

A PARASHA THOUGHT

Edom

Much of Jewish history is set in exile from Israel and is traditionally divided into four segments, each corresponding to the dominance of a different global power over the Jewish people. Known as Bavel, Midian, Yavan and Edom, each controlling empire brought with it its unique challenge to the spirituality of the Jew and to Jewish life. The final exile of Edom, in which we currently find ourselves, is named for the father of that nation, also known as Eisav. The name Edom means "red" and the Torah records that Eisav was called such because of the way he referred to a bowl of lentils his brother Yaakov was cooking, "[P]our into me, now, some of that very red stuff... (He therefore called his name

Edom)." (Toldos 25:30) The question is why this episode has such significance that it impacts the way Eisav is referred to. As a Rebbi of mine often put it, "and if he asked for cheerios, would they call him Cheerio?" Some answer that in his choice of words, Eisav reveals himself to be a superficial person. The most mundane way to refer to something is by its appearance, and by Eisav describing the lentils of Yaakov simply as "red stuff," he displays his fundamental disinterest in depth and meaning. Thus, the name Edom alludes to the base persona of Eisav and his progeny. As such, Rabbi Yosef Elefant of the Mir Yeshiva observes that the title Edom is so apropos for our current exile.

The reality of being in exile is that we are influenced by our surroundings, and when so much of the prevailing culture is predicated on the pursuit of materialism and pleasure, we are easily impacted. Though we may be faced with moral dilemmas, it is the distraction of superficiality that truly hampers our spiritual development. An unchecked exposure to physicality slowly chips away at our conscious sense of purpose, creating an entry point for spiritual detachment. The passive nature of this struggle is what makes it so difficult to overcome, because we often do not have a sense of urgency in combatting it. Unlike being faced with blatant immorality or injustice, where we have a clear

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE →



RABBI  
YEHUDA  
LEVI

THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH  
RABBI YITZCHAK PREIS

Q. In *parashas Chayei Sarah* the Torah writes that "Avraham listened to Ephron and Avraham paid out to Ephron 400 silver shekel." In what way did Avraham "listen" to Ephron? Wasn't Ephron protesting the whole time that he wanted Avraham to take the cave for free?

A. In Ephron's last response to Avraham, Ephron said, "What is a land worth 400 silver shekel, between you and me? Bury your dead!" Superficially, Ephron seems to be extremely generous. However, Avraham realized that if Ephron really wanted to give the land away, he would not have mentioned the value of the land in the process. Avraham listened to what Ephron was really saying.

Q. Rashi (25:22) writes that Yaakov and Eisav were fighting in the womb about "the inheritance of the two worlds." What's there to fight about? If you follow Hashem's commands, you merit the next world, if you don't then you won't.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE →

**360<sup>of</sup> the Kollel**

A Taste of THE Kollel Annual Event

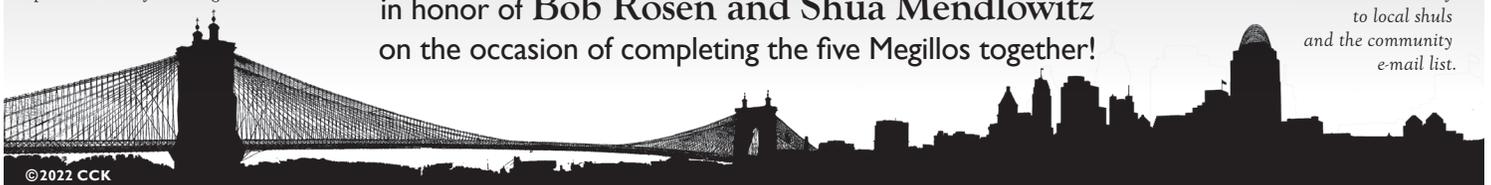
\$75 | [RSVP at www.cincynollel.org/360](http://www.cincynollel.org/360)  
At 18 Dining at the top of the Radisson  
668 W. 5th St., Cincinnati, KY 45201

5:30PM Sunday, Dec. 4

Sponsorship & feedback:  
[parasha@cincynollel.org](mailto:parasha@cincynollel.org)

Sponsored by Rabbi Heinemann  
in honor of Bob Rosen and Shua Mendlowitz  
on the occasion of completing the five Megillos together!

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



## THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

CONTINUED

A. The Taz in his *Divrei Dovid* explains that we are taught that for many *mitzvos*, although the primary reward is in the world to come, there are benefits that are reaped even in this world. It was these benefits that Eisav fought with Yaakov about. Eisav felt that just as he was not going to enjoy the world to come, so also Yaakov should not be allowed to benefit from the present world. 🕊️

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week's)? Ask! Submit a question on the parasha by Monday at noon by emailing [parasha@cincykollel.org](mailto:parasha@cincykollel.org). Questions will be selected to address at the discretion of the Rabbi who is answering that week. Questions may be edited for brevity/clarity.

## HAFTORAH HAPPENINGS

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

We know that the Haftorah generally mirrors the events recorded in the weekly *parasha*, and this week is no exception. The Haftorah portion is from *sefer Malachi*. Malachi was the last of the prophets, and lived at the beginning of the second *Beis Hamikdash*. The short *sefer* begins with Hashem telling us how he loved Yaakov over Eisav and chose the Jewish people as His nation. Malachi continues with giving harsh *mussar* (rebuke) to the Kohanim for not treating the *Beis Hamikdash* with the proper respect. The Haftorah ends talking about Hashem's covenant with the tribe of Levi, with the last verse reading, "For the lips of the Kohanim should safeguard knowledge and people should seek teachings from his mouth, for he is an agent of Hashem."

When the land of Israel was divided amongst the tribes, the tribe of Levi did not receive a portion because they were dispersed amongst the other tribes to be the teachers of Torah and were supported by the tithes of the other tribes. Rambam (*Shmitah v'yovel* 13:12), writes that this role is not limited to the tribe of Levi. Rather, every Jew has the ability to dedicate his entire life or a portion of it to live like a Levite, by dedicating all of his time to studying and disseminating Torah. Rav Aaron Kotler, founding Rosh Yeshiva of the Lakewood Yeshiva, writes (commentary on *Nach*, p. 123) that learning Torah is considered a *mitzvah* that is between man and his friend, because even the Torah study of an individual is a benefit for the Jewish people. How much more so is this the case when someone teaches others.

The clearest expression of this idea is a Community Kollel. It's no wonder that Rav Nosson Wachtfogel, previous *mashgiach* of the Lakewood Yeshiva, was the founder of the Community Kollel movement. Recent history has repeatedly shown that a group of people dedicated to the learning and spreading of Torah brings material and spiritual *bracha* to a city.

On that note, I want to encourage everyone to join in the Kollel's annual event next Sunday as we celebrate another year of growth in our mission of sharing the light of Torah with the Cincinnati community! 🕊️

## A PARASHA THOUGHT

CONTINUED

sense of opposition, an abhorrence of evil will not shake us out of complacency. It is imperative that we consciously fight moral stagnation and be ever critical about where our values lie. The world, and all that is pleasant in it, is ours to harness in our service of Hashem, but it

takes tremendous self-discipline and a great deal of moral integrity to ensure we remain faithful to our mission. With foresight, tenacity, and lots of prayer, we can hopefully take the high ground past the foibles of Edom, back to Yerushalyim. 🕊️



## TRACING OUR MINHAGIM

RABBI YEHUDAH LEVI

No *shalom zachor* is complete without chickpeas. Unfailingly gracing every *shalom zachor* table, the garbanzo bean seems to have become a universal *shalom zachor* staple. A source for this can be found in the *sefer Koreis Habris*, which explains that there is a custom to serve legumes at a *shalom zachor* as a sign of mourning. The Talmud teaches that while in utero, a fetus is taught the entire Torah by an angel. At birth the angel flicks the child above his mouth, causing the baby to forget all that he had learned (*Nidah* 30b). Based on this, the Drisha quotes the Recanti (Rabbi Menachem Recanti, 13th century C.E.) as explaining that the observance of the *shalom zachor* is not so much a party, as it is an opportunity to console the newborn who is mourning his loss of Torah knowledge. As such, we borrow the tradition mentioned in the Talmud of serving a mourner round foods to represent the circle of life and serve them at a *shalom zachor*. The Klausenberger Rebbe notes that the Yiddish word for chickpeas is "arbis" which alludes to the blessing Hashem gave Avraham that he will have many offspring (*v'harbah arbeh es zar'acha*). (Perhaps this is why we specifically choose this legume and not another (such as lentils, which are specifically mentioned in the Gemara). 🕊️

Cincinnati Community Kollel

2241 Losantiville Avenue, Cincinnati OH 45237 • 513-631-1118 • [kollel@shul.net](mailto:kollel@shul.net) • [cincykollel.org](http://cincykollel.org)

Please remember the Kollel with a gift in your will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy.



CREATE YOUR JEWISH  
LEGACY