

# Toldot 5772

## BS"D Parashat Toldot 5772

### Part A:

The overriding question, or rather dilemma, in this week's parsha is the seemingly irreconcilable behavior of our mother Rivka. That a paragon of Jewish virtue should act in a deceitful manner behind her husband's back is more than disturbing. That Rivka took advantage of Yitzchak's blindness and naivete regarding the twins is more a matter for the rabbinic divorce courts than for a parasha in the Torah.

So what happened there?

One more question: Rivka was having a very difficult pregnancy, not so much in the physical sense as in the spiritual one. For, as Rashi explains, when Rivka passed a place where the study of HaShem was occurring, she felt a birth pang in one place as if the child she was carrying was making an effort to enter that holy place, and when she passed a place of idolatry, she again felt a birth pang, in a different place, as if the child was making an effort to join with the evil idolaters.

The Torah relates that Rivka sought the advice of the learned people of the time. But why didn't she seek the advice of the gadol hador (the most illustrious spiritual personality of the time) – her own husband?

I suggest:

The old question of nature vs. nurture looms very large in this week's parasha. Is the determining factor of what and who we are the characteristics which we inherit from our parents, or is it the influences we absorb from the society in which live?

If it is inheritance then what made the twins Ya'akov and Aisav poles apart from one another? If it is the surroundings, didn't the twins grow up in similar surroundings?

And if one should answer that what defines a person is a combination of nature and nurture, the question stills remains regarding the behavior of the righteous Ya'akov and that of his murderous brother Aisav.

I would suggest that nature and nurture certainly play enormous roles in establishing our personalities and preferences in all walks of life. But nature and nurture do not function in a vacuum, for they are parts of a larger story. The overriding, decisive factor is the platform on which nature and nurture function – the person's *neshama* (soul).

Compare it to the art of painting, where the surface may be paper, cloth, parchment, canvas or glass, and the medium of color in the hands of the artist must conform to the surface. Charcoal will make no impression on glass, and oil paint will destroy the surface of paper. So too, a delicate educational approach of Torah, on the lines of the Musar Movement will make no impression on a crass, egotistical soul like that of Aisav, just as a rigid Halachic approach will turn away a sensitive, fragile soul.

Yitzchak and Rivka certainly exercised all their parental influence in trying to make Aisav into a ben Torah, while the influences of the *sadeh* (the field) of the secular values of hedonism, anarchy and instant gluttonous gratification drove Aisav in the opposite direction; as the parsha describes Aisav as *esh hasadeh* – a man of the field.

But Rivka knew something that her husband Yitzchak could not have known. That they did not stand a chance in the world to change or improve Aisav's basic nature.

During her pregnancy, when passing a place of idolatry, Rivka

felt the excruciating pain of the child trying to escape his confinement in order to join with the deniers of God. It was a feeling she would never be able to escape even after the birth of her children and it would linger till the day she died. Rivka realized that she was carrying two very different kinds of children, and sought spiritual counsel on how to proceed with the pregnancy, if at all.

This was the dark secret that Rivka could never reveal to her husband; that one of the children was a bad seed from conception – an evil incorrigible soul with no hope for change. Two reasons prevented Rivka from revealing this to Yitzchak: 1) To spare this great man, the second pillar of the Jewish nation, this profound pain; and 2) her feelings of guilt that as the daughter of Betuel and sister of Lavan, she was probably responsible for drawing down from the heavens such an evil soul.

In their lives together, Rivka never revealed the secret of the souls, and Yitzchak could not have discovered it by Aisav's conduct because of his blindness, coupled with the illusion of righteousness that Aisav created in his father's presence. Aisav knew who he was. Rivka was also aware of Aisav's nature, as was Ya'akov, which caused him to relieve Aisav of the spiritual responsibilities incumbent on a *bechor* (first born). The only member of the family who believed that he had two righteous sons was Yitzchak, whom Rivka isolated from the reality of the situation.

Rivka learned that Yitzchak was about to bless the evil Aisav, who in Yitzchak's mind was a *tzaddik*. At this point, Rivka had no choice but to involve herself – at any cost – to prevent the dominant blessing from being given to Aisav. It was a situation that she had caused from the time the children were born, by concealing from Yitzchak who Aisav really was.

In her desire to be a righteous, devoted wife to Yitzchak, she now found herself in the unenviable position of having to

deceive her beloved husband for the sake of the future of the Jewish nation.

Rivka instructs Ya'akov as to how to proceed and says to him: *Alei kilelatcha be'nie* – "I accept all the responsibility on myself".

Aisav was born as a bad seed with an evil soul. He begot a son called Elifaz who begot the arch evil Amalek, the progenitor of the evil nation of Amalek.

It is a well known and well used phrase:



*It is a halacha (a law and way of life) that Aisav hates Ya'akov*

An ingrained hatred, not caused by anything that Ya'akov did, but by Aisav's soul whose essence is contrary to the sanctity of HaShem, as *tuma* is diametrically averse to *tahara*, as *sin* is to *mitzva* and *Gehennom* to *Gan Eden*.

The Gemara (Pesachim 118b) discloses that in the future when the Mashiach will appear, nations will come forward to present him with gifts. HaShem will direct the Mashiach to receive the gifts of Egypt and other nations, but will prohibit him from receiving gifts from Aisav, while comparing them to a wild boar in the jungle.

Who are descendants of Aisav in our time?

I believe that they comprise the majority of Christian Europe and most peoples who emigrated from Europe to other parts of the world. Interestingly, Aisav is associated with the color red, and almost all the nations of Europe have the color red in their flags.

They speak of the Judeo-Christian tradition. What tradition? There is nothing in the spiritual realm that we have in common

with Christianity. They deny the mitzvot, and their Trinity is a denial of pure monotheism. The only Judeo-Christian “tradition” that exists is that they murdered millions of Jews and we died helplessly.

What I have stated is not just inflammatory rhetoric resulting from the Shoah, which was enabled by their Christian beliefs. Christianity dictates the living, breathing anti-Israel and anti-Semitic policies of the nations of Europe today.

I am not advocating that Ya’akov (the Jewish people) should actively and energetically seek to harm any country in Europe or – any other part of the world. But we must be aware and alert to the basic hypocritical nature of Aisav as it has been passed down to his descendants to this very day.

#### **Part B:**

Last week’s parashat Chayai Sarah ends with the verse dealing with the descendants of Yishmael:

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*His descendants settled in the area from Havilah to Shur, near the border of Egypt, as you go toward Ashur. And they lived in the vicinity of all their brothers*

The phrase ✘ is loosely translated as stated above ‘*And they lived in the vicinity of all their brothers*’; but the literal translation is ‘And they fell in the face (in front of) their brothers.’

And this week’s parasha begins

✘

*This is the account of the family line of Abraham’s son Isaac.*

The sequence of these two pasukim (verses) implies that the

fall of Yishmael will signal the beginning of the reign of Yitzchak. Or possibly just the reverse. The beginning of the reign of Yitzchak will signal the fall of Yishmael.

Whatever the truth, facts on the ground are proving that the Jewish people have returned to a large part of Eretz Yisrael and Yishmael is in the process of decline.

Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen, Lebanon, and the fissures forming in the national unity of Morocco and Saudi Arabia are signaling the free fall of these Arab entities. They are not falling into Gehennom yet, because they have to undergo a pre-Gehennom initiation called *Islamization*. These countries will deteriorate into Islamic republics which will draw the world into confrontations on a scale not yet experienced in history.

At the end of this final historical process, the Jewish people will have returned home and the Messianic era will be ushered in.

If we have learned anything from the Second World War, it is that when goyim make war on goyim, it is wise for Jews not to be present there. The gates of the holy land are still open to gather in the exiles; but who knows for how long.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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