

## A PARASHA THOUGHT

### The Image We Reflect Not Project

There was once a Jewish mother whose son was elected president and was attending the inauguration ceremony. At some point she nudged the person sitting beside her and said, "You see the man whose hand is in the air? Well, his brother is a doctor!"

Jewish parents stereotypically "kwell" over their children's success. "My son-the-doctor" has a special spot in the Jewish lexicon, and it isn't uncommon to hear parents boast of their children's recent promotion or acceptance into some prestigious school or firm. However, as Jews we need to understand the Torah perspective on the role of children in this world.

After many years of hate and separation, Yaakov and Eisav are finally reunited and embrace one another. Interestingly, their conversation quickly turns to Yaakov's family. Almost immediately, Eisav inquires, "Who are these children to you? *Mi hayeladim haeila lach?*" to which Yaakov responds, "*Hayeladim asher chanan Elokim es avdecha*, the children who Hashem has graciously given your servant."

Rabbi Matisyahu Solomon points to a key difference in the wording that Yaakov and Eisav use, demonstrating their two opposing paradigms of *chinuch* and child-rearing. Eisav says, "Who are these children to you," indicating his philosophy of children as "for you" – for honor, pride, and personal service. To Eisav, children are "*nachas* machines," vehicles to tout success, the ultimate status symbol.

Yaakov on the other hand responds, "These are the children that Hashem has graciously given to your servant." Children are gifts from Hashem in order to continue the mission of spreading Hashem's name and filling

the world with acts of kindness. Yaakov's philosophy recognizes that his children are the future of the Jewish nation. He loves them unconditionally, understanding that their purpose mimics his own.

It is enticing to view our children as ways to achieve status, the means to project a picture perfect Jewish family. We are lured into giving ultimate importance to the way we are perceived by our friends and society around us.

Yaakov teaches us that we have a higher purpose that we share with our children. That we are all here to serve Hashem.

Let us act like Yaakov *Avinu* and understand that the only image we aim to mimic is Hashem – *B'tzelem elokim nivra haadam*. 🌍



RABBI  
TZVI  
RICHTER

## THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH  
RABBI YITZCHAK PREIS

Vayeitzei:

Q) Rather than simply tell his wives that Hashem said "time to go," Yaakov shares a lengthy expose about Lavan's corruption! Was Yaakov not confident in their dedication to Hashem and concerned that they needed incentive to heed His directive?

A) Rav Hutner, *zt"l*, is quoted as saying that Yaakov had no doubts that his wives would be fully on board accepting Hashem's word. But he wanted to impress upon them that their move from Charan would not simply be a geographic relocation. Rather this was a full detachment from Lavan and all that he represented and hence the need to highlight the problems with "Lavan-culture."

Vayishlach:

Q) At the beginning of the *parasha*, Yaakov directed messengers to the land of Seir to give a message to Eisav. But it is only much later in the *parasha*, when "...the land... could not support them because of their livestock" that "Eisav settled on Mount Seir." It seems that until this point he was in Canaan. So why

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## Upcoming!

**This Motzaei Shabbos** - Kollel Women's Learning Melave Malka at 8:30pm at the Minster home - 6713 E. Farm Acres Dr.

**This Sunday morning** from 9-9:30, a shiur from Rabbi Yochanan Bechhofer on the *sugya* of "אף הן היו באותו הנס"

And stay tuned for details for:

**Monday December 19th**, the Kollel Men's Chanukah event at CHDS

**Wednesday December 21st**, the Kollel Family Chanukah drive-in event.

Sponsorship & feedback:  
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is distributed weekly  
to local shuls  
and the community  
e-mail list.

## THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

CONTINUED

send messengers to Seir?

A) The Netziv suggests that Eisav had already set up shop in Seir and treated that as his primary territory, although he personally still spent most of his time in Canaan. Yaakov was trying to determine Eisav's true feelings and knew that if the messengers would find Eisav in the vicinity of Yitzchok any response might be colored by his concern for Yitzchok and not indicative of his true feelings. Sending the messengers to Seir allowed the possibility that they would find Eisav there, distant from his father and more true to his emotions. And even if Eisav would not be there, Eisav's family would likely have means of communicating openly with Eisav and any message related back through the messengers would be more accurate. 🤖

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

This week's Haftorah comes from *sefer Ovadiah* which is the shortest book of prophecy in the entire *Nach*, with a mere 21 verses. Ovadiah speaks about one topic: the ultimate downfall of the nation of Edom (Eisav), and how at the end of days Hashem will avenge all the pain they have caused us. The connection to this week's *parasha* is quite obvious, as the main theme is the meeting of Yaakov and Eisav.

Rashi asks why specifically Ovadiah, of all the prophets, was the one to deliver this message? Rashi explains that Ovadiah was a *ger* (convert) from the nation of Edom, and was a *Navi* during the time of the wicked King Achav and Queen Ezavel. In spite of these bad influences, Ovadiah remained steadfast in his belief. This is in stark contrast to Eisav, who grew up in the presence of two great people, Yitzchak and Rivkah, and did not learn from their positive traits. Therefore Ovadiah is specifically chosen for the mission of delivering these harsh messages.

All of us have both good and bad influences around us, and who we spend our time with will ultimately decide the type of person we will be. *Chazal* (the Sages) tell us that a person acts based on his surroundings. Putting yourself in the right environment will go a long way in deciding how your life will look.

However, we are left with a point to ponder, which was mentioned to me by my esteemed *chavrusa* Rabbi Hendeles. The Gemarah (*Sanhedrin*) tells us that one should be careful not to insult the original nation of a convert in front of him until ten generations have passed from his conversion. If so, Ovadiah, being a *ger*, should be the last person tasked with the job of foretelling the downfall of Edom. 🤖



## Kollel Otzar Seforim Drive

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## TRACING OUR MINHAGIM

RABBI YEHUDAH LEVI

We light the menorah for eight nights in commemoration of the second century Chanuka miracle, corresponding to the number of days an insignificant amount of oil remained lit. The primary function of the menorah is to publicize this miracle and its accompanying salvation. As such, the principal structure of the *mitzvah* is for the menorah to be lit outside, close to a public area, where it will achieve the most exposure. Interestingly though, Jews outside of the land of Israel have primarily kindled the Chanukah lights inside their homes for hundreds of years (according to some accounts for over a thousand years), a deviation from the instruction of the Talmud. The primary reason for this change seems to have been the danger Jews living in increasingly hostile environments faced by openly displaying religious observances such as a menorah; in the face of danger, the Talmud offers license for the menorah to be lit indoors. Although nowadays with the kindness of Hashem many Jewish communities live in safety, we have by and large retained the age-old custom of lighting the candles indoors. Rav Moshe Sternbach explains that as long as we are in exile, the fundamental rationale behind the practice remains. Firstly, while living in foreign lands there is never a guarantee that a tranquil situation will remain such, and secondly since there do exist Jewish communities who are presently endangered it is prudent to behave cautiously. 🤖

Cincinnati Community Kollel

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