

ALTER RAUBVOGEL

Well, Well, Well...

[Yitzchok] became great...and the P'lishtim envied him... Avimelech said to Yitzchok, "Go away from us, for you have become much mightier than we!"

Yitzchak left and camped in Nachal G'rar... Yitzchok's servants... found a well of fresh water there. The shepherds of G'rar quarreled with Yitzchok's servants... They dug another well, and they quarreled over that, too... [Finally, Yitzchok] moved away from there and dug another well... (26:13-22)

THE TORAH SEEMS TO SPEND AN AWFUL LOT of time discussing Yitzchok's failed business ventures. Why are these apparently trivial incidents being stressed? What lesson should we glean from all this?

One facet of Yitzchok's character, which is strongly exhibited in all of these incidents, is Yitzchok's tenacity. Certainly we see hints of this throughout his life—for twenty years, he never stopped praying for children, even as it seemed that Rivka was doomed to barrenness, and he never gave up on Eisav.

But it is under these circumstances that his tenacity truly shines forth. He reestablished his father's wells, but then the P'lishtim threw him out. He dug anew, but he got involved in a dispute. He dug again, and got involved in another dispute. At this point, most people would have walked and tried their luck elsewhere. But Yitzchok was tenacious, and his tenacity paid off:

...They did not quarrel over [the third well]. He called its name R'chovos ("Expanses")—he said, "For now Hashem has given us extensive space, and we can be fruitful in the land." (26:22)

The Chofetz Chaim finds inspiration in this incident. He says that we should apply this lesson of tenacity in the face of adversity in all aspects of our lives, both physical and spiritual. We should not give up at the first sign of adversity—or even at the second or third. Had Yitzchok just given up, he would not have struck water the third time and lived in peace, with Avimelech coming to him to broker a treaty. He might have been doomed to continue wandering the land.

ON A MORE SOBERING NOTE, THIS INCIDENT starts off with Yitzchok becoming wealthy in the land of the P'lishtim (Philistia), then being run out of town by the P'lishtim because "you have become much mightier than us."

The Netziv points something out here: Yitzchok was dwelling in a city full of nobles and kings, and he became wealthy there. So what? Everyone was wealthy in that zip code! Why were they jealous of him, to the extent that they felt a need to run him out of town?

Unfortunately, we have seen the answer time and time again throughout Jewish history, a *la ma'aseh avos siman labanim* (the acts of the Patriarchs are a portent for their descendants): A Jew

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A Mitzvah Unspoiled

[Yaakov, disguised as Eisav] served [Yitzchok the food Rivka had prepared], and he ate; he brought him wine, and he drank... He drew close; [Yitzchok] kissed him and scented the smell of his clothing, and he blessed him. He said, "See the scent of my son, like the fragrance of a field which Hashem has blessed..." (27:25-27)

But is there any smell worse than the odor of raw goatskin [which Rivka had tied onto Yaakov's arms, to make him as hairy as his brother]? This teaches us that the fragrance of the Garden of Eden entered [the tent] with him. (Rashi's commentary)

How did Yaakov merit to smell like the Garden of Eden—to the extent that Yitzchok didn't even seem to notice the stench of freshly-stripped goat hide?

In *Ma'ayan Beis haSho'eiva*, Rabbi Shimon Schwab offers an answer from his son, Rabbi Meir Yerucham.

Hashem took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it. (2:15)

"To work it" implies fulfilling the [Torah's] positive commandments. "And to guard it" implies the negative commandments. (Zohar)

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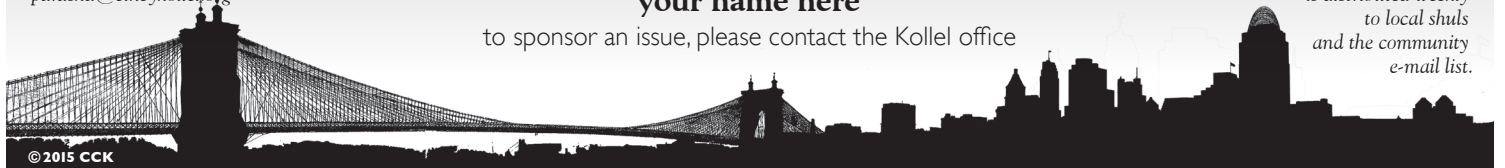
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Cincinnati Torah

is distributed weekly to local shuls and the community e-mail list.



At the Kollel

Well, Well, Well... CONTINUED

cannot become wealthy without raising the ire of the nation among whom he dwells. Those who are wealthy may envy those who are wealthier, but if the wealthier person is a Jew...

What contributes to this is that the host nation feels that the Jew became wealthy off its back, using its resources. So the nation shouts at him, "You have become mightier *mimanu*, from us!" (The Hebrew *mimanu* literally means "from us," even though a simple reading of the verse would read "than us.")

The sad facts of history have shown that such feelings of envy towards Jews who "get rich off our backs" eventually lead nations to drive the Jews out of their dwelling places and into more restricted districts.

This is another lesson that we should derive from this incident: Jews should not flaunt their wealth in front of their host nations, in the lands where they earned it. 🕊



This week
at
the Kollel

Chavrusos are available

for private and group learning—
speak to Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!
weekdays: noon–1
Sunday–Thursday: 8–9:45

Minyanim for Standard Time

Shacharis
Sunday8:15 AM
Monday–Friday7:20 AM

Mincha
Sunday *thru January*1:15 PM
Mon.–Thurs. *thru January*2:35 PM
Sunday–Thurs., *Feb.–Mar.*5:45 PM
Shabbos2:45 PM

Ma'ariv
In the Beis Midrash:
Sunday–Wednesday9:45 PM
Thursday10 PM

Every Day

🕍🕍 **"Dirshu" Gemara Shiur**
(Maseches B'choros)
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🕍🕍 **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🕍🕍 **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**
Live video conference!
Rabbi Dani Schon.....
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🕍 **Daf Yomi**
Rabbi Meir Minster.....
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🕍🕍 **Nightly Halacha Chabura**
Rabbi Dani Schon
& Binyamin Teitelbaum
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

Sunday *Free brunch!*

🕍🕍 **America Runs on Torah**
(Jewish Law & Parasha)
Rabbi Dani Schon
and Yisroel Kaufman..... 10 AM
Grand Deluxe breakfast served

🕍 **Shivti**
(Self-contained learning, geared
toward practical halacha) 10–noon A

Tuesday

🕍🕍 **Partners in Torah**
at the Mayerson JCC
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

Wednesday

🕍🕍 **Torah Treasures for Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

🕍🕍 **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

🕍🕍 **Halacha based on the parasha**
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM
Homemade refreshments served.

KEY: 🕍🕍 Beginners
🕍 Intermediate
🕍 Advanced
🕍🕍 for men and women

A Mitzvah Unspoiled CONTINUED

Adam was tasked with fulfilling, at least in essence, all of the Torah's dictums, in the Garden of Eden. When Adam then sinned by eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, he impaired his ability—mankind's ability—to live up to all of Hashem's expectations.

All but one, that is. Adam had never been expected to honor his parents, because he didn't have any!

This means that, in theory, human beings would still be capable of reaching the heights of primordial spirituality by honoring their parents, even after Man had been banished from the Garden.

Twenty-one centuries later, even as he deceived Yitzchok, Yaakov gave his father honor when he served him the food and drink he liked best. It was the fulfillment of that mitzvah which brought on the perfume of Eden. 🕊