



Parshas Toldos

November 9, 2018

# A Taste of Torah

## Mission Possible

by Rabbi Nesanel Kipper

We are all too familiar with the never-ending battle that goes on within ourselves, the fight between good and evil. Ever since Adam sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, this force of the *Yetzer Hara* (Evil Inclination) has been implanted within us, forming the struggle of our life. In this week's parsha, we encounter a case in point which can shed some light as to how we can succeed in our daily struggle.

There is a puzzling Rashi at the beginning of this week's parsha. The opening verse states, "And these are the offspring of Yitzchak." (Bereishis 25:19) Rashi states that we are referring to Yaakov and Eisav, who are discussed in the parsha. This seems obvious and doesn't seem to reveal anything new; what is Rashi trying to tell us?

The Shelah (Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz; 1555-1630) explains that Yaakov and Eisav embodied the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that were in the Garden of Eden. Let's explore this statement and its meaning.

While the Tree of Life represented only good, the Tree of Knowledge represented the constant struggle of having to choose between good and evil. Before eating from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam lived solely at the level of the Tree of Life and, as the Ramchal (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto; 1707-1746) says, there was no bad within Adam. While it's true that Adam needed to choose between right and wrong from the get-go, the evil was never part of him; he never had any internal impulse

to do the wrong thing. Rather, evil was something he understood as a possibility. After Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge, evil was incorporated into his persona, creating an internal desire to do what is wrong. Adam now had to fight that battle to constantly overcome the bad and do what is right.

The Ramchal states that the purpose of our forefathers was to rectify the sin of Adam. Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, each with their own unique, personal attributes, were tasked to rectify various aspects of Adam's wrongdoing. Originally, Yaakov and Eisav were each tasked with their own aspect of this mission; ultimately, Yaakov ended up fulfilling both parts.

Yaakov was comparable to Adam before the sin. The Talmud (Bava Metziah 84a) tells us that the spiritual glow of Yaakov's face was similar to that of Adam. Yaakov was completely good, and his mission was to engage only in goodness. Eisav, on the other hand, had a lot of evil that was naturally a part of his personality. This symbolizes, albeit in a rather extreme way, the consequences of eating from the Tree of Knowledge which first caused the evil to become a part of mankind. As our Sages teach us, Eisav within the womb was pushing to get out when his mother Rivka passed a house of idol worship, while Yaakov struggled to emerge when passing a house of Torah study. Even before birth, the tendencies of these two people were manifest. Eisav's mission was to rectify the sin of Adam by using the innate point of purity and holiness within himself to

## Stories for the Soul

### Custom Made

It was a Friday night in a concentration camp during the Holocaust, and the Kolishitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Chuna Halberstam (d. 1941), sat with a group of Jews and valiantly led a Shabbos meal. First, he made *kiddush* on a small piece of stale bread. After eating a small part of it, he proceeded to break the bread into smaller pieces. "This is for the challah," he said as he ate one piece of bread. "This is for the fish," he continued, and ate a second piece of bread. "This is for the soup," and he ate the third piece of bread. He then continued to eat tiny pieces of bread corresponding to all the traditional Shabbos foods, such as chicken, *lokshen*, and farfel. When he said that the next piece of bread was in place of *tzimmes*, one of the men sitting with him burst out laughing. The man found it humorous that the Rebbe bothered to mention a mere vegetable dish.

The Rebbe was not amused. "Why are you laughing? It's a custom to eat *tzimmes* on Shabbos, and it's vitally important. In fact, if you promise me that you will eat *tzimmes* every Friday night for the rest of your life whenever possible, I'll promise you that you will survive the war." The Jew quickly agreed, and, after Shabbos, asked the Rebbe for a written guarantee.

Unfortunately, the Rebbe did not survive the war, but this Jew did. Eventually, he moved to America, started a family, and faithfully ate *tzimmes* every Friday night. He managed to retain the written promise of the Kolishitzer Rebbe

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## Kollel Happenings

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Join thousands around the globe in listening to the renowned weekly Navi shiur of Rabbi Yaakov Reisman! Rabbi Reisman's weekly Motzoei Shabbos class is shown at Beth Jacob High School, 5100 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Ave., this week at 7 pm. For sponsorships and info, contact [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

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# Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

**Last week we asked:** If one has an incomplete bread, where part of it has been removed and discarded after baking, how can he still fulfill the requirement of *lechem mishna* (using two loaves at the Shabbos meal) with this bread? **A:** According to some opinions, if the piece removed is 1/48<sup>th</sup> of the bread

or less, the loaf is still considered complete.

Source: Sha'arei Teshuva 274:1.

**This week's question:** When may one use an incomplete loaf for *Hamotzi* at a Shabbos meal although a complete loaf is available?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email [ryz@denverkollel.org](mailto:ryz@denverkollel.org).

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Moshe Sofer, the Chasam Sofer - Part XIX

The Chasam Sofer's good relationship with the government is illustrated in a story that is told regarding a meeting between the Chasam Sofer and Emperor Franz Josef,

ruler of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for close to 70 years. The story goes that Emperor Franz Josef visited the Pressburg Jewish community on Shabbos.

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channel his *Yetzer Hara* toward good. While it is often thought that Eisav's failure was a foregone conclusion, it should now be clear that this was not the case. It was within Eisav's ability to determine his fate. Eisav, too, had a purpose and task in this world, which was to overcome his *Yetzer Hara*. Ultimately, this would have earned him a spot together with Yaakov as part of the Patriarchs. When Eisav failed, Yaakov had to fulfill Eisav's mission - hence, Yaakov took the blessings meant for Eisav, and Yaakov had to spend twenty years engaging the evil fraudster Lavan while maintaining his own spiritual perfection.

We can now understand what Rashi is telling us at the outset of the parsha. Rashi is informing us that at birth, both Yaakov and Eisav could have been - and should have been - Yitzchak's true progeny. Eisav lost his opportunity, though, and Yaakov became the true offspring of Yitzchak. These ideas ought to provide encouragement to all of us. Although we may encounter serious moral struggles in our lives, we have the ability to overcome them - on the contrary, that is our mission in life! We can follow our *Yetzer Tov* (Good Inclination) and channel our impulses toward Hashem, and ask Him for the strength to succeed in doing so.

## Stories for the Soul

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throughout the war years, and he kept in his possession the rest of his life. In this week's parsha, Rashi tells us that Yitzchak unstopped the wells that his father Avraham had previously dug.

This act symbolizes Yitzchak's desire to continue with the efforts and traditions his father had begun. It is instructive to us, as well, for the need to carry on the customs of our forebears.