



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva

Ha-Rav **Shlomo Aviner** Shlit"a

Parashat Toldot - #305 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com
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On the Parashah...

Esav the Wicked

[Tal Chermon]

Yitzchak believed in Esav's ability to manage the material world morally and thus wanted to give him his blessing. Rivkah, however, knew the stark truth. In his present state Esav was not capable of advancing the world, since he himself was incorrigibly depraved. Perhaps after several thousand years of improvement, when the End of Days arrives, he will be fit for the task. He possessed strength, but it was the strength of wickedness which would be used for the destruction of the world, not its advancement. Yitzchak saw the future ideal, and the absolute truth, in which Esav's strength must and will be employed for the world's benefit. Rivkah, however, saw the world in its present, realistic state where Esav was a source of evil. At present he is a murderer, as he said, "May the days of the mourning of my father come soon so that then I will be able to kill my brother" (Bereshit 27:41)." It is true that he was upset because his blessing was taken from him but there are limits even to an angry response. Wanting to hasten the death of his father was clearly above and beyond. It was even a bit too much for him to do personally, so he requested it of his dear uncle Yishmael, who would certainly comply willingly (Midrash Ha-Gadol, Bereshit 28:9). These murderous inclinations were not developed overnight because of a one-time event. They are indications of Esav's deep-rooted corrupt nature (Rav Charlop in Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'a). Rivkah knew his present state better than Yitzchak and thus decided that in the meantime Yaakov would have to fulfill both his and Esav's tasks. Sarah had acted similarly a generation earlier when she decided to banish Yishmael from the home because of the negative influence of his corrupt behavior. Avraham was shocked. This went against the grain, which was the ideal of absolute kindness, but it was essential for practical considerations. Hashem

confirmed Sarah's approach: "Do everything that Sarah tells you" (Bereshit 21:12). It is true that ideally they should live together, but at the present time it was not possible. "The events that occurred to our forefathers are indications of what will befall their descendants."

Rav Aviner on...

Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Avraham Zuckerman:
The Perpetually Committed Torah Scholar

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Chayei Sarah 5774 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Our crown has fallen, Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Avraham Zuckerman, ztz”l, head of the Kfar Ha-Roeh Yeshiva, head of the Bnei Akiva Yeshivot, builder of the Zionist Yeshivot, who raised up generations of disciples and disciples of disciples.

Rambam teaches us in Hilchot Talmud Torah, Chapter 3, that it is impossible to merit the crown of Torah in tandem with wealth and honor. The Torah comes with humility and devotion, and it is attained by those who kill themselves over it (see paragraphs 6-9,12).

And such it was with Ha-Rav Avraham Zuckerman already in his childhood. At age six, out of his great craving for Torah, he was skipped from first to second grade, and then from second to third grade. At age eleven, he moved to a different city to learn in a Yeshiva in Polish Lithuania, his birthplace. At night he would wake up missing his parents, and he would weep silently into his pillow. Despite this, he continued to learn with great diligence. The Yeshiva belonged to the “Mussar” movement, which was preoccupied with man's being true to his own nature. Later on he studied in other Mussar Yeshivot until he arrived at the Navardok Yeshiva, the pinnacle of those Yeshivot, which emphasized humility and devotion. He had a custom of praying with his friends in the train station of the gentiles, in order to learn to be embarrassed before G-d and not before man. He learned there with great diligence.

He celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in the Yeshiva, as was the custom in those days, without gifts or parties. Rather, he was just called up to the Torah and wished a Mazel Tov.

The students slept in the women's sections of synagogues up to an hour away, on wooden benches with straw mattresses. There was no food in the Yeshiva. The students ate with householders who invited them.

He moved to Israel at age twenty, and never left the Land. He was opposed to doing so, even to visit Poland. He was also opposed to evacuating settlements. He celebrated his Aliya date as a second birthday, the day on which he was granted a new soul.

In Israel, as well, he studied at Navardok. In Israel he met the Rosh Yeshiva of Navardok, Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, “the Steipler Gaon”, from whom he learned the profundity within the simple and the simplicity within the profound.

One time he heard Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Yaakov Moshe Charlop, the Rosh Yeshiva of Mercaz HaRav, and he saw that this was the right direction. Later on he heard Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Moshe Tzvi Neriah.

He learned as an adult, married student in Yeshivat Ha-Yishuv Ha-Chadash, helping out younger boys. This was his most blessed learning period, in which he studied in peace, without having to worry about earning a living.

Later on he was appointed to be in charge of the branches of the Bnei Akiva youth movement in the North, encouraging the boys to go and learn in Yeshiva. At the time, there was no appropriate Yeshiva. That is how Yeshivat Kfar Ha-Ro'eh was founded. Later, he was appointed to be one of the teachers, and later still, the Rosh Yeshiva, and after that, he was appointed head of all the Bnei Akiva Yeshivot. He initiated the founding of numerous Yeshiva high schools and Hesder Yeshivot. He was the great founder.

And he did it all with humility and modesty, without trying to stand out in anything. This great student was entirely humble.

When anyone came to get his advice, he would answer: "I'm not telling you what do. I'm just telling you what I would do." In discussions, his approach was that of Avot 2:8: "Do not say: Accept my opinion."

He never got a driver's license. He would take the bus. On Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays he would not eat meat.

In Yeshiva, he did not teach that the main idea was to produce geniuses. Rather, he emphasized the common good.

He even encouraged scholastically weak students who had good character, fear of G-d and readiness to sacrifice for the Jewish People. He was very serious and very devoted, and he demanded seriousness of his students.

That truly great man has now ascended up to heaven, and still his spirit lives on forever in his students and his students' students.

May his spirit be bound up in the bond life with the souls of all the truly righteous.

True or Superstition?

Whistling

Q: Is it true that according to Kabbalah it is forbidden to whistle inside a house?

A: Nonsense (There is no prohibition against whistling. Outside of Israel, non-Jews whistled, so Jews refrained from doing so. It is also permissible to whistle on Shabbat. Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:182. This is also the opinion of Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik. Divrei Ha-Rav, pp. 197-198).

Fingernails

Q: Is it possible by looking at a pregnant woman's fingernails to know if she will have a boy or a girl?

A: Nonsense.

Silver Knife

Q: What is the source that a pure silver knife is a Segulah for a livelihood?

A: There is none (And so says Shut Doresh Tzion of Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi: It is a waste of money).

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