

Torah Weekly

ת"ב

12-18 November 2023
28/29 Cheshvan, 1-5 Kislev
5784

Torah: Toldot:
Genesis 25:19 - 28:9
Haftorah: 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 Matzah 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 Alone,
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. Which do you follow? 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. Only the World of Order can elevate the World of Chaos. 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 Menachem Feldman

A Double Gift

Isaac blesses his son Jacob: "...And may G-d give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fat of the earth..."¹ The famed commentator Rashi explains the implication of the words "And may G-d give you": "The Al-mighty will give, and give again." What was missing in G-d's initial giving, that could be perfected and completed by a second giving? Man is finite, limited; should he give even a magnificent and generous gift to another, it can still be improved upon by additional giving. But even the initial "gift" of the omnipotent and perfect Creator would be perfect. What could be added by "giving again"? An analogy from the education of a pupil by his teacher might clarify the problem:

A teacher may reach two different levels of achievement with his pupil. He may successfully impart his knowledge to the pupil so that it is completely absorbed and becomes the pupil's own knowledge — but the pupil may still not be able to creatively develop the line of thought further on his own. There is a second, higher level of instruction in which the teacher so perfectly guides the pupil, that he develops the ability to exercise his own intellectual creativity on the subject, and further extends and expands — in his own unique contribution — the knowledge received. The Mishna records an example of these two levels

among the pupils of Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai.² One of Rabbi Yochanan's pupils was Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkanus and another was Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch. "If all the wise men of Israel (including Eliezer ben Aroch)³ were on one end of a scale and Eliezer ben Hurkanus on the other, he would outweigh them all," states the Mishna. But then it declares, "If all the wise men of Israel were on one end of a scale, even together with Eliezer ben Hurkanus, and Eliezer ben Aroch was on the other end, he would outweigh them all!"

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkanus was like " ... a cemented well that loses not even a drop." His reception and absorption of wisdom was superior even to that of Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch. But Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch was "...as a well-spring gushing with ever-increasing force," indicating an ability to expand, add and innovate. His creative genius was greater than that of Eliezer ben Hurkanus.

The implication of G-d's "double blessing" that Isaac imparted to Jacob is now clear: not only would the Divine blessing itself be full and perfect, but it would also have the additional effect of enabling Jacob to extend and expand the blessing himself.

By Yitschak Meir Kagan

IN JEWISH HISTORY

Monday, November 13, 2023-29 Cheshvan, 5784

Mumbai Terror Attacks (2008)

The city of Mumbai, India, was hit with a series of coordinated terror attacks, starting on Wednesday evening, the 29th of Cheshvan 5769, which left close to 200 dead and scores more injured. One of the terrorists' chosen targets was the local Chabad House, known as the "Nariman House," operated by Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries Rabbi Gavriel Noach (Gabi) and Rivkah (Rivki) Holtzberg. In the subsequent standoff, which continued until Friday afternoon, Gabi and Rivki and several other Jews in the Chabad House – Rabbis Bentzion Chroman and Leibish Teitelbaum, Norma Schwartzblatt-Rabinowitz and Yocheved Orpaz – were killed in cold blood. May G-d avenge their murders.

Miraculously, the Holtzbergs' two-year-old child, Moshe, was saved by his nanny.

Tuesday, November 14, 2023-1 Kislev, 5784

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 16, 2023-3 Kislev, 5784

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 17, 2023-4 Kislev, 5784

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 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 18, 2023-5 Kislev, 5784

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