stuff. Yaakov gave Eisav bread and lentil stew." (25:29, 30:34) Eisav asked for soup. Yaakov Avinu was a magnanimous host, and he gave him soup and bread! Why did Yaakov give Eisav bread in addition to the soup? This question was asked of Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, who rendered a halachic response. There is a question in Meseches Berachos concerning which brachah one should recite on beans that have been cooked for a long time. Should it be Borei pri ha'adamah, since beans grow from the ground; or, because they have been cooked so long, should the berachah be, She'ha'kol ni'heh yeh b'davaro? To avoid any halachic issues, one should wash on bread and make the brachah, Ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz, a blessing that would include almost anything eaten during the meal. To circumvent any problems Eisav would have concerning the berachah, Yaakov gave Eisav bread. This reply intimates that Eisav was a halachic scholar who might have been concerned with the blessings he recited on food. Horav Eliyahu Mann, Shlita, then asked Rav Kanievsky concerning a comment he once made regarding a statement made by the Meshech Chochmah. Apparently, this comment was not consistent with his present explanation of Yaakov's actions. The Meshech Chochmah observes from the text of (24:54, 55) that Lavan and his mother did not eat together with everyone at Rivkah's seudas eirusin, festive meal, in honor of her betrothal to Yitzchak. Apparently, Besuel, their husband and father, had suddenly died, rendering them aveilim, mourners. Thus, they could not partake of the festive meal. Rav Chaim commented that the Meshech Chochmah turned them into bigger lamdanim, scholars, than they were. "If so," queried Rav Mann, "why did Rav Kanievsky turn Eisav into such a big lamdan?" Not fazed, Rav Chaim replied that Eisav had a father who was a talmid chacham, who had certainly studied with him. Lavan's pedigree was not as distinguished. He had no one to teach him the halachos of aveilus. Rav Mann countered, "Could Eisav have been so concerned with hilchos berachos when he was, in fact, returning from his first major sojourn into iniquity? He was guilty of murder, immorality and heresy. Could such a person have cared about which berachah to recite?" Rav Chaim replied, "Yes. There are many people in today's society who act in a like manner." We might add that, while they might not kill with bullets, they kill with slander; they maim with their mouths. Immorality also comes in many forms. It does not have to be outright adultery to be considered immoral. Last, one does not have to deny Hashem to be viewed as a heretic. Chazal have expressed various parameters of activity which fall under this category. Yet, these same individuals still stand for a long Shemoneh Esrai and pontificate with righteous indignation every instance that Torah observance does not own up to their perverted system of calibration. Eisav was evil; only he did not necessarily dress or publicly act the part. This makes his nature even more insidious. Perhaps my father will feel me, and shall seem to him as a deceiver. (27:12) Chazal derive from the Torah's use of the word k'masatei, as a deceiver, that one who disguises his speech, so that he would not be recognized, is considered as if he worships idols. The Meiri explains that machlif b'diburo, the term used by Chazal for one who disguises his speech, applies equally to one who does not keep his word. They cite the pasuk in Yirmiyahu 10:15, which employs the root of titua: heimah maaseh tatum, "They (idol worship) are vanity, the work of deception," as support for this statement. The connection between Yaakov Avinu's act of "misrepresentation" and idol worship seems questionable. The idol is the creation of a deceiver; the idol deceives. The idol worshipper is nothing more than a gullible fool who believes in a stone god. How is one who deceives others to be compared with an idol worshipper? I think the answer lies in the act of deception. One succeeds in deceiving someone who wants to believe in him. The deceived individual, thus, plays a role in the deception. Yitzchak Avinu wanted very much to believe that it was Eisav who stood before him. What about the "voice of Yaakov"? Perhaps Eisav repented. Is that not what every father wants? Likewise, the idol worshipper gives license to the idol and its creators to fool him. He wants to believe that the stone standing before him has miraculous powers. In any event, machlif b'diburo, one who outright deceives or does not keep his word, is acting immorally.

His deception is no less iniquitous than one who worships idols. What about Yaakov, the paradigm of emes, truth? In his commentary to the Talmud Makkos 24A, Rashi writes that Yaakov acted under the direction of his mother, who supported her request with a prophetic vision. In other words, she intimated to him that Hashem had given His blessing to this subterfuge. Horav Avraham Grodzenski, zl, supports this, citing the pasuk in Malachi 2:6 Toras emes haysah b'fihu v'avlah lo nimitzah b'sfasav, "The Torah of truth was on his (Aharon's) mouth and iniquity was not found on his lips" as a reference to Aharon HaKohen, who was the ohaiv shalom, the one who loved peace and pursued peace. When we take into account the tactic that Aharon employed in order to achieve peace between disputants, it seems far from the "truth." He would tell each one that the other one was remorseful and regretted the breakup. In the end, they would agree to make up. Yet, Aharon is called a man of truth. Apparently, there is more to the "truth" than meets the eye. We may suggest that it depends on what the misrepresentation of the truth is attempting to achieve. In the case of Yaakov, the Patriarch was trying to retrieve the blessing which was his by right. He had purchased the birthright from Eisav. Thus, by apparently bending the truth, he was actually sustaining the truth. For Eisav to receive the blessings would have been a lie! Likewise, every Jew wants to get along with his fellow. Circumstances and situations are created in which something gets in the way, preventing the truth from being actualized. Enter Aharon with his little ruse which will achieve the truth. A lie is a lie if it supports and sustains a lie. If it is the only means for validating the truth - it is not a lie. The Chafetz Chaim once asked a prominent lay person to participate in a specific endeavor which would involve time on the man's part. The Vaad HaYeshivos, conference of yeshivos, was in dire need of someone to represent them before the government. The man demurred, claiming ill-health. A number of years later, Horav Elchonon Wasserman, zl, met the man and was shocked to see that he was gravely ill. He could hardly get out of bed, and he was dependent on aides to care for him round the clock. Later, Rav Elchonon ruminated that earlier, this man had refused the Chafetz Chaim because of ill health. Hashem arranged that he would not be considered a deceiver, by sending him this illness. When we lie, Hashem sees to it that we are transmitting the truth.

our husband, father and grandfather on his yahrtzeit Elchanan ben Peretz z"l
niftar 11 Kislev 5759 Esther Kurant Mordechai & Jenny Kurant Aliza &
Avrohom Wrona Naomi & Avrohom Yitzchok Weinberger Dovid & Chavi
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**Rabbi Wein - Parshas Toldos
The True Heritage of Israel**

The name of this week's parsha – Toldot – is taken from the opening verse of the parsha – these are the toldot, the offspring and generations of Yitzchak. It is therefore understandable that the parsha should be named and remembered as the parsha of Toldot since that it is the key operative word. However, there is an exactly similar series of words that begin parshat Noach – these are the toldot of Noach. Yet that Torah parsha is not Toldot but rather it is named for Noach. For the sake of consistency either our parsha should be named for Yitzchak or the parsha of Noach should be called Toldot as well. Even the naming of the parshiyot of the Torah teaches us important lessons about life and history. Both Noach and Yitzchak had righteous offspring. Noach had Shem and Yitzchak had Yaakov. Both also had offspring that were less than righteous. Noach had Ham and Canaan, and Yitzchak had Eisav as a son. Yet there was a fundamental difference between Noach and Yitzchak. Yitzchak possessed a heritage to transmit to Yaakov. The blessings that he bestowed upon his son were those that he had received from his father Avraham. It is heritage, family and national memory and traditions that create toldot, a continuity and connection to generational bonding and unity. Noach was without such a background – he was a righteous individual, but still only an individual, who did not see himself in the role of being a nation builder. He did not possess a father who imbued him with a sense of tradition, family and nationhood. Avraham on the other hand was described by God, so to speak, as someone who would create a nation after him that would follow God's ways and commandments. It was this heritage that Yitzchak received. He was also engaged not only in creating individuals as was Noach but rather in raising toldot – national eternal generations - that would continue the heritage and holy tradition that he had received from his father. Thus Yitzchak's parsha is named Toldot while

Noach's parsha remains only on his name alone. The Torah itself emphasizes this point by immediately describing Yitzchak as being the son of Avraham whereas in the parsha of Noach, the name of the father of Noach no longer appears. The Jewish people as a whole has toldot even as individual Jews may or may not be so blessed. The toldot of the Jewish people are based upon shared memory and historical experience, Torah knowledge and observance, a sense of mission and a strong national identity. The thread of idealism, of helping others, of goodness and compassion – in short, the blessings of our father Avraham, run through the Jewish story of the ages. We often think that material goods and wealth are the stuff of human inheritances. But that is a false reading of life's truths. It is the ideals and beliefs and traditions of holiness and Godly service that are the true heritage of Israel and guarantee that the people of Israel will always have toldot. Shabat shalom,

Rabbi Berel Wein