

# Torah Weekly

November 15-21, 2020  
28 Cheshvan – 5 Kislev, 5781

Torah reading:  
Toldot: Genesis 25:19 - 28:9  
Haftarah: Malachi 1:1 - 2:7

## PARSHAT TOLDOT

### Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

### Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

### Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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No One Forgotten.

## Heart and Mind: Esau and Jacob

Your mind and heart are opposites.

Your mind breaks everything into small bite-size pieces, while your heart sweeps everything together as one.

Your heart knows no details. If your heart is in love, it is in love completely. If it loves someone, then the totality of that person, with all his or her complexities, are all swept up in that love. If someone tells you, "I love all of you, except for one small detail about you that annoys me," then you know it is not her heart talking; it's her mind talking. For the heart is blind to detail—which is precisely why it is so passionate. When you weigh every detail individually, somehow, the magic escapes.

Your mind, on the other hand, is analytical. It breaks an idea into small parts, accepting some, polishing others, and throwing some out. When something exciting happens, your mind's job is to cool you down. It knows that indeed the news is exciting, but it is smart enough to know that "the devil is in the details." The mind tells you things like "Sure, you love the new job offer, but are you really willing to put up with the extra commute time?" or "Sure, he makes you happy, but is he really right for you?"

So which do you follow, the analytic mind or the passionate heart? Today the trend is to "follow your heart," to lead a lifestyle that is driven by desire. Chassidic thought says otherwise. Sure, the heart's passion and drive are powerful forces that can propel you to great heights, but without the mind's guidance, your passion may propel you to a place you don't want to be. For the heart is from the world of Tohu, "Chaos," a world of intense passion but no direction, while the mind is from the world of Tikkun, "Order."

So the next time you're not sure if what you love is right for you, take out a sheet of paper and list the pros and cons. What you are doing is bridging the heart and mind, leading to a more integrated, holistic life. In Kabbalistic terminology, only the World of Order can elevate the World of Chaos.

This, says chassidic philosophy, explains all you need to know about Esau and Jacob.

Isaac loved Esau. Why? Because he saw the energy of chaos. For Judaism to survive, argues Isaac, you need passion, commitment and emotional strength. The intellectual may have the right ideas, but he also has no drive to fight for and protect those ideas. You need an Esau to carry, safeguard and implement

your message.

Rebecca disagrees.

Esau has awesome potential, indeed. But he needs Jacob as his compass. Left to his own devices, Esau may use the blessings to further his base desires rather than to perpetuate his grandfather's legacy. Rebecca therefore convinces a reluctant Jacob to steal the blessings designed for Esau. She understands Esau's potent quality. But she realizes that Esau's chaotic power needs direction.

It needs Jacob. *By Rabbi Menachem Feldman*

## The True Heir

When Jacob outsmarted Esau and received his father Isaac's blessings, Esau was outraged. "He cried out a great and bitter cry, and he said to his father, 'Bless me too, O my father!'... And Esau raised his voice and wept." Esau had been anticipating these blessings for many years, (*Contrary to popular misconception, Esau and Jacob were 63 years old when this story happened.*) and for decades long Esau had feigned religious observance because he wanted his father to believe that he was worthy of these blessings. He was utterly devastated when he realized that he, the on-the-ball, worldly hunter, had been outwitted by his religious "goody-goody" brother.

It is remarkable that this person who was a murderer, rapist and glutton was so eager to receive the blessing of a *tzaddik* (righteous person). Esau wasn't out for a large inheritance; after all, Isaac was an elderly, blind person who had nothing to offer other than his blessings.

(See commentary of Ibn Ezra (and Nachmanides) on Genesis 25:32. ) Rather, as someone who was raised in the households of Abraham (*Abraham dies when Jacob and Esau were fifteen years old.*) and Isaac, he was well aware of the value of a *tzaddik's* blessing. Esau was a Jew who was born to a Jewish mother, (*Unlike Ishmael who was born to Hagar the Egyptian.*) and therefore possessed a Jewish soul which imbued him with a strong belief in G-d and the super-natural. His "Jewish heart," however, did not manifest itself in his immoral lifestyle, which was contrary to all he had learned in his father's home. He knew what was right, but was unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices to live an ethical, spiritual life.

The Divine plan determined that Jacob, not Esau, receive the blessings. For Jacob was a Jew not only at heart, but in practice as well. With faith alone we cannot accomplish the mission of revealing G-dliness in this world, and transforming ourselves and the world around us into a Divine abode. Only through actually *practicing* Torah and mitzvot can this goal be achieved.

In microcosm, many can relate to Esau's dilemma. Most people know what is proper, but oftentimes lack the strength and willpower to implement that which is proper into their daily lives. We must always remember that only the practice of Torah and mitzvot makes us a worthy receptacle for Divine blessings. Faith isn't a product of our labor; it naturally exists within every Jew due to our G-dly soul which was instilled within us. Blessings must be earned. Only the hard work of applying the faith in everyday life makes a person worthy of all of G-d's blessings.

By Rabbi Naftali Silberberg

**Tuesday, November 17, 2020 --- 1 Kislev, 5781**

**Winter**

As per the Talmud, the month of Kislev marks the onset of the winter season in the Holy Land and is the third month of the "Season of the Rains."

**Rebbe's Recovery (1977)**

For the first time since suffering a major heart attack five weeks earlier, on the eve of Shemini Atzeret, the Rebbe left his office in 770 Eastern Parkway and returned to his home, signaling his recovery. Chassidim all over rejoiced at the good news.

From that day on, the Rebbe redoubled his efforts on behalf of the Jewish nation and all of humanity, and for the dissemination of Torah and chassidism. From then on, the first of Kislev is celebrated as a day of thanksgiving and rejoicing.

**Thursday, November 19, 2020 --- 3 Kislev, 5781**

**Kamenitz-Podolsk Talmuds Saved (5518/1757)**

As a result of the libelous slander of the Frankists (followers of Sabbatai Zevi, the archbishop of Kamenitz decreed that all Hebrew books of the communities in his jurisdiction should be burned. On this day, he suffered a miraculous downfall and the decree was annulled. (*Imrei Pinchas*, 2003 ed., vol. 1, pp. 496-498)

**Pnei Yehoshua Saved (5463/1702)**

The explosion of some barrels of gunpowder that had been caught on fire resulted in the collapse of a number of nearby buildings, placing Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua Falk in mortal danger. In distress, he pledged that if he would survive, he would commit himself to studying the Talmud and its commentaries. He was miraculously saved, and went on to author his classic Talmudic commentary, *Pnei Yehoshua*. (Introduction of the author to the above work)

**Temple Cleared in Chanukah Miracle (3622/-139)**

After overcoming the Greek forces, the Hasmoneans cleared the Temple from the idolatrous images that had been erected there. (*Megilat Taanit* ch. 9)

**Friday, November 20, 2020 --- 4 Kislev, 5781**

**Zechariah Foretold Messianic Era (3410/-352)**

A delegation from Babylonia put forth a query to the prophet Zechariah, asking whether the fast of the Ninth of Av was still in effect, now that the Second Temple had been built. In response, Zechariah transmitted G-d's message that it was not fasting that was most important, but to uphold justice, truth, kindness and compassion.

Zechariah also foretold what will occur to the fast days in the Messianic era: "So says the L-rd of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month [the seventeenth of Tammuz], the fast of the fifth month [the ninth of Av], the fast of the seventh month [the third of Tishrei], and the fast of the tenth month [the tenth of Teves] will be to the House of Judah for rejoicing, happiness, and festivals." (*Zechariah* 7-8)

**Purim Teveryah (5503/1743)**

After a three-month-long unsuccessful battle and siege waged by Suleiman Pasha, governor of Damascus, against the sheikh of Tiberias, the governor finally left the city. To mark their salvation and the numerous miracles that had occurred throughout the siege, the Jews of Tiberias, led by the venerable R. Chaim Abulafia (1660-1744), established this date as a yearly festival of rejoicing and praise to G-d. (*Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez*, *Esther* 9:28)

**Shabbat, November 21, 2020**

**5 Kislev, 5781**

**Maharsha (1631)**

Kislev 5 is the *yahrtzeit* (date of the passing) of Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Eidels (1555-1631), known by the acronym "Maharsha". Rabbi Shmuel authored a highly regarded and widely used commentary on the Talmud and its primary commentaries, Rashi and Tosfot.