

his reason for leaving, and migrating to Se'ir. Ultimately, though, that was his true motivation.

However, we must understand, why did Esav's hatred for Ya'akob still consume him to such a degree, that he would rather move to a foreign land rather than stay in the same country as Ya'akob?

Rabbi Abraham Yosef Davis explains that the wording here indicates that this was not the case. The Torah says that Esav left because of his brother Ya'akob, which implies that at this point Esav viewed Ya'akob as a brother. They had been reconciled at the time of their meeting (33:4) and Esav no longer bore any ill will towards Ya'akob. If so, however, why did Esav feel a need to distance himself from Ya'akob? Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch suggests that Esav felt threatened by Ya'akob's religious and moral standards. Being around Ya'akob, he did not feel free to live the kind of life that he wanted to live. Rather than changing himself and accepting a more moral and responsible lifestyle, Esav found it simpler to change his address. "Esav went to a [different] land because of Ya'akob." Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

Chiefs and Princes

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"These are the chiefs of the sons of Esav" (*Beresheet* 36:15)

Rabbi Yitzhak Hutner makes note of the fact that the expression "aluf," chief, is used only in regard to the descendants of Esav. The descendants of Yishmael, however, are referred to as "nasi," prince. He explains that this difference in terminology indicates a disparity in their relationship to *Am Yisrael*.

In the *Talmud, Sanhedrin* 99a, *Hazal* interpret the term "aluf" to be a sovereign without a crown. Esav merited the name of monarch in a limited sense. He will survive as a nation until that day when "the saviors will ascend *Har Zion* to judge Esav's mountain, and the kingdom will be Hashem's" (*Obadyah* 1:21). On the other hand, Yishmael was only bestowed the title of "nasi," which is primarily an honorary appellation with no power attributed to it.

Esav inherited something tangible. He is identified as the beneficiary of *Har Se'ir*. Conversely, regarding Yishmael, the Torah states, "Banish the maid servant [Hagar] and her son [Yishmael] for he...will not inherit" (*Beresheet* 21:10)

Rav Hutner expounded on this contrast, in light of *B'nei Yishmael's* bloodthirsty desire for a share in *Eres Yisrael*. He explained that Esav, who received his own tangible inheritance, has no motivation to demand a portion in our Holy Land. Yishmael, who received no share in the land, perseveres in his implacable hatred toward *B'nei Yisrael*, violently demanding a share in the land from its true inheritors. (*Peninim* on the Torah)

Constructive Fear

”וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד”

"[When Ya'akob heard that Esav was marching toward him with an army of four hundred men] Ya'akob was greatly afraid." (*Beresheet* 32:8)

Why was Ya'akob frightened? Had he not been assured by G-d, "I will be with you and will protect you" (28:15)? Did he not have faith that G-d would keep His promise?

Rashi explains that Ya'akob's fear resulted from his concern that perhaps he had sinned and lost Divine favor. The Divine promise had been made when he had just left the presence of Yitzhak and Ribkah, whose companionship undoubtedly had reinforced

his piety. Now, however, he had just spent twenty years in association with the degenerate Laban. "Who knows," thought Ya'akob, "whether Laban's influence might not have affected me in such a manner that I sinned without even being aware of it." If so, then he might no longer be deserving of G-d's protection. Ya'akob therefore prayed for Divine mercy, vowing to re-examine his behavior and correct whatever wrongs he might have committed. Ya'akob's fear was tied to *teshubah* and to hope for salvation.

The *Midrash* compares Ya'akob's fear of confrontation with Esav to that of the Jews' fear of Haman many generations later. Rabbi Henschel Leibowitz points out that these two fears are distinguishable from each other by the fact that Ya'akob's led to *teshubah* and hope, whilst that of the Jews under Haman resulted in despair. The first kind is commendable because it leads to constructive action, whereas the latter is destructive because it leads to resignation and inaction. Indeed, the *Midrash* states that if it had not been for the heroic leadership of Mordechai, the Jews would not have survived.

One of the greatest catastrophes in Jewish history recorded in Torah occurred when the spies sent by Moshe reported that the land was inhabited by formidable giants. The despair of the Jews resulted not only in their perishing in the desert, but also was the remote cause of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Sanctuary centuries later.

Both individually and as a people, we have experienced times of distress, and we have survived such times. While circumstances may warrant fear, the fear should be like that of Ya'akob, which resulted in his bringing himself closer to Hashem through prayer and *teshubah*, and then in taking whatever steps possible to defend himself. We dare not ever abandon hope and resign ourselves to fate, because such despair can bring about the very ill-fortune we fear. (*Living Each Week*)

Pursuit of Perfection

When people plan to accomplish a goal – be it expanding a business, learning to play a new sport, developing a talent, or improving a personality trait – they often tend to look at the ideal result and measure themselves against it. This approach may trigger resignation and squelch motivation. "I'll never be the piano player / lawyer / student / tennis player / patient person I dream to be."

Growth in any area of life is not constant. Every learning curve shows ups and downs. Life isn't much different from the stock market – some days you win, and some days you lose. What is important is that in the end, all the wins and losses cumulatively reflect an overall gain.

Instead of looking at a small failure as proof that you will never achieve perfection, it is much wiser to do a "progress report" from time to time. If you look back and recall your status at the start of a self-improvement project, you will realize that although perfection may be something you may never attain, progress has been made. You improve daily simply by pursuing perfection, even if perfection itself can never be totally achieved.

When you hit a setback, don't let a slight slide become a deep chasm that prevents you from continuing along the road to perfection. Instead, compare yourself as you are today to that raw, imperfect being you were when you began to journey to your goal. You will find that the daily pursuit of perfection brings overall improvement and regular growth. Don't ever let a bad day stop your climb. (*One Minute With Yourself* – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Opposites Attract

“Two things which are totally different cannot be joined together without some intermediary that acts as an adapter. Since the soul and the body are so different, there must be wondrous adapters that Hashem puts into place to bond these two opposites.”