

PARSHAS TOLDOS

CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS

פרשת תולדות

ג' כסליו כסלו תשפ"ד / November 16, 2023



What's happening in Belz

This past Monday, Erev Rosh Chodesh Kislev, Talmid Torahs from all over Yerushalayim gathered their students together in the Great Belz Shul to join the national Atzeres Tefillah – day to daven for the safety of our soldiers and the return of our hostages.



Everyone loves a good story, especially a Chassidishe story...

יהי עשו איש יודע ציד איש שדה... (תולדות כה:כז)
And Eisav became one who knows trapping, a man of the field...

The renowned Yerushalmi Maggid R' Shalom Swadron zt"l shared a story:

"If you want to know the explanation of Eisav, I'll present it to you: One evening, close to midnight when the streets were empty, a Yid stood outside one of the 'Mea Shearim Shtiblech' announcing that he was looking for a minyan to be able to daven Maariv. It wasn't easy to assemble ten people for a minyan at such a late hour, and he asked every rare passerby, 'R' Yid, did you daven Maariv?' And so the Yid continued calling out

until after half an hour, a minyan was assembled."

"I was also present," R' Swadron related. "And I saw how hard it was for the Yid to gather a minyan." R' Swadron raised his voice in rebuke and continued, "Oy, oy! When we were a group of ten, we all entered the Beis Medrash, and R' Tzaddik, the Yid who assembled the minyan, went to the amud – to lead everyone in prayer.

At that moment, an elderly Yid rushed inside the shul wearing strange attire and a straw hat. Breathlessly, he ran to the amud and asked the chazzan, 'R' Tzaddik, I have yahrzeit for my father, and I would like to daven for the amud.'

The shul was quiet, and everyone awaited R' Tzaddik's response. R' Tzaddik gave the elderly Yid a piercing look and said, 'I'm working on this minyan for half an hour, and you arrive at the last minute and want to take the amud from me? Find another place!'

The elderly Yid begged, "I'm a chiyuv – required to lead the davening to honor my father's yahrzeit. Please do me a favor and allow me to lead the davening." The chazzan replied, "If you have yahrzeit, why did you wait till so late at night? I purposely won't give you the amud!"

'R' Tzaddik' pushed away the elderly Yid and started davening.

R' Shalom Swadron concluded the story in a painful voice, "I got up from my place and called out aloud: 'Eisav is davening Maariv, Eisav is davening Maariv,' and I left the Beis Medrash."

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continued



ויהי עשו איש יודע ציד (תולדות כה:כז)
And Eisav became one who knows trapping.

Rashi says Eisav swindled his father with his mouth by asking halachic questions about taking off maaser (a tenth) from straw and salt, so his father should think he is stringent in keeping mitzvahs.

When the city of Bnei Brak was initially established, they needed to hire a shochet (A scholarly individual proficient with the halachic requirements of slaughtering kosher meat.) A shochet sporting a long, dignified beard gave the appearance of a man with Yiras Shamayim – fear of G-d and knowledge of halachas.

The community leaders told the prospective shochet to visit the Chazon Ish zt"l and receive his approval. The Chazon Ish conversed with the shochet and said he wasn't suitable for hire.

The community leaders questioned the Chazon Ish, and the Chazon Ish simply stated, "Because of his long beard."

They didn't understand the response; however, sometime later, they learned that this prospective shochet was known as a swindler and thief. He sold a piece of property for three different individuals, sold acres of land that weren't his, and, in the end, fled to America.

When the community leaders asked the Chazon Ish how he could see in such a short conversation that the prospective shochet wasn't worthy of the position, the Chazon Ish replied, "If he would've been a shoemaker with a long beard, it would symbolize his Yiras Shamayim, and I would recommend him. But this Shochet played with his beard throughout our conversation, and I realized he didn't possess any qualifications besides his long beard."

ויעקב איש תם יושב אהלים (תולדות כה:כז)
Yakov was a wholesome man, abiding in tents.

Reb Yechezkal Shraga of Shineva zt"l married at the tender age of sixteen. The government requested testing him to see if he was mature enough to marry. Reb Yechezkal Shraga's mother accompanied him to the test.

One of the questions was: "Whom do you love more, a Jew or non-Jew?" His mother whispered that he should answer 'both the same.'

However, Reb Yechezkal Shraga answered, "A non-Jew who never harmed me, there is no reason for me to hate him."

The questioner was satisfied with his answer and permitted him to marry.

When they left, Reb Yechezkal Shraga told his mother, "I couldn't fool myself that the questionnaire should think that I like the Jew and non-Jew equally!"

יקרבו ימי אבל אבי ואהרגה את יעקב (תולדות כז:מא)
May the days of mourning for my father draw near, then I will kill my brother Yakov.

In the Great Shul in Brisk where Reb Yosha Ber zt"l served as Rav, a fight broke out between two brothers who were mourners. Each wanted to daven for the amud (a requirement following the year of mourning a parent). They got into such a heated fight that one brother gave the other a hefty beating.

Reb Yosha Ber exclaimed: "In Parshas Toldos, it says יקרבו ימי אבל אבי ואהרגה את יעקב – why did Eisav wait patiently for his father Yitzchak to die so that he could kill Yakov? What prevented him from killing Yakov?"

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continued

**EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD STORY,
ESPECIALLY A CHASSIDISHE STORY**
continued

Eisav didn't want to appear as a lowly murderer who cold-bloodily kills his brother. He devised a plan that he will wait until his father dies, and then the two brothers will fight over who davens for the amud, which allows him to overtake his brother and kill him."



THIS WEEK'S VORT

פרשת חיי שרה

ויקראו שמו עשו (תולדות כה:כה)
They named him Eisav

Rashi says: "הכל קראו לו כך" – everyone named him like that; therefore, it's in plural form.

Chazal says that Eisav means "הא שוא שבראתי" – this is the falsehood I created in this world. Eisav symbolizes שקר – falsehood, and since many people are attracted to falsehood, it's in plural form.

Yakov represents אמת – truth, as it says "תתן אמת" – I gave truth to Yakov, and by Yakov's name it says "ויקרא שמו יעקב" – and he named him Yakov, in the singular form, since the truth has fewer followers and only individuals are attracted to the truth.

הנה נא זקנתי לא ידעתי יום מותי (תולדות כז:ב)
And he said, "See, now I have aged: I know not the day of my death."

לא ידעתי יום מותי – that he doesn't know when he will die? The Gemara says that seven things are hidden from a person. One of them is the day he will die. However, the Medrash says that Yitzchak knew the time of the Geulah – redemption, even though it's hidden from people. One would then think that Yitzchak also knew when he would die. Therefore, Yitzchak said לא ידעתי יום מותי – since the date of his death, he didn't know.

קום נא שבה ואכלה מציד (תולדות כז:יט)
Rise, please, sit and eat...

Yakov asked his father, Yitzchak קום נא שבה – please sit down and eat. He said the opposite of Eisav, who said: "יקם אבי ויאכל" – stand up and eat. Chazal teaches us that three things weaken a person, and one of them is standing while eating. Therefore, Yakov asked Yitzchak to sit and eat the way halachah requires.

ויברך אותו ויצוהו...לא תקח אשה (תולדות כח:א)
He blessed and instructed him...do not take a wife from the Canaanite women.

Yitzchak Avinu taught us a valuable lesson in Chinuch. If one wants children to obey their parents, one must bestow love upon his children. He blessed him first before Yitzchak asked Yakov not to marry a Canaanite woman.

יוד יעקב נזיד (תולדות כה:כט)
Yakov simmered a stew.

The Medrash brings out a beautiful lesson depicting Yakov's humbleness. Yitzchak and Rivka employed many servants, and when Yakov came home, they were all sleeping. Yakov didn't want to wake them, so he cooked the stew himself.