

Toldos

THE WEISS EDITION

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints
לזיכרון ולעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת
הר"ר ישעי' זושא
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם
גלב"ע ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב
תנצב"ה



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תולדות *Toldos*

כה:כב | 25:22

וַיִּתְרָצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ

The children struggled within her.

The Fighter

Our patriarchs and matriarchs were perfectly righteous. In the words of the Tanya, “Throughout their lives they sanctified their every limb to serve exclusively as a ‘chariot’ for the implementation of G-d’s will.”¹

Yet, when our matriarch Rivkah was pregnant with twins, “the children struggled within her.”² Rashi explains, “When she passed the Torah study hall of Shem and Eiver, Yaakov struggled to emerge, and when she passed places of idolatry, Eisav struggled to emerge.” How was Eisav, the child of the saintly Yitzchak and Rivkah, already so innately attracted to

1. Tanya, chapter 23.

2. Bereishis 25:22.

idol worship when he was but a fetus in his mother's womb, causing him to stir each time she passed a house of idolatry?

Our Sages tell us that the deeds and lives of our patriarchs and matriarchs paved the way for their descendants, the Jewish people, to fulfill their destiny.³ One aspect of this legacy is that through their unassailable commitment to G-d, our forefathers endowed every Jew with an inner strength of devotion to G-d. With this strength, a Jew can overcome any challenge to his Jewishness—be it adversity from the outside, or his personal struggles from within.

Yitzchak and Rivkah themselves were perfectly righteous, but because the path to G-dliness for some of their descendants would involve struggling with temptation, the legacy of Yitzchak and Rivkah also includes a natural inclination towards sin—in order to overcome it. They thus bore not only Yaakov, whose passions were entirely holy and pure, but also Eisav, who was born with an allure to sin and the inner strength to overcome it.

In fact, the Zohar states that as a child, Eisav, like Yaakov, excelled in the education he received from his grandfather Avraham—“Avraham's merit assisted and caused them to thrive, training them in the observance of mitzvos.”⁴ Undeniably, Eisav made the wrong choices as an adult. But until he went off on his own path, Eisav's attraction to idolatry was simply a natural part of being Yitzchak's child and Avraham's disciple: he exemplified the Jew who is born to struggle and is naturally endowed with the strength it takes to win.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 20, pp. 109–113

3. See Ramban, Bereishis 12:6; Bereishis Rabbah 40:6.

4. Zohar 1:138b.

26:5 | כו:ה

עֲקֵב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע אֲבְרָהָם בְּקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמֹר
מִשְׁמֵרֹתַי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקֹּתַי וְתוֹרֹתַי

*Because Avraham heeded My voice,
and kept My restrictions, My commandments,
My statutes and My instructions.*

Be Practical, but Spiritual

The Talmud states that long before the Torah was given on Mount Sinai, our forefathers observed all of its commandments. This is derived from a verse in Parshas Toldos:

“We find that our father Avraham observed the entire Torah before it was given, as it is written,⁵ ‘Because Avraham heeded My voice, and kept My restrictions, My commandments, My statutes and My instructions.’”⁶

But could Avraham have observed all the mitzvos in their physical form? In order to observe the mitzvah of wearing *tefillin*, for example, the *tefillin* must contain certain portions of the Torah, some of which speak about the exodus from Egypt. As the Exodus took place more than three centuries after Avraham’s passing, Avraham’s fulfillment of the mitzvah of *tefillin* could not have been identical to ours. Rather, Chassidus explains that our forefathers observed the spiritual *equivalent* of the mitzvos, meaning that they affected in the

5. Bereishis 26:5.

6. Mishnah, Kiddushin 4:14.

spiritual realm what we affect through our physical observance of the mitzvot.⁷

The Torah's teachings are not a mere documentation of history; they serve as a guide for every Jew in his or her service of G-d. Accordingly, our forefathers' uniquely spiritual observance of the mitzvot must provide a lesson for us as well.

How can we observe the mitzvot spiritually (in addition to observing them practically)? By being the inspiration and encouragement behind another person's mitzvah observance.

When we encourage someone else to keep Shabbos or to increase their Torah study, they alone can actually fulfill their personal obligation to observe that mitzvah. *our* involvement is only spiritual; *their* observance is driven by the words we spoke and the motivation that we inspired, but we cannot physically do those mitzvot in their stead.

The spiritual observance of mitzvot by our forefathers thus teaches us that besides for observing mitzvot physically (i.e., performing mitzvot ourselves), we must also engage in mitzvot that we fulfill spiritually (the mitzvot fulfilled by others at our encouragement).

—*Toras Menachem* 5745, vol. 1, p. 575

7. See Torah Ohr, Lech-Lecha 11d.

 27:1 | א:ז

וַיְהִי כִּי זָקֵן יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶיז עֵינָיו מֵרָאִת

*It came to pass when Yitzchak was old, and his eyes
were too dim to see...*

Better Off Blind

The Torah tells us that Yitzchak was blind in his old age. According to one explanation provided by Rashi, G-d caused this to happen “in order to enable Yaakov to take the blessings.”

Now, to say that blindness is debilitating is an understatement, as Rashi comments, “Because Yitzchak’s eyes had become dim and he was confined to his house... he was as though dead.”⁸ Nevertheless, because Yitzchak planned to bestow the greatest blessings upon Eisav, not knowing the full extent of his wickedness, G-d caused him to become blind in order for Yaakov to successfully disguise himself as Eisav and receive the blessings instead.

Consider this: Yitzchak was 123 years old at the time of the blessings, and he lived until the age of 180. So for 57 years Yitzchak suffered from blindness, confined to his house “as though dead,” all because he was unaware of Eisav’s wickedness and therefore desired to bless him. Was this really necessary? Why didn’t G-d simply inform Yitzchak that Eisav wasn’t worthy of the blessings, just as He communicated many other things to him?

(Moreover, Yitzchak already had suspicions about Eisav. He disapproved of Eisav’s wives,⁹ and he was aware that Eisav

8. Bereishis 28:13.

9. Bereishis 26:35

did not have the praise of G-d on the tip of his tongue.¹⁰ So why did G-d not reveal the whole truth about Eisav, instead of causing Yitzchak to be blind for the last 57 years of his life?)

From here we see the extent to which one must be willing to go in order to avoid speaking negatively about another Jew. G-d deemed it preferable to cause Yitzchak to be *blind for over five decades* rather than to tell him *lashon hara* about the wicked Eisav!

If this is true concerning Eisav, how much more careful must we be when speaking about our fellow Jews, the most sinful of whom are certainly not nearly as wicked as Eisav was!

—*Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, pp. 215-216*

10. See Rashi, Bereishis 27:21

 כז:א-ד | 4:1-27

וַיִּקְרָא אֶת עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ הַגָּדֹל וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו...
 בְּעֵבֹר תְּבָרְכֶךָ נַפְשִׁי בְּטָרָם אָמוּת

*He summoned his elder son Eisav
 and said to him, "...so that I may grant you
 my soul's blessing before I die."*

Beneath Eisav's Surface

Yitzchak was not entirely oblivious to Eisav's unrefined character and conduct, yet he intended to bestow upon him the most powerful blessings.¹¹ Surely, his desire to bless Eisav was not based only on what he did *not* know about him, but also on what he *did* see in him.

The Torah relates that Yitzchak devoted a great deal of energy to digging water wells, restoring old wells, and searching for and developing new sources of fresh water. Chassidus explains that this hobby was not a meaningless detail in Yitzchak's life, but a reflection of his distinctive nature and his unique path in the service of G-d. Where others saw dirt and gravel, Yitzchak dug deeply to reveal springs of lifegiving water that ran beneath the earth. This means, in spiritual terms, that Yitzchak devoted himself to refining the unrefined, unearthing and cultivating the potential within all creation to recognize its G-dly source.

Accordingly, we can understand why Yitzchak desired to bless Eisav. Despite Eisav's disreputable behavior, Yitzchak had the ability to see the great spiritual potential associated

11. See Bereishis 26:35; Rashi, Bereishis 27:21.

with Eisav's soul. Yitzchak therefore hoped that his powerful blessings would successfully excavate the spiritual treasures that lay hidden in his child.¹²

Today there are no Eisavs, but like Yitzchak, who labored to reveal the connection to G-d buried even within the wicked Eisav, we too must endeavor to draw near even those who seem distant from the lifegiving waters of the Torah. With toil and effort, we can reveal within them their innate connection to the Source of Life.

— *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, pp. 195-198

12. Nevertheless, despite Eisav's immense potential, his actual lowly state was such that in reality the blessings would not have had the desired effect on him. Rivkah therefore deemed it necessary for Yaakov to receive the blessings instead of Eisav.



לעילוי נשמת
מרת חיה מרים
בת ר' יעקב לייב ע"ה
ראזעגנבלום
גלב"ע ביום ד' כסלו ה'תשס"ז
תנצב"ה



נדפס ע"י חתנה ובתה
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