

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

TOLEDOT

Haftarah: Shemuel I 20:18-42

DECEMBER 3, 2016 3 KISLEV 5777

Rosh Hodesh is Thursday December 1

Begin saying Barech Alenu on Sunday night, December 4 in Arbit.

Moses is running the Jerusalem Marathon (doing a 10k)! Raising money for Chasing Peace in gofundme.com/moses-runs-for-chasing-peace

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MOSES writes: Dad! I'm running for Chasing Peace in the Jerusalem Marathon (doing a 10k)! Get people to fund me :)

gofundme.com/moses-runs-for-chasing-peace

Hi guys! During my year in Israel this year, I will be running the Jerusalem Marathon 10k on behalf of a really wonderful charity by the name of Chasing Peace. Chasing Peace, or Rodef Shalom, was started by my sister, Mikhayla, in memory of my grandfather, Jerry Werman. My grandfather was not only a shoemaker, but also a man of the world. He believed that all of us around the globe are connected and that it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to care and provide for each other. Chasing Peace, with this philosophy, strives to provide a pair of shoes to all of those in need, all around the world. Please help us in this endeavor and please donate to sponsor my run this year!

Thank you!
chasingpeace.org
 Help spread the word!

Editors Notes**The Prosecutor's Blessing**

This morning we began our class reviewing the beginning of this week's portion. A simple reading of the three verses leaves more questions than answers. So we looked at Rashi at that left us with even more questions.

"And these are the generations of Isaac the son of Abraham; Abraham begot Isaac." Do we learn anything from this verse that we didn't know before? We spent an entire portion two weeks learning of the birth of Isaac and last week's portion focused on finding Isaac a wife. All of us know that Isaac is Abraham's son, so why tell us again and repeat it? Rashi suggests that because the scorners of the generation were saying that Sarah had conceived from Abimelech, Hashem shaped the features of Isaac's face to resemble Abraham's, and everyone attested that Abraham was in fact the father. The question remains why wait until now to tell us this?

"And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebecca the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to himself for a wife." Again we are given information we all know. We read the longest chapter in genesis last week and were introduced to Rebecca, her father and her brother. Again Rashi suggests that this repetition is to praise Rebecca. Although she was the daughter of a wicked man and the sister of a wicked man and her place was inhabited by wicked people, she did not learn from their deeds.

And finally, And Isaac prayed to the L-rd opposite his wife because she was barren, and the Lord accepted HIS prayer, and Rebecca his wife conceived. Rashi elaborates: Isaac was standing in one corner praying, and Rebecca was standing in that corner and praying. His prayer was accepted, but not hers. And why? For the prayer of a righteous man, the son of a righteous man, does not compare to the prayer of a righteous man, the son of a wicked man.

Wait a minute Rashi. I know you are quoting that Talmud, but that's counter intuitive. And furthermore,

you just heaped praise on Rebecca for being righteous in a place of wicked people, and now you say it counts for nothing? Why should that be? We suggested a comparison between two people. One man is born into wealth. He is given the finest education. He is sent to the best schools. He is raised in the family business understanding every aspect of it from his childhood forward. His social circle is moneyed and connected. He takes over the family business and continues successfully in the path of his father. Another man is raised in poverty. He grows up in a tough neighborhood with an absentee father and because of his family needs has no opportunity to continue his education. Still he studies and reads each night and pushes himself and builds his own very successful business. Although both may be equally successful, there is no question that the latter stands out much more in terms of a story of self-motivation and perseverance.

So we must ask, why when it comes to judging one's righteousness would we assume differently? Wasn't Isaac lucky to be born to Abraham and Sarah? Didn't he grow up witnessing miracles? Didn't he receive an unparalleled education? Wasn't he blessed with wealth and honored by all. One would expect him to grow up following his father's path. Rebecca represents the proverbial "rags-to-riches" story. She grows up amongst liars and cheaters. She lived in a house of idolatry. And given all of this, she is judged worthy to fulfill the role as a mother of the Jewish people.

How could Rashi explain that Hashem would overlook all this and instead favor the one who came from a more privileged background? If anything it should be the opposite! Rebecca, who struggled her whole life and had to work extra hard to get to where she was at, should have been answered first by Hashem?

We examined three possible answers. The first suggested that it is certainly true that the one who struggles is at a higher level, and that's often because they take nothing for granted in their relationship with G-d. Every moment is filled with a yearning to grow and an excitement. On the other hand those raised in a religious environment may be rote in their religious observance and lack what Rabbi Abittan called gusto. Isaac though, did not. Although he grew up in Abraham's house where the consecrated was normal, it never lost its special quality to him.

A second answer is offered by that kabbalists. We know that Abraham's quality was Chesed or unending kindness. Isaac on the other hand

epitomizes the opposite quality of Gevurah or self-control, restriction and restraint. One might doubt that Isaac would be the son of Abraham as opposite as they are. Furthermore, men typically represent chesed while women gevurah (as a wife keeps her husband in his place). Given Isaac's extreme gevurah, it was necessary to find an atypical wife for him. Rebecca, who was tested at the well, and who was of the same cut as her father in law on the extreme side of kindness and giving, was that wife.

And just as Abraham cultivated this quality although he grew up in Terach's home, Rebecca did the same surrounded by Betuel, Laban and the rest of Abraham's former countrymen. She prayed from the side of chesed to fulfill the command to be fruitful and multiply which Hillel (representing chesed) states is have a son and daughter. Isaac prayed from the side of Gevurah and it was his prayer which was answered in having two sons as Shamai (representing gevurah) states that it is two boys which fulfill the command. Now although this answers all the questions, it simply was not satisfying. So we delved further and the final answer we came up with was incredible enlightening.

We read last week that when Eliezer and Rebecca take leave of the family in Syria, that the family blesses Rebecca, "Our sister, may you become thousands of myriads, and may your seed inherit the cities of their enemies." Again Rashi elaborates and explains their blessing - "May it be His will that those children (which Hashem promised to Abraham) will be from you and not from another woman." The Midrash fires back and explains, that it is precisely because of this blessing that Rebecca was unable to conceive. It would be unthinkable to allow the idolaters to state that through their blessing, Isaac and Rebecca were blessed with children.

Furthermore, Rabbi Pinches Friedman quotes the Chatam Sofer who recalls the Talmud which states that most sons resemble the mother's brother. He explains that it was precisely for this reason that Lavan HaArami, the consummate rasha, bestowed this blessing upon his sister. "Since you are our sister, we want you to have myriads of offspring who resemble us—who are consummate reshaim - evil people". Thus the verse clearly states that it was Isaac's prayer which was answered.

But this leaves us with an even bigger question. Many have a custom to recite the same verse uttered by Laban and company, Achoteynu At "Our sister, may you become thousands of myriads, and may your seed inherit the cities of their enemies" at the veiling during the wedding. Why would we choose

such a verse from such a person? And in addition to that many begin the wedding ceremony with Mah tovu ohalecha Ya'akov, mishkenotecha Yisrael, "How goodly are your tents, Jacob, your dwelling places, Israel". These words were uttered by none other than our arch enemy Bilaam (coincidentally a descendant or perhaps a reincarnation of Lavan) who sought to curse the Jewish people. Couldn't we find another verse from someone a bit holier?

Again we have two answers. The first is that when we bless Achoteynu At – our sister, we are praying that the descendants resemble us, the rabbis and people giving this blessing.

And secondly, let us recall that the Talmud relates that two angels escort us home from the synagogue on Friday night. When they see the candles lit, the table set, our families looking our Shabbat best, and take in that unique Shabbat aroma, the good angel declares that they should find the same on the following week, and the bad angel is forced to respond "Amen." Why is it so important to get the bad angel to respond Amen? When Jacob battles Esav,'s angel and defeats him, he asks the angel to bless him. We are told that the angel is Satan, so why would Jacob want his blessing?

We learn, "En Kategor Na'asa Sanigor," which literally means, "A prosecutor cannot become a defender." I would suggest that the reverse may be true as well. It seems that if the prosecutor, the evil angel, the Stan blesses us, he has cut himself off from doing the opposite.

I believe we want to make sure that everyone blesses the couple, even the prosecutor, the evil inclination and the Satan. So that he too should bless and be unable to reverse that blessing.

Let me know what you think!
Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi David Bibi

Summary of the Perasha Toldot - Yaacov gets the blessings

- 1- Yaacov and Esav are born. Esav sells the bechor to Yaacov.
- 2- Yitshak moves to Gerar. Abimelech sees Yitshak with Rivkah
- 3- The Pelishtim close up Abraham's wells. Yitshak moves to the valley of Gerar and builds wells there.
- 4- Yitshak goes to Be'er Sheva. Hashem appears to him. Abimelech's people chase after Yitshak to make a peace treaty.

5- Yitshak gets old and prepares to bless Esav. Rivkah instructs Yaacov to present himself as Esav and get the beracha.

6- Yaacov gets the beracha. Rivkah tells Yaacov to run away to Laban's house.

7- Yaacov goes to Laban in Padan Aram. Esav takes another wife.

FROM THE RABBIS OF THE JERSEY SHORE

"And Hashem said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb.'" (Beresheet 25:23)

Ribkah, who was pregnant, was suffering great pain, so she went to inquire of Hashem to find out why she was suffering so much. She was told that she is carrying twins who are very different. The Torah describes them as "two nations." However, Rashi, taking note of the unusual spelling, explains that the Torah is hinting to two great ones that will come from her in the distant future. They are Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi, who will come from Ya'akov, and the Roman Caesar Antoninus, who will come from Esav. There is an amazing story in the Midrash (Tosafot Abodah Zarah 10b) that reveals how these two great men became connected and accomplished great things together.

Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi (a descendant of King David) was born during a time when the Romans decreed that anyone who circumcises his son will immediately be put to death. Rabbi Yehudah (also known as Rebi) was born to the great Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel. Rabbi Shimon secretly circumcised his son Rebi. The Roman ruler found out and reported him to the Caesar. Rabbi Shimon was immediately summoned to come before the Caesar with his wife and the baby.

When they arrived at the palace and were waiting in the vestibule to be summoned, the queen happened to see them. The queen, the Caesar's wife, know the wife of Rabbi Shimon, and asked her why she was there at the palace. The wife of Rabbi Shimon told her of the decree and her husband violated the decree and they were facing the death penalty.

Then the queen did an amazing thing. She brought the Rabbi's wife into her room. She told her that she gave birth ten days ago, to a baby boy. She told her to switch her circumcised baby for her own uncircumcised baby and show the Caesar that the charges are untrue. The Rabbi's wife agreed and temporarily switched the babies. It so happened that while they were waiting to see the Caesar, the baby started to cry, so the Rabbi's wife nursed him to quiet him down. When Rabbi Shimon met with the Caesar, he denied the charge and showed him the baby. The Caesar accepted the answer and executed the one

who reported Rabbi Shimon, and allowed Rabbi Shimon to leave in peace.

Rabbi Shimon's wife returned to the queen and switched back the babies and thanked her. The queen's baby was Antoninus, and because he nursed from Rabbi Shimon's wife he was infused with a tremendous dose of holiness. As a result, Antoninus became a ger through Rebi and Rebi began teaching him Torah secretly. They became beloved companions all their lives. As a result of this friendship Rebi was empowered to compose the Mishnah. Rabbi Reuven Semah

“And Yitzhak was extremely frightened” (Beresheet 27:33)

When Yitzhak realized that he gave the blessings to Ya'akov, instead of to Esav, he grew extremely frightened. He realized that his whole life he was under the impression that Esav needs the blessings and not Ya'akov, and all of a sudden he sees that he is grossly mistaken. Through Divine Providence, it was shown to him that Ya'akov should get the blessings. The Midrash says that Yitzhak was more frightened when he discovered who took the blessings than when he was lying on the altar, ready to be slaughtered! Can we imagine a person ready to die, waiting for the blade to fall, and yet this is more terrifying? The answer is that when a person lives his life one way and then realizes his whole life he was mistaken, that is a terrible shock, as great if not greater than facing death. To realize that his whole approach was not correct is a difficult test!

We can understand why many people who are faced with this realization don't want to admit their mistakes. They would rather justify their previous behavior rather than confront the truth. We must ask ourselves if we are not guilty of this same human nature. Be it our misvah observance or our character development, or our total attitude towards life, are we avoiding change because we can't admit our past mistakes? We come from Yitzhak, who, although he was terrified by this prospect, nevertheless admitted that Ya'akov needed the blessings and he, Yitzhak, had not been correct in his perception. We also have this inner strength inside of our spiritual genes! Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

Eulogy

The mourners' mood was somber as they quietly exited the funeral chapel. The eulogies had been heart-wrenching testimonials to a community-active individual who exemplified so many of the qualities religious leaders advocate from their pulpits.

“I wish people would feel that way about me,” thought David, as he solemnly stepped out into the bustling city street. “I wish I could accomplish even half of what the deceased did.”

David's feelings were not unique. Many in the crowd felt similar envy, whether acknowledged privately or shared with others.

One purpose of eulogizing the deceased is to ignite sparks of positive motivation in the listeners – to prompt them to emulate the good qualities of the departed. Our Sages teach: “Kinat sofrim tarbeh chochmah – Jealousy directed toward people who study generates an increase in wisdom” (Baba Batra 21a). This is a “kosher” form of envy.

“Tov shem mishemen tov – better is a good name than fine oil” (Kohelet 7:1). The Midrash Kohelet explains: “Good oil decreases in value, while a good name gets better and better. The finest oil eventually runs out, but a fine reputation lasts for eternity. High-quality oil is expensive, while a good name can be acquired for free. The best oil can only be enjoyed by the living, while a fine name benefits the living and the dead. Premium oil can only be purchased by the rich; a good name can be acquired by anyone.”

In order for kosher jealousy to work for you and to produce change in your character – in order for envy to benefit your personal growth and achievement and get you to do more misvot and acts of kindness – you must first realize that it is not a talented speaker who will independently compose your eulogy (after 120 be'ezrat Hashem). You will supply the writer of your eulogy with biographical details by living your life in an exemplary fashion. You set the tone of your eulogy by the life you live.

Why waste any more time? Wake up and start the composition. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR The First Workaholic

Parashat Toledot tells the story of Yaakob's “purchase” of the birthright from his older twin, Esav. Yaakob was cooking a lentil stew when Esav stormed into the house, famished from a day of hunting. Esav asks Yaakob for some of the food: “Pour into my mouth, if you will, some of this red stuff” (“Hal'iteni Na Min Ha'adom Ha'adom Ha'zeh” – Bereshit 25:30). The Torah adds in this context that Esav was forever more known by the name “Edom” as a result of this incident. The origin of this name, by which the kingdom that emerged from Esav would be called, is this request he made to Yaakob, that he feed him “Min Ha'adom Ha'adom Ha'zeh” – “some of this red stuff.”

The obvious question arises, why was this remark so significant that it became the source of Esav's name?

Why is Esav eternally known for his reference to a lentil stew as “this red stuff”?

To answer this question, let us address a different question: why did Esav refer to the lentils as “this red stuff”? Why did he not simply state, “Give me some of these lentils”?

Seforno (Italy, 16th century) explains that Esav was preoccupied with his hunting to the point of obsession. His mind was so intensely focused on his work in the fields that he paid little attention to anything else. We might say that Esav was the first workaholic. He was obsessed with his work and could not think about or concern himself with anything else. And thus, when he entered the kitchen that day, he did not take the time to notice what Yaakov was making. He saw “red stuff,” and this is what he asked for.

This is why Esav is forever known as “Edom.” His reference to lentils as “this red stuff” reflected his inability to pay attention to matters other than his work in the fields. And this was Esav’s fundamental flaw – he focused exclusively on worldly pursuits, and was thus unable to concern himself with more important and sublime matters.

This is also why Yaakov realized at that moment that he needed to acquire the birthright – the right of religious leadership in the family – from Esav. This status cannot be entrusted with somebody who lives with an obsession for material success. Yaakov thus tells Esav, “Michra Chayom Et Bechoratecha Li” – “Sell me your birthright like this day” (25:31). Yaakov pointed out to Esav that his life was characterized by the quality of “Kayom” – “this day” – living for the moment, for immediate gratification and worldly success, without looking beyond the immediate present to long-term aspirations. Yaakov demanded the birthright because it demanded a broad vision and lofty ambitions, which were completely foreign to Esav.

There is certainly nothing wrong with pursuing a gainful and fulfilling career. To the contrary, we must work to support ourselves and our families; this is our obligation. The problem arises, however, when the career or business takes over one’s life and becomes the totality of his existence. We should work, and work hard, but we must never allow our professional lives to become an obsession, which prevents us from focusing on family and religion. If we are too submerged in our careers to see the “lentils,” and we can take just a quick glance to see “this red stuff,” then we have become like Esav. We must ensure to maintain a proper balance between our professional

obligations and the other important areas of our lives, and never allow our work to become our exclusive point of focus.

**VICTOR BIBI
SOD HAPARASHA**

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**Rabbi Wein
SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

As we all have been taught in our study of elementary economics, prices and values are established by the law of supply and demand. In theory, the greater the supply, the lower the price. We are witness to this fact of commerce in the current, still relatively inexpensive price of oil, due to the glut of all oil available on the world market.

This rule of commerce – supply and demand – applies to human resources as well. And currently in the religious Jewish world, the supply of capable young men and women who are willing to enter the field of Jewish education far outstrips the demand. For every teaching opportunity, especially in the higher grades of elementary school and in high school, let alone in the advanced yeshiva realm, there are far more applicants available than there are teaching openings and opportunities.

As a consequence, salaries for entrance positions in Jewish education are low and the competition to fill any teaching vacancy is fierce and often times disappointing. During my recent visit to the United States, quite a number of excellent young Torah scholars, who are searching for teaching positions in Jewish schools, bemoaned this fact to me.

It seems that in almost every school located in a large urban Jewish community, there are thousands of applicants for every position that needs to be filled. And because of the seemingly inexorable law of supply and demand, these highly sought after positions pay relatively poor salaries, certainly in relation to the responsibilities and demands of the position.

The problem is somewhat compounded by the fact that these young people are entering the job market rather late in life. Most of them already have a number of children already attending school and if one is convinced that one’s child should receive a Lakewood education then it becomes difficult to consider taking a position that may be available in a smaller, perhaps less observant community.

The lack of a secular education and professional training also militates against this type of yeshiva graduate securing a meaningful position in Jewish education. We thus end up in a catch 22 situation of wasted talent. Entering the job market when one is already in his or her 30s with children to support and educate is a great challenge. And, when there are so few job opportunities available, this challenge becomes almost insurmountable.

In the United States many of these potentially great educators turn to other types of work in order to survive. Usually this creates a great deal of personal angst and spiritual and emotional frustration. I have been witness to such situations many times in my rabbinic and educational career. It seems that somehow our educational system is broken and because of many different pressures – religious, social, political, as well as feelings of inertia – there are very few who are willing to accept the challenge of fixing it. On an individual basis, a number of great and hardy young educators have created their own new institutions but this has done little to solve the general overall problem in the educational world of Orthodox Jewry.

Traditionally, the profession of the teacher had been viewed in Jewish life as being an exalted and noble one, while at the same time those who practice that profession are viewed as otherwise unsuccessful and uninspiring individuals. This schizophrenic view of the educators of our children also contributes to skew even more the law of supply and demand in Jewish education. Somehow we expect our teachers to be holy, altruistic, supremely competent and heroic figures. At the same time we harbor within ourselves a feeling that the cream of the crop of Jewish talent is in the field of hedge funds... and that those who teach our children do not really measure up to them.

These conflicting views manifest themselves in myriad ways from salary structure to tenure and social respect in the Jewish world. There are currently initiatives and programs financed by sources outside of the field of Jewish education to physically and socially improve the lot of teachers in the Jewish field. But these programs are palliative and not structural. In the 1940s in the United States, a number of great leaders created the day school revolution, which saved Orthodoxy in America. They were able to inspire a generation of educators that sacrificed much in order to achieve the goal of Jewish survival and the rebirth of Torah knowledge and observance amongst American youth. Such a revolution is necessary again today in order to overcome the crushing pressures that the law of supply and demand has imposed upon us.

Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Why Did Isaac Love Esau?

Even before they were born, Jacob and Esau struggled in the womb. They were destined, it seems, to be eternal adversaries. Not only were they different in character and appearance. They also held different places in their parents' affections:

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob. (Gen. 25:27-28)

We know why Rebekah loved Jacob. Before the twins were born, the pains Rebekah felt were so great that "she went to inquire of the Lord." This is what she was told:

"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." (Gen. 25:23)

It seemed as if God were saying that the younger would prevail and carry forward the burden of history, so it was the younger, Jacob, whom she loved.

But why, in that case, did Isaac love Esau? Did he not know about Rebekah's oracle? Had she not told him about it? Besides, did he not know that Esau was wild and impetuous? Can we really take literally the proposition that Isaac loved Esau because "he had a taste for wild game," as if his affections were determined by his stomach, by the fact that his elder son brought him food he loved? Surely not, when the very future of the covenant was at stake.

The classic answer, given by Rashi, listens closely to the literal text. Esau, says the Torah, "knew how to trap [yode'a tzayid]." Isaac loved him "because entrapment was in his mouth [ki tzayid befiv]." Esau, says Rashi, trapped Isaac by his mouth. Here is Rashi's comment on the phrase "knew how to trap":

He knew how to trap and deceive his father with his mouth. He would ask him, "Father, how should one tithe salt and straw?" Consequently his father believed him to be strict in observing the commands. (Rashi to 25:27)

Esau knew full well that salt and straw do not require tithes, but he asked so as to give the impression that he was strictly religious. And here it is Rashi's comment on the phrase that Isaac loved him "because entrapment was in his mouth":

The midrashic explanation is that there was entrapment in the mouth of Esau, who trapped his father and deceived him by his words. (Rashi to 25:28)

The Maggid of Dubnow adds a perceptive comment as to why Isaac, but not Rebekah, was deceived. Rebekah grew up with the wily Laban. She knew deception when she saw it. Isaac, by contrast, had grown up with Abraham and Sarah. He only knew total honesty and was thus easily deceived. (Bertrand Russell once commented on the philosopher G. E. Moore, that he only once heard Moore tell a lie, when he asked Moore if he had ever told a lie, and Moore replied, "Yes").

So the classic answer is that Isaac loved Esau because he simply did not know who or what Esau was. But there is another possible answer: that Isaac loved Esau precisely because he did know what Esau was.

In the early twentieth century someone brought to the great Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Kook, first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of pre-state Israel, the following dilemma. He had given his son a good Jewish education. He had always kept the commands at home. Now however the son had drifted far from Judaism. He no longer kept the commandments. He did not even identify as a Jew. What should the father do? "Did you love him when he was religious?" asked Rav Kook. "Of course," replied the father. "Well then," Rav Kook replied, "Now love him even more."

Sometimes love can do what rebuke cannot. It may be that the Torah is telling us that Isaac was anything but blind as to his elder son's true nature. But if you have two children, one well behaved, the other liable to turn out badly, to whom should you devote greater attention? With whom should you spend more time?

It may be that Isaac loved Esau not blindly but with open eyes, knowing that there would be times when his elder son would give him grief, but knowing too that the moral responsibility of parenthood demands that we do not despair of or disown a wayward son.

Did Isaac's love have an effect on Esau? Yes and no. It is clear that there was a special bond of connection between Esau and Isaac. This was recognised by the sages:

Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said: No man ever honoured his father as I honoured my father, but I found that Esau honoured his father even more. (Devarim Rabbah 1:15)

Rabbi Shimon derives this from the fact that usually people serve their parents wearing ordinary clothes while they reserve their best for going out. Esau, however, had kept his best clothes in readiness to serve his father the food he had gone out to hunt. That is why Jacob was able to wear them while Esau was still out hunting (27:14).

We find, much later in the Torah, that God forbids the Israelites to wage war against Esau's descendants. He tells Moses:

Give the people these orders: "You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, but be very careful. Do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own." (Deut. 2:4-5)

And later still Moses commands the Israelites:

Do not abhor an Edomite [i.e. a descendant of Esau], for he is your brother. (Deut. 23:8)

The sages saw these provisions as an enduring reward to Esau for the way he honoured his father.

So, was Isaac right or wrong to love Esau? Esau reciprocated the love, but remained Esau, the hunter, the man of the field, not the man to carry forward the demanding covenant with the invisible God and the spiritual sacrifices it called for. Not all children follow the path of their parents. If it was Isaac's intent that Esau should do so, he failed.

But there are some failures that are honourable. Loving your children, whatever they become, is one, for surely that is how God loves us.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"And Esav came from the field, and he was weary" (25:29)

He was hungry, but here the weariness is emphasized. Also, in the following verse Esav declares,

"For I am weary". We discern the importance of this fact in this episode. It was Hashem's plan to cause unusual weariness to Esav on that day. Abraham Abinu had passed away, which was why Yaacob was cooking lentils since this was the traditional mourners meal.

When Esav heard the bad news his mind was pushed off balance and he became greatly disheartened. Esav felt that since such a great Tzadeek could die it must mean that the world was devoid of justice and a Judge. If not for this weariness (dejection), Esav would not consent to surrender the prized birthright, which carried not only honor and privilege but also the opportunity to earn merit in the service of G-d, which was the prerogative of the Behor.

But in a discouraged mood men may forget the World to Come, and even the glory of status and privilege might be carelessly exchanged for a momentary gratification. It was when Esav was in a discouraged mood that he made his terrible error.

Discouragement and depression are of the most extreme forms of the Yetzer Hara/evil inclination. Therefore, we must be careful to stay far away from this state of mind and remove ourselves from it quickly, since it makes us susceptible to falling to the Yetzer Hara.

An additional teaching is that one should refrain from making any decision when in a mood of weariness or dejection. Wait for a more opportune time with a positive frame of mind to formulate your choice. Adapted from "The Beginning" By R' Miller ZTL

Candidly Speaking: The Trump revolution, Israel and American Jews
By ISI LEIBLER

It is obvious that increasing numbers of Reform, Conservative and secular Jews consider Israel low among their priorities.

The victory of Donald Trump in the US presidential elections will have long-term global repercussions at many levels. It represents a revolt against the extreme postmodernism which has undermined the moral fiber of the West and its willingness to defend itself, facilitating the emergence of brutal Islamic terrorism throughout the world.

Many, if not most, of those who voted for Trump were offended by his vulgarity and aggressive language and did not support all aspects of his policies. They voted for him because they regarded him as the only opportunity to break with the status quo. The refusal of his antagonists – the self-styled liberal guardians of democracy – to accept the outcome of the election was despicable and unprecedented and contrasts with the acquiescence of the defeated Republicans when Barack Obama won both of his elections.

Whether or not Trump will succeed in restoring America's former global and political status remains to be seen. We should bear in mind that when Ronald Reagan was elected, the media and much of the "intelligentsia" described him as an idiot and predicted disaster.

But he proved to be one of the greatest American presidents.

Trump's victory could have dramatic ramifications for Israel. Of course, pre-election undertakings are never fully implemented, but it is historically unprecedented for Israel to enjoy such a committed pro-Israel incoming president together with massive support from both houses of Congress.

Trump, who literally gushes over Israel, has always been closely associated with Jews in business and politics.

Aside from his family, his senior advisers include committed devotees of Israel.

He has repeatedly praised Israel and refers to us as America's greatest ally; he has endorsed Israel's position on defensible borders and stated that he has no objection to construction in the major settlement blocs and Jerusalem; he called on the Palestinians to recognize Israel as a Jewish state and is opposed to imposed solutions, insisting that the only way to peace is direct negotiations between the parties; and most importantly, he has made it clear that he totally repudiates President Obama's criticism of Israel for failing to make progress in the peace talks and his application of moral equivalence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Trump committed to moving the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem – although that is an unfulfilled pre-electoral promise made by many of his predecessors, both Democrat and Republican.

He has also undertaken to confront the Iranian terrorist regime and either terminate the bogus nuclear deal or at least pressure the Iranians to adhere to their commitments.

His vice president-elect, Mike Pence, is a passionately devoted Christian friend of Israel and a seasoned politician who Trump has announced will be his major adviser and policy formulator.

And whatever tensions exist between Trump and both of the Republican-controlled houses of Congress, the one issue that they share in common is support of Israel.

However, none of this should be misinterpreted to mean that the Trump administration will favor annexation or a one-state policy. Trump has made it clear that he still endorses a two-state policy but, in contrast to Obama, he stipulates that it cannot be imposed without providing Israel with defensible borders and all of the security guarantees it requires – an unattainable objective and at present, not even on the horizon.

For this reason, the bombastic declarations by the Israeli Right and particularly Bayit Yehudi chairman Naftali Bennett's calls for annexation in the wake of the election results are irresponsible and could be highly counterproductive. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should tell his coalition members to zip it and enable him to move forward by engaging in silent diplomacy with Trump, who has already extended a warm invitation to meet with him.

One of the negative repercussions of the Trump victory is the accelerated erosion of bipartisanship and the growing influence of the radical anti-Israel wing of the Democratic Party. Nothing exemplifies this more than the likelihood of the anti-Israel Muslim Congressman Keith Ellison – who was initially funded by the Hamas-linked Council on American-Islamic Relations – assuming the role of chairman of the Democratic National Committee, supported by leading Jewish Senator Chuck Schumer. The post was formerly held by pro-Israel Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

Simultaneously, anti-Israel Jewish Senator Bernie Sanders is emerging as one of the most powerful forces in the defeated radicalized Democratic Party.

The most bizarre aspect of this election result is the almost hysterical reaction by liberal segments of the Jewish community. That 70 percent of Jews supported Hillary Clinton is not surprising and is consistent with American Jews' longstanding obsession with liberalism.

But the manipulation of Jewish issues as a political vehicle by some American Jewish leaders to oppose Trump will go down in history as an act of infamy.

The trailblazer was Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt, who shamelessly uses this once-venerable organization to promote his radical liberal agenda.

Commissioned to combat antisemitism, he had the chutzpah to harness the ADL to condemn the Republicans as "anti-Zionist" because they failed to

relate to a two-state solution in their Middle East policy platform.

He condemned Trump for "tolerating" antisemites because he declined to dignify the Ku Klux Klan by responding to their expressions of support for him. In fact, thanks to the ADL's anti-Trump hysteria, antisemites and scum like David Duke were brought to the forefront of the mainstream media, a goal which they had sought unsuccessfully to achieve over the past decades.

It also encouraged racists and antisemites to emerge from their closets.

This contrasts starkly with the muted response to by liberals to Obama's relationship with Rev. Jeremiah Wright, a paranoid antisemite. Not only did Obama attend his sermons with his family, but Wright actually officiated at his wedding and was appointed by him in 2007 to the African American Religious Leadership Committee. He only dissociated himself from Wright's views after media exposure but refused to disown him personally, relating to him as "an old uncle." Not even the fiercest critics of Trump can suggest any comparable relationship with Duke or any other identifiable antisemite. But his critics continue defaming him as a promoter of antisemites.

Clearly motivated by a very partisan agenda, they take this to insane levels. A star motif used in Trump's election propaganda was pounced upon by the ADL, claiming that it was a Star of David employed to inflame Jew-hatred. The frenzied ADL also suggested that Trump's condemnation of the power of the international banks (also promoted by Bernie Sanders) was a subtle means of promoting The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. One has to be either a paranoid delusional or an antisemite to genuinely believe that any reference to international banks is a reference to Jews. And to top this, a negative reference to the anti-Israel George Soros – which most Jews would endorse – was also alleged to be antisemitic.

Not surprisingly, the hysteria impacted on Jews at the grass roots. Yet in the wake of the election of a most pro-Israel US government, in which Jews and staunch friends of Israel are likely to assume key positions, with the president's daughter having converted to Judaism and observing an Orthodox religious lifestyle, many Jews have simply lost the plot. A number of Reform and Conservative synagogues actually held special mourning services to bewail the advent of fascism in America.

One prominent Conservative rabbi in New York even made a shocking analogy between the Trump victory and the rise of Nazism prior to the Holocaust.

The ultimate obscenity was the hysterical attack on Trump's appointment of the controversial right-wing media executive Steve Bannon as his strategic adviser.

Without any credible proof, the ADL accused him of being an antisemite who would pave the way for a return to antisemitism and white supremacy.

It so happens that Bannon is surrounded by Jews in his media company, Breitbart News. He is known for his fervent support for Israel and his condemnations of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, antisemitism and anti-Israelism on campus. One can disagree with Trump's selection of Bannon, but for Greenblatt and the ADL to smear him as an antisemite is beyond the pale. The uproar following this was so great that Greenblatt was ultimately obliged to whisper a withdrawal of this false allegation.

The double standards applied by the ADL are exemplified by the fact that despite the outright antisemitism and promotion of BDS against Israel promoted by the Black Lives Matter movement, Greenblatt does not call for Jews to boycott the organization and still refers approvingly to the "positive" aspects of its work, suggesting that only a "small minority" imposed the antisemitic aspects of its program. Apparently the ADL adopt very liberal standards when it comes to real antisemitic groups if they come from the Left.

Greenblatt's use of a revered body created to combat antisemitism to promote his own partisan political agenda and even stooping to use of allegations of antisemitism to slander his opponents is scandalous.

He has no place in a mainstream Jewish organization.

American Jewry today stands at a crossroads. Ironically, at a time when possibly the most pro-Israel US administration in history is about to take office, significant sectors of the Jewish community are falsely accusing its leaders of promoting antisemitism. It should be noted that other mainstream Jewish bodies, like the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the American Jewish Committee did not engage in this campaign and merely called for unity.

But the Zionist Organization of America was the only significant Jewish organization protesting against this partisan defamatory campaign.

However, it is obvious that increasing numbers of Reform, Conservative and secular Jews consider Israel low among their priorities and mistake liberalism or "social justice" as a universalist basis for a Jewish commitment with no Jewish content or values. In all likelihood, they will become even more estranged from Israel as they seek to further ingratiate themselves with their liberal friends.

Fortunately, this will be compensated by the intensified support for Israel from committed Jews and Christian friends.

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