

## SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

TOLEDOT

Haftarah: Shemuel I 20:18-42

NOVEMBER 21-22, 2014

29 HESHVAN 5775

Rosh Hodesh Kislev will be celebrated on Sunday, November 23.

In memory of Isaac Mizrahi – 3 Kislev 5725

. Candle lighting Friday evening 4:15 p.m. Mincha at 4:15  
4:15 will creep up very quickly and its cold out so please make the effort to join us on time  
and help to make sure we have a minyan

SHABBAT: Perasha class with Rabbi Aharon at 8:30  
Shaharit - Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:27 AM  
**Kiddush sponsored by the Waldman Family – Kiddush before 11:40 Hasot**

Looking Forward – Anna Yadgarov is dedicating next week's Kiddush  
to the new baby and her daughter and son in law's visit with us  
Please sponsor a Kiddush or Seudah Shelishi or breakfast in memory or in honor of a loved one  
We want to schedule the full season in advance if possible

Early Mincha after Kiddush - Amidah after 12:05

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30  
Ages 0-5 - in the Playroom/ Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's afternoon program with the Bach at the Bach 3:30 PM  
Ladies Class at the Lembergers at 4:30

Return for Arbit at 5:30 and then join us ...  
Saturday Night November 22nd is Family Movie Night @The Sephardic. Pizza Melaka Malka  
Sponsored by Patti and Jack Azizo

Krav Maga is cancelled for this SUNDAY

### WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00AM, Mon and Thurs at 6:55, Tues, Weds and Fri at 7:00

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE - Thursday Nights 8:30-9:30 Virtual\* Class facilitated by Rabbi Yosef Colish.  
Practical Laws of Shabbat for Sephardim

GENERAL SYNAGOGUE MEETING For all congregants  
At the Synagogue – New Date - Sunday December 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM  
Looking forward to 2015 - Plans for the future and transitions

Saturday Night December 6<sup>th</sup> Family Movie Night @The Sephardic. Pizza Melaka Malka - Sponsored by Patti & Jack  
And for the Adults ....IS J STREET PRO-ISRAEL & PRO-PEACE? At Lido Beach Synagogue 7:30 PM  
Please join us for a screening of one of this year's most talked about, controversial and provocative films; a  
documentary about the American Jewish Community and its relationship with Israel. Free Admission. \$10 Suggested  
Donation. PANEL DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE FILM with producer, co-writer, and co-director Ilya Feoktistov

**SAVE THE DATE: Sisterhood Annual Dinner December 9 honoring Hinda and Robert Mizrahi.**  
**Please sponsor an ad and make your reservations**

Saturday Night December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 pm ..... Did you know there are over 700,000 amateur radio operators in the  
United States and almost 3 million world-wide! Come learn the secrets of how to operate your own radio to  
communicate with others by transmitting voice, Morse code, digital text and pictures, even live video signals by radio  
from one ham "station" to another, on land and at sea, in the air, and in space. Children and adults of all ages are  
invited. Pizza and refreshments will be served. Presentation by Bob Kraus, facilitated by Rabbi Yosef.

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**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100 – Mincha and Arbit – Give us 22 minutes and we'll give you the World To Come!**

### Editors Notes

**As a follow up to last week, between the Jewish Voice, The Five Towns Jewish Times and our newsletter at least 60,000 people had a look at last week's article asking you to register in support of The Ohavei Zion Party for the World Jewish Congress.**

**The first step in creating our new party is to register a minimum of 600 people so that we can become a recognized party and this must be done within the next thirty days. To register in support of the party, please visit**

**<https://admin.election-america.com/Candidates/?petition=10>**

**We needed a minimum of 600 to register and we got only about half. So we need at least 300 of you to register NOW!**

**There you will be asked to fill in your personal information and check-off boxes approving our party. There is a nominal registration fee of \$5 for those under 30 or \$10 depending for the rest of us. Please make sure all your family members register. You register four people on the same card but you must close the page and reopen it for each new registration. Additionally we will need volunteers and point people to assist us from every synagogue and school in every community in the country. This is your opportunity to truly make a difference. If you can help, please contact Lana Eliyahu at [lana.eliyahu@gmail.com](mailto:lana.eliyahu@gmail.com) or via phone at 917-213-4600.**

### Editors Notes

Like all of you, I am shocked at the terrorist attack that took place in Har Nof this week. Those who speak of a war against Israel and a war against Zionism need to realize that this is a war against Jews. I spoke with people who were first responders and who were helping people while the shooting continued. I received thoughts from Rebetzin Tziporah Heller and Rabbi Daniel Gordis (who refers

to this as more than a terrorist attack, this was a pogrom) and chose to include those rather than include my own.

I also received a chilling audio file of Rabbi Moshe Twersky HY"D. In the audio, the 59-year-old senior maggid shiur at Yeshiva Toras Moshe in Yerushalayim is addressing his talmidim on Tuesday, June 22, 2012. He is discussing the topic of kiddush Hashem and tells his talmidim that it could "happen anywhere."

"Again, you have to be ready for kiddush Hashem. You can never tell. One never knows," Rav Twersky is heard saying. "It could happen anywhere. It could happen in Moscow, it could happen in Paris, in London, it could happen in New York, it could happen in Yerushalayim somewhere. Some Arab could come up with a knife and it could happen. It could happen. Not mukfah today. Anywhere. Any place. Anytime. Any place it could happen."

How frightening that it did happen. This great teacher in Torah lived a life of kiddush Hashem and lost his life al kiddush Hashem. In his passing as in his life, he will continue to serve as a source of inspiration to his students and now to tens of thousands all over the world. Yehi zichro baruch – may his memory be blessed. Hashem yikom damav – May Hashem take vengeance on his blood.

### Tziporah Heller- words on the attack

Yesterday at about 7am my daughter Miri called. "Mordechai just came home from shul. He said that Arabs came in and are shooting, and that a man with an axe is hitting everyone. Some of the people threw chairs at them, but it didn't help". The twelve year old had hit the floor along with everyone else when the bullets began to fly. He was fully aware of what was going on, and what it meant. He somehow found the courage to let go of his father's hand, crawl towards the exit and break into a run. Some of you know Miri and her family. She has had some of you over for Shabbos and holidays, and others sleeping in one of her kid's bedrooms when the crowd at my house gets too big to accommodate sanely. Mordechai is blonde, freckled, and a soft spoken somewhat introverted and studious boy, much like his father, Shmuli. He is not Huck Finn, and the courage he found at those moments were a gift straight from G-d. By the time he finished telling Miri what happened, sirens from Hatzalah ambulances, police cars, and Magen David could be heard telling her that there were casualties. "Where's Shmuli" was the thought that entered her mind again and again as the seconds which felt like hours began to tick. She called me and said, "Say

Tehillim. There is shooting in Bnei Torah". I began to say the ancient prayers, stopped myself and called Rabbi Weidan, and told him what was happening. I then began the Tehillim again, knocked on my neighbor's door and told her to do the same. Chani called and told me to look at the news to see what was really happening. Nothing was reported as yet. Of course not. It was only 7:10.

I realized that the whether or not the attack was over, that no one as yet knew whether the murderers escaped. I called again, asking that everything be done to see that no one leaves the campus, and then called Miri. Thank G-d she had the sense to stay indoors and not run to the besieged synagogue. When Mordechai came home, the shooting was still happening. By 7:20 we both realized that if she didn't hear from Shmuli, something was very wrong. The police and other services had no information as yet to give to the public, but a family friend who had seen the terror with his own eyes, said that Shmuli had been taken to Haddassah ElN Karem. When Mordechai let go of his hand, he instinctively ran after the child placing himself in the sight of the terrorists. One of them attacked him with his axe, hitting him on the left side of his head, his back and his arm. Somehow he made it to the door. Josh White, a student of Machon Shlomo was riding down Agassi on his bike. He noticed what he described later as "a lot of confusion" in front of Bnei Torah asked someone what was going on, and surprisingly (for Har Nof) the man answered him in Hebrew! In the midst of what to him was gibberish, he picked up the word Aravim (Arabs) and immediately grasped what was happening. He approached the shul and saw Shmuli who was still aware. The Machon student took of his shirt and stopped the bleeding, a move which may have saved Shmuli's life. The shooting was still happening inside. It was about 7:15! The emergency crew drew back, but because SHmuli was already outside, they evacuated him thus making him the first of the wounded to be taken to Hadassah, another factor in his survival. Before collapsing, he asked where Mordechai was, and when he was told that the boy ran away from the carnage, he said, "Baruch Hashem". Inside, the terrorists were continuing their "work". When they entered they turned to their left, and immediately cut down Rabbi Twerski and Rav Kalman Levine who were standing in the corner. Reb Kalman was the husband of Chaya, formally Markowitz who was a student and later a madrichah at Neve. Her husband was not a regular attendee of Bnei Torah. He would generally daven in the earliest possible minyan so he could get in a couple of hours of learning before beginning his day. Yesterday he had a question about something he had learned and had gone after davening to Bnei Torah to put the question to its erudite rav, Rabbi

Rubin. The question will now only be resolved in the Heavenly Academy. Rev Avraham Goldberg, the third man to be killed is Breina Goldberg's husband. Many of you know Breina as the warm caring efficient secretary cum mother figure at the front desk in the afternoon. I don't as yet know how her husband, or Reb Kupinski the fourth victim met their deaths. The only thing that I know, is that it was brutal and swift. The first policemen to enter were traffic cops who knew what they were facing, and also knew that they were not wearing protective gear. They entered anyway and together with the forces that came afterwards ended the bloodbath. By 7:30 the murderers were apprehended.

Miri, my daughter Guli, and her husband were in Hadassah. Miri's other kids were watched by relatives and friends for the day. Mordechai was urged to speak about what he saw again and again in order to diminish the damage of the trauma he had undergone. The rest of the family flowed in, saying Tehillim and waiting for updates. The hospital social worker, Aviva, who is blessed with the rare gift of being empathic without being overbearing, and the women of Ezer Mitzion (a volunteer organization) kept us well supplied with food, calming conversation and practical advice. We were allowed to see Shmuli who was put under anesthesia. We don't know if he heard us or not, but we were talking to him stressing that Mordechai was fine. In the hours before the surgery was done, we found ourselves with Risa Rotman. Her husband, Chaim Yechiel ben Malka, was also attacked, and the extent of his wounds are very serious. Some of you may know Risa (who if I am not mistaken also is an OBG) and those of you whose husbands learned in Ohr Sameach or who recall Reb Meir Shuster who he helped unstintingly for years, may know him as Howie. The policeman who entered first, passed away. May Hashem avenge his blood.

Every day in Eretz Yisrael is a gift and a miracle. I have no pretensions of knowing Hashem's will, but I do know that everything He does is purposeful, and that His compassion that is often hidden from the human eye. Anyone who values human life and reality and the eternal nature of the soul is appalled by the idea of people entering a synagogue and killing people who they never met randomly. Except for CNN. They reported the entire event as an attack on a mosque.

Except for BBC. They reported that the Israeli police killed two Palestinians (they meant the murderers). The victims of Israeli brutality presumably were going on a stroll through scenic Har Nof when attacked by the racist troops....

Please post the truth to whomever you can reach. Please please continue saying Tehillim for Shmuel Yerucham ben Baila and the other victims. Daven

that Hashem give strength to the five new widows and 24 new orphans. Most of all thank Hashem that we are not Them, and treasure Hashem's Torah and His Land.

### **Jerusalem's New Holy War** **By Daniel Gordis**

There are terror attacks, and there are pogroms. The attack at a Jerusalem synagogue this week that killed four rabbis was a pogrom. It was an attack motivated not by politics but by religious hatred; it was directed not at Israelis but at Jews.

The killers were armed with hatchets and guns instead of suicide belts, and they came not to kill Jews but to butcher them. The images are horrific: a prayer shawl in a pool of blood; a prayer book turned crimson, from which one of the victims had been worshiping as he was killed; and more haunting, the hand of a dead man, still wearing his phylacteries, soaking in his own blood. Witnesses said a worshiper's arm, also wrapped in a leather prayer strap, had been hacked off its torso.

To Jews schooled in Jewish history, these images are not new; they are the images of a destiny from which Israel had been intended to redeem the Jews. Consider this description of the Kishinev Pogrom in 1903:

[One young boy], blinded in one eye from youth, begged for his life with the offer of sixty rubles; taking this money, the leader of the crowd ... gouged out [his] other eye, saying "You will never again look upon a Christian child." Nails were driven through heads; bodies, hacked in half; bellies split open and filled with feathers. Women and girls were raped, and some had their breasts cut off.

Jews knew that sort of hatred could not be combated with reason. Violence of that sort was not motivated by economics, by contested territory or even by history. It was, they understood, malignant Jew-hatred at its core, driven by a millenniums-old sickness from which Europe would never recover. The 20th century was to have been the century of reason, of banishing ancient hatreds. But when the Kishinev poison was unleashed with the new century already under way (they had no inkling, of course, of how horrific the century would become), they knew they needed to flee.

At the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903, Theodor Herzl, the father of modern political Zionism, evoked Kishinev not as an event, but as a condition.

"Kishinev exists wherever ... [Jews'] self-respect is injured and their property despoiled because they are Jews. Let us save those who can still be saved!" The Jews, he insisted, needed a state of their own. He was not the first to say this. When the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881 unleashed

a similar burst of murderous anti-Jewish violence, an earlier Zionist, Yehuda Leib Pinsker, wrote that "the misfortunes of the Jews are due, above all, to their lack of desire for national independence; ... if they do not wish to exist forever in a disgraceful state ... they must become a nation." As long as the Jew was landless and stateless, Pinsker argued as Herzl would once again a decade and a half later, the Jew would persist in a "disgraceful state." He, too, argued that there was no choice -- the Jews needed to flee Europe.

So flee they did, by the many millions. Most went to America, but some newly committed Zionists went to Palestine where they hoped to build a nation-state for the Jews. The Italians had Italy, the Poles had Poland and the Germans had Germany. Each had a language, a history, a culture. So, too, did the Jews; what they lacked was a state, and the price of that statelessness, they believed, was Kishinev.

The Jewish State was supposed to put a stop to those images. Yes, a tragic and bloody conflict over land erupted, but Jews -- later called Israelis -- believed the conflict could be resolved. Israel would sign treaties with its Arab neighbors, sometimes giving up land (as with the Sinai Desert in the case of Egypt) and sometimes not (since Jordan essentially required no meaningful territorial concession). When Palestinian nationalism emerged and then became the world's darling, left and centrist Israelis remained unfazed. This was a conflict over territory, they reasoned; when the Palestinians were ready to live side by side, Israel would cede more land, and the conflict would be over.

But the images of Jewish bodies hacked to death on a blood-soaked synagogue floor are about a hatred too deep to be assuaged by territorial concessions. Those images tell Israelis that although they fled Europe and have built their national home, they are still assailed by the same venomous loathing they had sought to escape.

This time, 7 million Jewish Israelis have nowhere to run. To where would they go?

While Hamas has praised the butchery and Palestinians have celebrated by handing out candies to children and posing with hatchets and photographs of the killers, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called for restraint, urging Jews not to take the law into their own hands.

Yet while Netanyahu seeks restraint on the part of private Israelis, he is unlikely to show restraint himself. For if this horror cannot be stopped, the fundamental premise of Zionism and the promises that it bore for the Jewish people -- that the butchery was over -- will be upended. And no Israeli prime minister can willingly allow that to happen on his or her watch.

### Western media twist Jerusalem terrorist attack narrative - Alina D. Sharon.

In the wake of a terrorist attack on the Kehilat Bnei Torah synagogue in Jerusalem's Har Nof neighborhood on Tuesday morning—which killed five people, including three American citizens, and wounded at least seven other Jewish worshippers—Western media organizations rushed to downplay the culpability of the Palestinian terrorists in the attack.

The U.K.-based newspaper The Guardian published a Reuters story about the attack that was originally headlined "Palestinians kill four in Jerusalem synagogue attack," but changed the headline to "Four worshippers killed in attack on Jerusalem synagogue." (Both headlines came before the death toll in the attack rose to five when a Druze policeman died of his wounds.) The Guardian also removed all references to Palestinians from the text of the article, writing only that "two men" had perpetuated the attack.

A Canadian Broadcasting Corporation article on the attack was headlined "Jerusalem police fatally shoot 2 after apparent synagogue attack," implying that most of the culpability lies with Israeli police for responding to the attack.

In what might have been an accidental—though still highly irresponsible—gaffe, CNN mislabeled its initial TV coverage of the terror attack with the headline, "Deadly attack on Jerusalem mosque."

"I would say [the CNN 'mosque' error was] predisposed—an honest mistake that was probably not consciously made, but revelatory of subconscious prejudice. ... Such mistakes, perhaps honest in individual cases, suggest by their numbers and repeated occurrences a pattern indicating underlying predisposition or bias. Israelis and Jews are filtered through the false history of 'the Palestinian narrative,'" Eric Rozeman, Washington director for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), told JNS.org.

Such factual errors—as well as alterations to the context surrounding terrorist attacks and other violence by Palestinians against Israelis—are frequently documented by CAMERA. The media watchdog group's analysis on coverage of the Nov. 18 synagogue attack (and other recent incidents) can be found here.

As CAMERA noted, when a Palestinian driver ran over pedestrians in Jerusalem last month—after which point police officers responded by shooting the assailant, as they likely would do if such an incident

occurred anywhere else—the initial Associated Press headline was "Israeli Police shoot man in east Jerusalem." This headline, though later revised, was online for some time and omitted the entire terror attack that provided the context for the police shooting.

CAMERA also pointed out what it called "passive language" in the initial New York Times headline on the synagogue attack. The headline had stated, "Four Killed in Jerusalem Synagogue Complex," without any mention of terrorism.

"The New York Times, too, is displaying its usual skittishness about headlines clearly stating Palestinians carried out violence," CAMERA said.

The Boston Globe print edition's front page, meanwhile, on Nov. 19 ran the headline "5 dead in Jerusalem Attack" along with the subhead "2 Palestinian assailants also killed in violence at synagogue," seemingly giving moral equivalence to the deaths of Jewish worshippers and the terrorists who murdered them.

Matti Friedman, a former Associated Press correspondent, wrote a detailed argument in Tablet magazine in August explaining why, in his view, Western media systematically exhibit anti-Israel bias in their reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Read his analysis here.

Citing Friedman's piece, CAMERA's Rozenman explained that while the media is relegating Israelis and Jews "to their 'proper,' not really newsworthy, status as 'normal' victims," Palestinian Arabs since 1967 have managed "a double victory—portraying themselves as 'abnormal victims.'"

"This long ago became a default position of those opposed to Israel ideologically, and that has percolated through the media," Rozenman told JNS.org.

### After Brutal Terror Attack, Dershowitz Rips CNN Anchor for 'Parroting' Hamas Claim That All Israelis Are Legitimate Targets

Professor Alan Dershowitz, one of the most prominent advocates for Israel in the United States, as well as a leading light of Harvard University's law school until his retirement last year, has blasted broadcaster CNN for its "determination" to "show that there is a moral equivalence between terrorists and Israel's proportionate responses."

Professor Dershowitz was speaking to The Algemeiner one day after he appeared on a segment with CNN anchor Ashleigh Banfield to discuss Tuesday's terrorist atrocity at a synagogue in Jerusalem's Har Nof neighborhood. "Soldiers come in

all forms," Banfield told Dershowitz. "And when you have mandatory conscription and service in Israel, effectively the Palestinians will say, 'it's war against everyone,' because everyone is a soldier."

Dershowitz managed to respond, "Well, that's just racism and bigotry. To say that everyone is a soldier..." before Banfield interrupted to protest, "But everybody is."

"Not everybody is," Dershowitz continued. "The law of war is very clear. You can't kill a two year-old child claiming, 'he's going to be a soldier.'"

Dershowitz told The Algemeiner that Banfield had "parroted Hamas' outrageous claim that every 2 year old and 90 year old in Israel is a soldier. It's particularly ironic in the context of attack on the synagogue, because the people killed were beyond military age."

"For her to raise this outrageous argument in the context of the synagogue shooting, it really required me to control my temper," Dershowitz said.

Dershowitz pointed out that CNN does not make similar claims of moral equivalence in its coverage of the US-led war against the Islamic State terrorist organization. "No CNN anchor says that there's another side to the story with ISIS – but you hear that all the time with regard to Israel," he said.

Dershowitz argued that CNN was much more "dangerous" than, for example, Britain's left-wing Guardian newspaper.

"Everyone knows The Guardian is anti-Israel, but you watch CNN and you see moral equivalence presented as balanced news. Describing an imbalanced situation as balanced is mendacious and misleading," Dershowitz said.

#### **Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:**

1st Aliya: Yitzchak is 40 years old (2088) when he marries Rivkah. After 20 years, Esav and Yakov are born. The Parsha jumps from their birth to Yakov's purchase of the 1st born rights from Esav at the age of 15. (2123 - the day Avraham died)

2nd Aliya: The Parsha returns to the story of Yitzchak and Rivkah and the famine which forces them to settle among the Plishtim. Yitzchak, like his father before him, has a moral confrontation with Avimelech, after which his fields are uniquely prolific and financially successful.

3rd Aliya: Yitzchak's financial success leads to jealousy with his Plishtim neighbors. He re-digs

Avraham's wells, resulting in a confrontation with the Plishtim over water rights. He moves back to Beer Sheva.

4th Aliya: Hashem (G-d), in a dream, confirms for Yitzchak the future of his children. Avimelech, the King of the Plishtim, and his General, Phicol, approach Yitzchak to make a peace treaty.

5th Aliya: The treaty between Yitzchak and the Plishtim is celebrated. The Parsha returns to the story of Yakov and Esav. Esav's marriage to two Canaanite women at the age of 40 (2148) brings disappointment to Yitzchak and Rivkah. In 2171, when Yakov and Esav are 63 and Yitzchak is 123, Yitzchak blesses Yakov and Esav. The Parsha details the duplicity of Yakov and Rivkah in fooling Yitzchak.

6th Aliya: Yitzchak blesses Yakov with spiritual and material gain, after which Esav returns to discover Yakov's plot. He receives his own blessing for material gain, and is determined to kill Yakov. Rivkah, fearful for Yakov's life, convinces Yitzchak to send Yakov to her brother Lavan in search of a shiduch - a wife. Yitzchak confirms on Yakov the future of the Jewish nation before his departure to Lavan.

7th Aliya: Yakov departs for Padan Aram, and Esav marries the daughter of Yishmael. (his 1/2 1st cousin)

**Shmuel 1, 20:18** - Being that tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh, the Haftorah is exclusive for a Shabbos that coincides with Erev Rosh Chodesh. The Haftorah is from Shmuel I Capt. 20. It describes the emotional parting between Yehonasan the son of Shaul, and Dovid, the future king of Israel. The Gemara states that the greatest love ever manifested between two people was the love that existed between Yehonasan and Dovid.

Dovid had already been anointed by Shmuel to succeed Shaul as king, and his relationship with his mentor, King Shaul, had deteriorated to the extent that Dovid had to flee for his life. Yehonasan, wanting to ascertain the extent of Shaul's hatred for Dovid, devised a plan, whereby Dovid would be absent from Shaul's Rosh Chodesh meal. If his father acted lovingly in asking about Dovid's absence, then it would be safe for Dovid to return. If not, Dovid would flee. In the end, Dovid was forced to flee Shaul's wrath. The extraordinary aspect of Yehonasan's love for Dovid was the fact that he protected Dovid with his life, even though he knew that Dovid would succeed Shaul as king, rather than himself.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

### “So that my soul may bless you before I die.” (Beresheet 27:4)

It is well known that we have no inkling as to the level the Patriarchs were on. With that in mind we will try to understand the idea in our perashah that Yitzhak Abinu and Ribkah Imenu have different approaches in how to deal with Esav.

There are many explanations brought down by the commentaries as to what was the underlying difference between them. Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky zt"l offers the following: He says that Yitzhak was of the opinion that Ya'akov was going to be the Torah learner and Esav the supporter, just as we find later in the relationship that existed between Yissachar and Zebulun. That being the case, Esav must receive the blessings of material prosperity from Yitzhak.

Ribkah's view on the other hand was that one must have the merits (zechut) to support Torah and she felt that Esav lacked and would lack in that area. That is why she arranged for Ya'akov to take the blessings of material prosperity.

Rabbi David Kaplan explains that Rabbi Galinsky did a lot of fundraising for Torah causes in his life. He once asked the Hazon Ish zt"l why is it that sometimes when he knocks on the door of a wealthy potential donor the man tells him to come back the next day! “It's probably so that the next day he will be able to stay out of the house and I won't find him, right?” asked Rav Yankel in his humorous manner. The Hazon Ish smiled. “No, that's not really it. You see, in order to support Torah one must have the proper merit. It could very well be that the man needs another arbit, a daf yomi class, and a Shahrarit with tefillin in order to have the merit to give to Torah. By the time you come back the next day he will be found worthy in Heaven of having the privilege of participation in the support of Torah.”

Rabbi Galinsky once related that he was once in a certain city and was trying to get together with a very wealthy man. Every time something else happened so that they couldn't meet. On his plane trip back he ended up sitting next to that man on the plane. The Rabbi explained the project and the man was very interested, but he said, “Wow, I wish you would've gotten to me a week ago. See, just last week I gave a huge sum of money to dedicate the Bloomfield Soccer Stadium in Tel Aviv, so I'm over my limit right now. Maybe a different time, okay?”

We see clearly the manifestation of the Hazon Ish's words. The man was lacking merit. Just think of the reward he could have gotten; instead he has the “merit” of all the games played on Shabbat. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

### “And Esav came from the field and he was tired.” (Beresheet 25:29)

Rabbi Nissan Alpert z"l points out that this is the first time the Torah uses the word ; - tired. When a word is introduced to us in the Torah in a certain context, we are supposed to learn from that usage and apply that same meaning all over.

Abraham was one of the busiest men we have ever seen. He traveled from place to place, building altars, serving guests, being tested and passing those tests successfully, and we never find that he was tired. He lived for 175 years and had a full and very involved life and yet the Torah never describes him as tired. We know from our own experiences of great people who are very busy, involved in a million things, and we never perceive them as tired. The lesson here is that someone who is involved with a spiritual dimension to his life has the energy for many more things than someone who is just existing a mundane life. Esav was busy doing sins on the day he sold his birthright and he was not rejuvenated by anything spiritual of any meaning. Therefore, he was “tired.” If we fill our lives with meaning, if we have spiritual contact in the things we do, we will have the spice and sparkle which will keep us from getting stale. Only someone who lives a life of materialism, without letting Hashem into his world, will become “tired” easily. Let us be like Abraham and have the energy for much more in our lives. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

## RABBI ELI MANSOUR The Cynics

The opening verse of Parashat Toldot introduces the story of Yishak Abinu and his family, and writes, “This is the story of Yishak; Abraham begot Yishak.” Curiously, the Torah found it necessary to “remind” us that Yishak was Abraham's son, despite the fact that we are already very well aware of who Yishak was from the previous chapters of Sefer Bereshit.

The Midrash explains that the Torah here tells us not that Abraham begot Yishak, but rather that it was clear to one and all that Abraham begot Yishak. The “Lesanim” – “cynics” – of the time charged that Yishak was actually fathered not by Abraham, but rather by the Philistine leader Abimelech. After all, Abraham and Sara were married for many years without children, and then immediately after Sara was abducted by Abimelech, Sara conceived. The cynics pointed to this as “evidence” that Yishak was not really Abraham's son. G-d therefore made Yishak appear exactly like his father, thereby putting to rest the cynical denial of Yishak's relationship to Abraham.

The Hid"á (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1806) noted how the rumors spread by the cynics of Abraham's time are typical of the way cynics speak. In a certain sense, the claim that Sara conceived as a result of Abimelech was true. After Abimelech returned Sara to Abraham, Abraham prayed on his behalf, asking that his wives should have children. In reward for his prayer, Abraham was blessed with a child. Hence, when the cynics went around proclaiming, "Sara conceived from Abimelech," they were not lying. Indeed, the Hid"á notes, the Midrash calls these people not "Resha'im" – wicked people who spread lies – but rather "Lesanim" – cynics. They spoke the truth, but deliberately phrased in a way that guarantees it would be misunderstood. Part of the reason why cynics are so dangerous is that they do not lie. Instead, they find a way to portray all things in a negative light without actually speaking dishonestly. Liars could easily be dismissed; formulating the truth in a negative, disparaging way attracts an audience.

Ensuring to speak the truth does not always ensure that we speak appropriately. The truth can be expressed in many different ways. The cynics excel in spinning the truth to make everyone and everything look bad, so they don't have to take anything seriously. We can learn from them the importance of exercising care and caution with regard to not only what we say, but how we say it, and of seeking to find all that is noble and commendable in other people, rather than constantly looking to insult and malign.

### Rabbi Wein

Perfect parents do not always produce perfect children. This week's parsha is a perfect illustration of this truism of life and family. There apparently was very little that Yitzchak and Rivka could do to reclaim Eisav to their way of life and level of morality. He was, perhaps, incapable of moral improvement the moment he was born.

There existed, and perhaps still exists, a great debate about whether genetic makeup or social and family environment determine a child's personality and behavior patterns. But no matter how we judge this question, it still is perplexing, if not even unthinkable, that Yitzchak and Rivka parented Eisav and raised him in their holy home.

It is one of the Torah's prime examples of the power of freedom of choice that children and all human beings possess. Parents naturally berate themselves over the bad behavior of their children. Yet, in my admittedly limited experience, these parents are

hardly ever to be blamed for the free-will wickedness of their offspring.

We ascribe too much power to parents in raising children. Of course family and environment are important, but a child's choices will trump all other factors and circumstances. And thus we have an Eisav emerging from the house and family of Yitzchak and Rivka.

The Torah's message to us in this matter is direct and blunt - there are no guarantees or perfect successes in raising children. One could say that though Avraham fathered Yishmael, perhaps it was Hagar's influence that formed him. But what can we say about the house of Yitzchak and Rivka that could produce an Eisav?

The Torah poses for us the unanswerable questions of life that we encounter daily. And it never truly provides us with satisfying answers. Such is the nature of life itself – its mystery, uncertainty and unpredictably. The great question as to why the righteous suffer and the evil person apparently prospers lies at the root of the struggle for belief and faith. And as we read in the book of Iyov, the Lord chooses, so to speak, not to answer that question.

The Torah does not explain to us how an Eisav can arise from the house of Yitzchak and Rivka. Apparently it is satisfied just to notify us that it occurred and, by inference, to teach us that other inexplicable things will occur throughout Jewish and human history.

Eisav, whether genetically or environmentally influenced, was a free agent – as we all are – to choose between good and evil, peace and violence, compassion and cruelty. These choices were his and his alone to make. Somehow, Heaven also must have taken into account the heartbreak of Yitzchak and Rivka over the behavior of Eisav. But that is certainly secondary to the judgment regarding Eisav himself.

There is a tendency in our modern world to try and understand and sympathize with the evil one at the expense of the good and decent victims of that evil. The Torah is not a fan of such misplaced compassion. Rivka makes the painful decision to abandon Eisav and save Yaakov. By so doing she ensures the civilization of the human race.

### Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks

Was Jacob right to take Esau's blessing in disguise? Was he right to deceive his father and to take from his brother the blessing Isaac sought to give him? Was Rivka right in conceiving the plan in the first place and encouraging Jacob to carry it out? These are fundamental questions. What is at stake is not just biblical interpretation but the moral life itself. How we read a text shapes the kind of person we become.

Here is one way of interpreting the narrative. Rivka was right to propose what she did and Jacob was right to do it. Rivka knew that it would be Jacob, not Esau, who would continue the covenant and carry the mission of Abraham into the future. She knew this on two separate grounds. First, she had heard it from God himself, in the oracle she received before the twins were born:

'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 elder will serve the younger.' (Gen. 25: 23)

Esau was the elder, Jacob the younger. Therefore it was Jacob who would emerge with greater strength, Jacob who was chosen by God.

Second, she had watched the twins grow up. She knew that Esau was a hunter, a man of violence. She had seen that he was impetuous, mercurial, a man of impulse, not calm reflection. She had seen him sell his birthright for a bowl of soup. She had watched while he "ate, drank, rose and left. So Esau despised his birthright" (Gen. 25: 34). No one who despises his birthright can be the trusted guardian of a covenant intended for eternity.

Third, just before the episode of the blessing we read: "When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rivka" (Gen. 26: 34). This too was evidence of Esau's failure to understand what the covenant requires. By marrying Hittite women he proved himself indifferent both to the feelings of his parents and to the self-restraint in the choice of marriage partner that was essential to being Abraham's heir.

The blessing had to go to Jacob. If you had two sons, one indifferent to art, the other an art-lover and aesthete, to whom would you leave the Rembrandt that has been part of the family heritage for generations? And if Isaac did not understand the true nature of his sons, if he was "blind" not only

physically but also psychologically, might it not be necessary to deceive him? He was by now old, and if Rivka had failed in the early years to get him to see the true nature of their children, was it likely that she could do so now?

This was, after all, not just a matter of relationships within the family. It was about God and destiny and spiritual vocation. It was about the future of an entire people since God had repeatedly told Abraham that he would be the ancestor of a great nation who would be a blessing to humanity as a whole. And if Rivka was right, then Jacob was right to follow her instructions.

This was the woman whom Abraham's servant had chosen to be the wife of his master's son, because she was kind, because at the well she had given water to a stranger and to his camels also. Rivka was not Lady Macbeth. She was the embodiment of loving-kindness. She was not acting out of favouritism or ambition. And if she had no other way of ensuring that the blessing went to one who would cherish it and live it, then in this case the end justified the means. This is one way of reading the story and it is taken by many of the commentators.

However it is not the only way.[1] Consider, for example, the scene that transpired immediately after Jacob left his father. Esau returned from hunting and brought Isaac the food he had requested. We then read this:

Isaac trembled violently and said, 'Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him – and indeed he will be blessed!'

When Esau heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, 'Bless me – me too, my father!'

But he said, 'Your brother came deceitfully [be-mirra] and took your blessing.'

Esau said, 'Isn't he rightly named Jacob? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me: he took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!' Then he asked, 'Haven't you reserved any blessing for me?' (Gen. 27: 33-36)

It is impossible to read Genesis 27 – the text as it stands without commentary – and not to feel sympathy for Isaac and Esau rather than Rivka and Jacob. The Torah is sparing in its use of emotion. It is completely silent, for example, on the feelings of Abraham and Isaac as they journeyed together toward the trial of the binding. Phrases like "trembled violently" and "burst out with a loud and bitter cry" cannot but affect us deeply. Here is an old man who

has been deceived by his younger son, and a young man, Esau, who feels cheated out of what was rightfully his. The emotions triggered by this scene stay with us long in the memory.

Then consider the consequences. Jacob had to leave home for more than twenty years in fear of his life. He then suffered an almost identical deceit practised against him by Laban when he substituted Leah for Rachel. When Jacob cried out "Why did you deceive me [rimitani]" Laban replied: "It is not done in our place to place the younger before the elder" (Gen. 29: 25-26). Not only the act but even the words imply a punishment, measure for measure. "Deceit," of which Jacob accuses Laban, is the very word Isaac used about Jacob. Laban's reply sounds like a virtually explicit reference to what Jacob had done, as if to say, "We do not do in our place what you have just done in yours."

The result of Laban's deception brought grief to the rest of Jacob's life. There was tension between Leah and Rachel. There was hatred between their children. Jacob was deceived yet again, this time by his sons, when they brought him Joseph's bloodstained robe: another deception of a father by his children involving the use of clothes. The result was that Jacob was deprived of the company of his most beloved son for twenty-two years just as Isaac was of Jacob.

Asked by Pharaoh how old he was, Jacob replied, "Few and evil have been the years of my life" (Gen. 47: 9). He is the only figure in the Torah to make a remark like this. It is hard not to read the text as a precise statement of the principle of measure for measure: as you have done to others, so will others do to you. The deception brought all concerned great grief, and this persisted into the next generation.

My reading of the text is therefore this.[2] The phrase in Rivka's oracle, Ve-rav yaavod tsair (Gen. 25: 23), is in fact ambiguous. It may mean, "The elder will serve the younger," but it may also mean, "The younger will serve the elder." It was what the Torah calls a chidah (Numbers 12: 8), that is, an opaque, deliberately ambiguous communication. It suggested an ongoing conflict between the two sons and their descendants, but not who would win.

Isaac fully understood the nature of his two sons. He loved Esau but this did not blind him to the fact that Jacob would be the heir of the covenant. Therefore Isaac prepared two sets of blessings, one for Esau, the other for Jacob. He blessed Esau (Gen. 27: 28-29) with the gifts he felt he would appreciate: wealth and power: "May God give you heaven's dew and earth's richness – an abundance of grain and new

wine" – that is, wealth. "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" – that is, power. These are not the covenantal blessings.

The covenantal blessings that God had given Abraham and Isaac were completely different. They were about children and a land. It is this blessing that Isaac later gave Jacob before he left home (Gen. 28: 3-4): "May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples" – that is, children. "May He give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham" – that is, land. This was the blessing Isaac had intended for Jacob all along. There was no need for deceit and disguise.

Jacob eventually came to understand all this, perhaps during his wrestling match with the angel during the night before his meeting with Esau after their long estrangement. What happened at that meeting is incomprehensible unless we understand that Jacob was giving back to Esau the blessings he had wrongly taken from him. The massive gift of sheep, cattle and other livestock represented "heaven's dew and earth's richness," that is, wealth. The fact that Jacob bowed down seven times to Esau was his way of fulfilling the words, "May the sons of your mother bow down to you," that is, power.

Jacob gave the blessing back. Indeed he said so explicitly. He said to Esau: "Please accept the blessing [birkati] that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all I need" (Gen. 33: 11). On this reading of the story, Rivka and Jacob made a mistake, a forgivable one, an understandable one, but a mistake nonetheless. The blessing Isaac was about to give Esau was not the blessing of Abraham. He intended to give Esau a blessing appropriate to him. In so doing, he was acting on the basis of precedent. God had blessed Ishmael, with the words "I will make him into a great nation" (Gen. 21: 18). This was the fulfilment of a promise God had given Abraham many years before when He told him that it would be Isaac, not Ishmael, who would continue the covenant:

Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase

his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.” (Gen. 17: 18-21)

Isaac surely knew this because, according to midrashic tradition, he and Ishmael were reconciled later in life. We see them standing together at Abraham’s grave (Gen. 25: 9). It may be that this was a fact that Rivka did not know. She associated blessing with covenant. She may have been unaware that Abraham wanted Ishmael blessed even though he would not inherit the covenant, and that God had acceded to the request.

If so then it is possible all four people acted rightly as they understood the situation, yet still tragedy occurred. Isaac was right to wish Esau blessed as Abraham sought for Ishmael. Esau acted honourably toward his father. Rivka sought to safeguard the future of the covenant. Jacob felt qualms but did what his mother said, knowing she would not have proposed deceit without a strong moral reason for doing so.

Do we have here one story with two possible interpretations? Perhaps, but that is not the best way of describing it. What we have here, and there are other examples in Genesis, is a story we understand one way the first time we hear it, and a different way once we have discovered and reflected on all that happened later. It is only after we have read about the fate of Jacob in Laban’s house, the tension between Leah and Rachel, and the animosity between Joseph and his brothers that we can go back and read Genesis 27, the chapter of the blessing, in a new light and with greater depth.

There is such a thing as an honest mistake, and it is a mark of Jacob’s greatness that he recognized it and made amends to Esau. In the great encounter twenty-two years later the estranged brothers meet, embrace, part as friends and go their separate ways. But first, Jacob had to wrestle with an angel.

That is how the moral life is. We learn by making mistakes. We live life forward, but we understand it only looking back. Only then do we see the wrong turns we inadvertently made. This discovery is sometimes our greatest moment of moral truth.

For each of us there is a blessing that is ours. That was true not just of Isaac but also Ishmael, not just Jacob but also Esau. The moral could not be more powerful. Never seek your brother’s blessing. Be content with your own.[3]

[1] Critical readings of Rivka’s or Jacob’s conduct appear in

several midrashic works: Bereishit Rabbah, Tanhuma (Buber), Yalkut Reuveni, Midrash ha-Neelam and Midrash Socher Tov (to Psalm 80: 6). Among critical commentators are R. Eliezer Ashkenzi, Tzeda le-derekh, and R. Yaakov Zvi Mecklenberg, Ha-Ktav veba-Kabbalah. All these interpretations are based on the textual clues cited in what follows.

[2] For a more detailed explanation, see Covenant and Conversation Genesis: The Book of Beginnings, Maggid Books, 2009, 153-158, 219-228.

[3] This later became the tenth of the ten commandments.

## 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 ZT’L