



Parshas Toldos

November 5, 2021

A Taste of Torah

Childish Ambitions

by Rabbi Yosef Melamed

Will it be Chaim, Moshe or Joe; Sara, Chana, or Joanne? The question of what name to give a child can be charged with emotion and energy, as well as a source of stress and tension. Obviously, name giving is a big deal. In this light, the choice name given to this week's parsha's antagonist, Eisav, is quite puzzling. Rashi explains that the name Eisav comes from the word "asoï," which means ready-made and developed. This is because, as the verse states right before, Eisav was born with a full ensemble of hair, similar to that of an adult. Thus, Eisav was given his name because of his completed physical development at birth.

This seems puzzling. The fact that the Torah records the reason for Eisav's name, as well as the fact that Yitzchak called his child by that name, must mean that such a name carries enormous significance. However, a detail of physical appearance at birth, albeit an anomaly, does not seem very significant; why is it the source for his name?

Rabbi Chaim Friedlander (1923-1986) explains that the Torah, as well as Yitzchak's calling Eisav by that name, is teaching us a very important lesson: The name given to Eisav was not merely a reminder of his physical state at birth. Rather, it defined the life of Eisav, as well as the philosophy that led to his eternal infamy.

Rabbi Friedlander bases this on an insight from the Alter (Elder) of Kelm (Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv; 1824-1898). The Alter wonders why it is that Hashem created human babies

so physically deficient. A human baby cannot walk, talk, eat or drink and is completely helpless without the care of its mother. Additionally, the development of a human child into an adult is a long and lengthy process that takes many years. This differs from a baby animal, who, at a mere few hours after birth, can already walk, eat, drink, and wander on its own, and whose full development is considerably shorter.

The Alter explains that a baby is born into a state of imperfection. It sees the fully developed adults around it, and it strives for that development. This is crucial, explains the Alter, because, in essence, man's purpose is to continue to develop himself spiritually and to grow all of his life. The fact that a child is born physically deficient serves as a vital aid to its developing a mindset toward constant growth and greater aspirations, including in the spiritual realm, which will help it accomplish that great task.

Eisav, says Rabbi Friedlander, was born already physically developed, and so he lacked this aid and subsequent skill. Right from the start, Eisav saw himself as fully developed and, as such, not in need of further learning and growth. It was this lack of desire and willingness to learn and constantly grow that eventually led to Eisav's destructive direction and path in life. And although Eisav was born with this predisposition through no fault of his own, it behooved him to recognize this factor as a challenge and to overcome it, as well as to channel it toward the ends of serving Hashem. This characteristic is the opposite of

Stories for the Soul

It's A Mitzvah Now

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman (1874-1941) was one of the foremost Torah leaders prior to, and during the early years of, WWII. Following the passing of his great rebbe, the Chofetz Chaim, in 1933, Rabbi Wasserman's leadership role increased, and he felt that he had to keep abreast of newsworthy events. To that end, he had a newspaper brought daily. The newspaper would be left on the *shtender* (lectern) where he studied in the *bais medrash* and, when he arrived, he would spend several minutes quickly perusing the news. (It should be noted that newspapers in 1930's-Poland did not contain much of the inappropriate material many secular papers include today.)

Someone asked Rabbi Wasserman, "I understand why you need to read the paper, but why do you specifically read it in the *bais medrash*? Wouldn't it be better to read it outside of the place reserved for the study of Torah?" Rabbi Wasserman explained, "If I read the paper, it is because I must do so to properly fulfill my responsibilities. It is thus a mitzvah for me to do so, and I do this in the *bais medrash*. If it is not a mitzvah, and therefore doesn't belong in the study hall, I have no business reading it in the first place!"

Yaakov's place was in the *bais medrash*, where he studied Torah and served G-d. But when he was required to adopt a more cunning approach to procure the blessings that were rightfully his, he did not shirk his obligations; despite his apprehension, he did what needed to be done, as that was what G-d expected him to do.

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Kollel Happenings

HACHNASAS SEFER TORAH THIS SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7TH

Join the Kollel in celebrating the completion and inauguration of the Aragon-Sperber-Singer Torah scroll, which will be housed in the West Denver Kollel Torah Center. The event will take place THIS Sunday, November 7th, with the final letters being written at 12:30 pm at the Ethel A. Beren Auditorium, followed by a celebratory procession to the Torah Center at approximately 1:15 pm. Acclaimed singer Joey Newcomb will join in the festivities.

RABBI YOSSI EPHRATHI NOW TEACHING LEARN 2 LEARN GESHMAK

You may have limited experience learning Talmud. You may think that you don't enjoy serious Talmud study, that it's just not for you. But you haven't tried Learn 2 Learn Geshmak. A gemara program crafted to give you the satisfaction and joy of learning, Learn 2 Learn Geshmak is now being taught by Kollel Scholar Rabbi Yossi Ephrathi, and is beginning a new topic. Contact Rabbi Nesanel Kipper at rnk@denverkollel.org for further details.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

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Halacha Riddles

Last week's question: How is it possible for one to recite *hamotzi* on bread and eat a large amount of it within a short time, but not recite *Birkas Hamazon* afterwards?

Answer: On bread that contains the Five Grains (wheat, barley, spelt, oats, rye) with another non-Five Grains flour (e.g., rice flour or corn flour), one recites *hamotzi* even if the Five Grains flour is the minority, so long as its taste is noticeable (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 208:9). However, *Birkas Hamazon* is recited only if a *kezayis* (olive's-volume) of the Five Grains flour is contained within a volume of the bread known as *toch kdei achilas pras* (lit., within the eating of half a [specifically-sized] loaf of bread) (ibid.). Practically speaking, the

Five Grains flour must be 1/8th-1/9th of the dough for this requirement to be met. (However, one may add a proportionate volume of the liquids as well for this percentage; for example, if the Five Grains flour is 25% of the dry ingredients, one may calculate 25% of the liquids, as well.)

If one ate bread that contains Five Grains flour but not with a concentration of a *kezayis toch kdei achilas pras*, one would recite *hamotzi* but would not recite *Birkas Hamazon*.

This week's question: How is it possible for one to recite *hamotzi* on bread that contains a *kezayis toch kdei achilas pras* of Five Grains flour along with other flour, eat a large amount of it, but not recite *Birkas Hamazon* afterwards?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part XXIV

Rabbi Shapiro had a new idea he wished to present at the *Knessia Gedola* – to create a formal worldwide program of studying one folio (*daf*) of Talmud daily (*yomi*) – a *daf yomi*. Rabbi Shapiro believed that this program would impact Jews across the world. Jews would set aside daily time to learn

daf. It would unite Jews across the world, as they would all be studying the same thing and, when two Jews from different places met, they could immediately begin discussing the very same page of Talmud they were studying!

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Yaakov, whom the verse (Toldos 25:27) describes as “*yosheiv ohalim*,” “a dweller of the tents,” which Rashi explains as referring to the tents of Torah study. Yaakov's thirst for knowledge and growth was never ending, and he was always striving for greater levels of knowledge and service of Hashem.

This, explains the Alter, is the meaning of the term “*talmid chacham*,” which is used to describe a Torah scholar. The two words of this term literally mean “student - wise one,” which seem to

be an oxymoron, for a student is still learning and developing his wisdom. In truth, however, a Torah scholar is the one whose yearning for more wisdom does not end, and only grows, despite and yet because of his previous wisdom.

Let us take this lesson to heart, and realize the danger of living a life devoid of motivation for growth, as well as the great potential that lies in a life lived with a constant aspiration for growth and knowledge of Hashem!

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