

amends. Delay will only cause us to rationalize and forget the feelings of guilt or shame that constitute a healthy alarm calling for *teshubah* – repentance.

Sometimes, people who are inspired to do good are lazy to act. The *yesser hara* – evil inclination – does not say, “Don’t do it!” Instead, he encourages a small delay: “Do it later.” How many smokers are going to quit “tomorrow,” and how many overweight individuals are going to start their diet “after the weekend”? But the same evil inclination that advocates procrastination when it comes to doing good, also pushes people to immediately fulfill desires which are harmful to the spirit or contrary to a commandment of the Torah.

Wise people deal with the wiles of the evil inclination by reversing his instructions, thereby rechanneling the *yesser hara*’s directives into spiritually successful behavior. When doing good, wise people act with alacrity to do the Will of Hashem. When responding to a physical desire, they delay gratification and consider the gain vs. loss of temporary satisfaction.

Success is easy for those who know when to stop and when to go. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Beloved Misvah

Among those boarding the United Airlines Flight 175 from Boston to Los Angeles at 8:00 a.m. on September 11, 2001 was a pious Orthodox Jew who was on his way to a business meeting and had to be on that flight. His mind was occupied with all the details of the deal, when he suddenly realized that it was the last call to enter the plane. He rushed forward, pulling out his ticket at the same time. The last to enter the plane, he witnessed the door closing in preparation for the flight.

After he had found his seat, he realized that in his rush, he had forgotten the bag containing his *tefillin* in the airport lounge. He immediately notified the stewardess that he forgot something and needed to return to the lounge. She said that was impossible, as the policy is that once the doors are closed, no one can leave the plane. In spite of all his explaining how important *tefillin* were to him, she simply would not understand.

The Jew said that he would explain the situation to the pilot, who would definitely understand the urgency of his request. He went to the pilot and told him the story. The pilot said that he should stop bothering them; they had a schedule to meet, and he should get back to his seat.

Seeing that there was no cooperation from the airline crew and he was about to lose his precious *tefillin*, the pious Jew decided to make a big tumult. He started screaming in the cabin, “I am going to lose my *tefillin*!” The crew came up and asked him to be quiet, but he would not stop making a fuss. Finally, the head steward came up to him and said, “Listen, we decided that you are a nuisance and we are allowing you off the plane to get your bag; but we are not waiting for you and you will lose your flight.”

“OK,” he answered. “That does not bother me as long as I do not lose my *tefillin*.” With that, they opened the doors and he went back into the lounge to get his *tefillin*. Flight 175 went on its way without him, crashing into the South Tower at 9:03 a.m.

It was later learned that due to all this tumult, the plane was delayed and left some fifteen minutes late. This turned out to be a life saver for thousands of people, since the terrorists had planned that both planes (American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175) would attack the Twin Towers at the same time, thus causing such a gigantic explosion that it would definitely kill some 20,000 people. Due to the delay in the flight that G-d in His infinite mercy made through that pious Jew, many thousands were able to escape the South Tower before it was hit by United Airlines Flight 175, making the casualties much fewer. (Even in the Darkest Moments)

The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשֻׁמָּת לְאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444

West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT TOLEDOT ☆ תולדות שבת

Haftarah: Malachi 1:1-2:7

NOVEMBER 29-30, 2019 2 KISLEV 5780

Friday Minhah: **4:13 pm**

Candlelighting: **4:13 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:11 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shaharit: **5:58, 8:10, 9:10 am**

Morning Shema by: **8:48 am**

Shabbat Minhah: **3:50 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **5:11 pm (R"Y 5:43 pm)**

Shabbat Class after Haddalah

Sunday Minhah: **4:15 pm**

This bulletin is dedicated by Steven Levy
in honor of his wife, Linda, a true *eshet hayil*.

Begin saying *Barech Alenu* on Thursday night, December 5 in *Arbit*.

Mabrook to Robert & Sheryl Levy on the engagement of their son, Elliot, to Aleen Alhalabi.

A Message from our Rabbi

”וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ”

“The children were moving quickly within her” (Beresheet 25:22)

Rashi explains: “Our Rabbis understood this word וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ to mean ‘running.’ When Ribkah walked past the Yeshiva of Shem and Eber, Ya’akov agitated in the womb to rush out, but when she passed houses of idolatry, Esav agitated to rush out.”

One may get the impression from *Rashi* that Ya’akov was predestined to righteousness, while Esav was doomed to wickedness. After all, their life courses seem to have been set before birth! If so, how could Esav be faulted for his failings, and how could Ya’akov be praised for his achievements? Where was the freedom of will?

Rabbi Zvi Kushelevsky explains: the key here is to understand that free will does not mean full equality of opportunity, nor starting on an even keel. People are different! They were created with different dispositions, urges, *midot*, and traits, and each person’s tests and challenges in life will match their individual characters and natures. Ya’akov and Esav, too, each had their different challenges.

Esav’s challenge was to control or direct his natural urges for sin. The *Gemara* teaches (*Kidushin* 39b) that if an opportunity to sin arrives, but one decides to avoid the

temptation and refrain from sinning, he receives reward as if he performed a *misvah*. Esav's calling first and foremost was to avoid sin. This would have given him the merit as if he performed a *misvah*, not too dissimilar to Ya'akov's *misvot* themselves.

Likewise, the tests of Ya'akov matched his *midot*. Ya'akov's prime *midah* was *emet*, truth, and he was tested precisely in this area – in being required to procure the blessings from his father in an apparently underhanded manner utilizing falsehood and risking the consequences.

Ya'akov passed his test, while Esav failed his. Esav was supposed to forge a partnership with Ya'akov, to be ancillary to Ya'akov and to support Ya'akov financially and help Ya'akov attain his spiritual goals. But Esav wanted to conquer all. This struggle continues today on a national level.

On a personal level, we must make sure that we identify our individual talents and harness them to the best of our abilities. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

Continuity

The Torah spends a great deal of time discussing the life of our forefather Abraham, and that of Ya'akov. By comparison, Yitzhak receives relatively short shrift. The offering of Yitzhak as a *Korban*, a sacrifice, is primarily told as a test of his father. It is Eliezer, his father's servant, who goes out to find Yitzhak a wife. And though I have not done a formal count, I strongly suspect that the Torah provides a longer account of Eliezer's visit to the family of Betuel, Ribkah's father, than the total of all verses directly discussing Yitzhak. Yitzhak meets and marries his wife at the end of last week's reading, and this week begins by discussing "*Toldot*" Yitzhak, meaning his children Ya'akov and Esav.

Much of what we hear about Yitzhak sounds very familiar. He is forced to hide his wife's identity, fearing for his life. That is precisely what happened to his father. We learn that Yitzhak goes back and digs the same wells that his father previously dug, which the *Pelishtim* had filled with dirt.

Even in appearance, Yitzhak was like his father. *Rashi* tells us, in his commentary to the first verse of our reading, that the mockers of Abraham's time said that it must be that Sarah became pregnant from Abimelech, because she had been with Abraham for many years and only became pregnant after being briefly taken by Abimelech. To prove otherwise, G-d made Yitzhak look so profoundly similar to his father that no modern DNA test was needed to prove paternity.

So with all of the above, what is Yitzhak's unique identity?

Our Rabbis teach that our forefathers were each paragons of a particular character trait. For Abraham, that was *Hesed*, kindness. He was so devoted to reaching out, to showing generosity to others, that he ran to welcome idolaters into his tent (or, angels that he believed to be idolaters) while suffering the worst day of recovery from his circumcision. Ya'akov's defining characteristic was *Emet*, truth, and thus the biggest tests for him were needing to mislead his father, and then deal with Laban's mendacity. Yitzhak's characteristic was *Geburah*, strength. How did he show that strength?

One answer is found in the very similarity to his father's story, that we find above. Yitzhak's mission was to hold firm to the teachings of his father, and prove that his father, though a uniquely great individual, would not be a "one off," an "aberration," a "blip on the radar."

We learn that Ya'akov, when he ran from Esav, went to study with Noah's son Shem and grandson Eber. Shem and Eber were great men, they knew Torah through prophecy, yet they were unable to transmit righteousness to their descendants. Yitzhak was able to take what he learned from Abraham, and give it to Ya'akov. Yitzhak is the

linchpin tying grandfather to grandson, creating the "threefold chain" which, our Sages teach, "is not easily broken."

In last week's reading, when Ribkah comes to Yitzhak, he marries her, and loves her, and "is consoled after his mother." *Rashi* tells us that during Sarah's lifetime, she would light the Shabbat candles, and they would continue burning until the eve of the following Shabbat. She would bake loaves, and they would be blessed. The cloud of the Divine Presence rested by the tent. When Sarah passed away, all of these three things stopped. But when Ribkah came to the tent, the blessings returned.

Yitzhak saw consolation, because he wanted that continuity. He wanted to see his wife able to bring the same blessings as his mother brought, because he wanted to follow in the path of his father. He did not want to strike out on his own, to do something different. On the contrary, his very strength of character was shown in how carefully he hewed to the model set by his holy parents.

All of us, as Jews, come from those holy ancestors. We, like Yitzhak, must strive to continue, to hold fast to the patterns set by our holy forebears, to maintain that which we have, and to successfully transmit it to the next generation. May we be successful in doing so until the end of days. (Rabbi Yaakov Menken)

The Kindness of Abraham Abinu

"עֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַע אֲבִרְהָם בְּקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמַר מִשְׁמַרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי וְתוֹרָתִי"
"Because Abraham listened to My voice, and minded My mandate, My commandments, My decrees, and My teachings." (*Beresheet* 26:5)

Rav says (*Yoma* 28b) that Abraham *Abinu* fulfilled the entire Torah before it was given to *Klal Yisrael* at Sinai. The *Ramban* comments on this *pasuk* that *mishmarti*, My mandate, refers to the belief in One G-d, and *hukotai*, My decrees, means to walk in the ways of Hashem - to be kind, merciful, and charitable, just as He is kind, merciful, and charitable.

We know that *hukot*, decrees, generally refers to laws that cannot be understood logically, but must be accepted as the decree of the King. Why, then, does the *Ramban* say that *hukotai* refers to acts of kindness and justice, which can be explained by logic?

The *Ramban* is teaching us a very important principle regarding the kindness that Abraham *Abinu* performed for others. Abraham did *hesed* even for those who were undeserving – even in situations where logic would dictate otherwise, where the mind and heart would tell him not to have mercy. Abraham would override any thoughts about the unworthiness of the recipients of his *hesed* with the instruction that "just as Hashem is merciful, so you shall be merciful" (*Shabbat* 133b). Just as Hashem has compassion on all of His creatures, as it says (*Tehillim* 145:9) "His mercies are on all of His creations," Abraham, too, had compassion on everyone. Abraham looked at *hesed* as a *hok*, a decree of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* to do acts of kindness even when logic and common sense would dictate otherwise. (Rav Schwab on *Chumash*)

Stop 'n' Go

The ability to make decisions is a key element of achievement. Successful executives, who know that procrastinating can result in the loss of a profitable opportunity, encourage their management personnel to make the moves that will keep the company going forward. The managers, in turn, drive their people to do what it takes to overcome obstacles and move on to the next challenge.

Our Sages say that the word "now" in Scriptures indicates a call to repent. Their intent is to teach us that once we realize our errors, we should act immediately to make