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## NEWS

### CELEBRATION IN TEL AVIV

**O**n Shabbat 19 November we had a special celebration in Tel Aviv, it was the 20th anniversary of the Russian community in Israel. We all remember that former Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991. Right after the first Jews who were persecuted for decades were free to leave Russia. It was exactly 20 years ago. The first Jews arrived in Israel and among them the first Russian Jewish Adventists who started the first Russian-speaking Adventist church in Israel. 10 years after, in 2001 we were able to buy a building in Tel Aviv, Rehov Soncino, for the Russian-speaking Adventists and we dedicated this building in November 2001.



Shabbath November 19, was also the 10th anniversary of the dedication of Russian-speaking house of prayer in Tel Aviv. All the Adventist Russian-Speaking congregations of Israel were present to celebrate these anniversaries. We had the joy also to have among us the presence of pastor Murga who was working in Israel when we dedicated this

house of prayer, we paid a tribute to his wife, Olga Murga who was a wonderful wife of pastor in Israel and who passed away this year. And Oleg Elkine, the pastor of the Russian-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv, invited pastor Zazulin who was his mentor in Russia and who helped him to discover Yeshua. Since a representative of each “daughter-congregation” of this community were present (Bath Yam, Ashkelon, Rishon Letsion, Ashdod, Haifa, Beer Sheva etc.) all of them wanted to congratulate this congregation for their celebration, and the program was very long, but everyone was happy.



My message for this community was to remember that the celebration of an anniversary is a time to celebrate G-d for his blessings, a time to rejoice together as a brotherhood community and to remember the purpose of the congregation. The Russian-speaking are the majority of our members today in Israel, I hope and pray that this community of faith will continue to grow and to preach the gospel of Yeshua in Israel.



# OVERVIEW

## TOLDOT

### Genesis 25:19-28:9

**A**fter 20 years of marriage, Yitzchak's prayers are answered and Rivka conceives twins. The pregnancy is extremely painful. G-d reveals to Rivka that the suffering is a microcosmic prelude to the worldwide conflict that will rage between the two great nations descended from these twins.

According to the Jewish tradition Esav represents "Rome" and ultimately the "Goyim" or the nations "Leumim" and Yaakov represents Israel.

Esav is born, and then Yaakov, holding onto Esav's heel. They grow and Esav becomes a hunter, a man of the physical world, whereas Yaakov sits in the tents of Torah developing his spiritual life. On the day of their grandfather Avraham's funeral, Yaakov is cooking lentils, the traditional mourner's meal. Esav rushes in, ravenous from a hard days hunting, and sells his birthright (and its concomitant spiritual responsibilities) for a bowl of lentils, demonstrating his unworthiness for the position of firstborn.

A famine strikes Canaan and Yitzchak thinks of escaping to Egypt, but G-d tells him that because he was bound as a sacrifice, he has become holy and must remain in the Holy Land.

He relocates to Gerar in the land of the Philistines, where, to protect Rivka, he has to say she is his sister.

The Philistines grow jealous of Yitzchak when he becomes immensely wealthy, and Avimelech the king asks him to leave.

Yitzchak re-digs three wells dug by his father. Avimelech, seeing that Yitzchak is blessed by G-d, makes a treaty with him.

When Yitzchak senses his end approaching, he summons Esav to give him his blessings. Rivka, acting on a prophetic command that the blessings must go to Yaakov, arranges for Yaakov to impersonate Esav and receive the blessings.

When Esav in frustration reveals to his father that Yaakov has bought the birthright, Yitzchak realizes that the birthright has been bestowed

correctly on Yaakov and confirms the blessings he has given Yaakov.

Esav vows to kill Yaakov, so Rivka sends Yaakov to her brother Lavan where he may find a suitable wife.

### THOSE WHO FEAR G-D

**T**he Torah states, "Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant." (Gen. 25:20-21). Why, asks the Talmud, were our Patriarchs incapable of bearing children? Because G-d desires the prayers of the righteous. "The will of those that fear Him, He will do, and to their cries He will hearken and save them." (Tehillim 145:19). Someone who truly fears G-d has only one desire to please God. To a person like this, all is good and appropriate and thus he or she seeks for the will of G-d for everything.

### PHILISTINES - PALESTINIANS

**W**e read in our parasha, "Yitzchak sowed in the land and in that year reaped a hundredfold... the man became great and kept becoming greater... and the Philistines envied him." (Genesis 26:12-14) The envious Philistines stopped up and filled with earth the wells that Yitzchak's father had dug, and when Yitzchak's servants dug two new wells of fresh water the Philistines claimed the water was theirs. Only when a third well was dug there was finally no resistance.

It is important to clarify here that even if we read in the Torah that the Philistines were in Canaan in the time of Isaac, the Philistines of that time are not the ancestors of the Palestinians of today. The Philistines were Phoenicians, that mean a people who came from the sea. They disappeared from the land of Israel in the 6<sup>th</sup> century before Yeshua. When Babylon invaded the Holy Land and deported its population the Philistines did not resist this difficult time and they assimilated to the nations. The Palestinians are both Turkish and Arabs who colonized the Holy Land after the emergence of Islam.

## YAACOV AN INNOCENT MAN

**T**he Torah states, “Jacob was a quiet man (Ish Tam) who sat in tents” (Genesis 25:27). What do we learn from the fact that Jacob was an “Ish tam”? The best way to look for a words of the Bible is to look at some other occurrence of a specific word in the Tanach and to check its meaning. Most of us know the word “Tam” because it is used in the Seder of Passover, to describe one of the four children. One of them is “Tam” it is the Innocent.

In the Hebrew Tanach we have this word 11 times: **Gen. 25:27; Psa. 37:37; Psa. 64:5; Job 1:1; Job 1:8; Job 2:3; Job 8:20; Job 9:20; Job 9:21; Job 9:22.** Thus it is clear that this word is used for the blameless like in **Psalm. 37:37** “Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the man of peace.” and also as “man of integrity” like in **Proverbs. 13:6** “Righteousness guards the man of integrity, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.” Therefore why the English versions of the Bible have translated this verse using the word “quiet”, in the French version “tranquil”? I think that Christians have always read the text with some anti-Semitic prejudices. Jacob is the father of the Jewish people, he has always been seen as the deceiver, the one who stole his brother’s blessing (so by extension the Jewish people are deceivers and thieves.) How can the Bible describe Yaakov as an innocent man, a man of integrity, a blameless man? A man similar to Job about whom G-d said: **“Then the L-RD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless ( TAM) and upright, a man who fears G-d and shuns evil’ .” (Job 1:8).** Christians full of prejudices cannot understand why Yaakov was TAM, thus they translated this word by “quiet”.

It is interesting to notice that Rashi defines the word ‘tam’ as a person who is not skilled in deceiving others. As is his heart, so are his words. Yaakov was not called only a “tam,” but an “Ish Tam.” He was a master over the trait of being a “tam.” He was totally honest, a man of great integrity. However, in some situations when it was appropriate, and remembering what was the will of G-d for him, his life and his descendants strategies were used to accomplish his destiny.

As most of the time, a father (here Itzchak) does not see his children in the right way, but a mother (Rivka) was able to see the potential of her son Yaakov. Itzchak was amazed by the strong character of his son Esav,

that is why he admired him, and thought that he was the son of the promise. However, Rivka understood that Yaakov was more the son of the promise than Esav. And she organized everything to make the will of G-d to happen. Of course from time to time, it would be better to let G-d take care of his business and his people. However even if Rivka used a stratagem to get the blessing of the Promise on Yaakov, G-d did not blame Rivka or Yaakov for that. Later G-d spoke to Yaakov in Bethel through the ladder dream and repeated to Yaakov the blessings he gave to Abraham and Itzchak.

The spiritual nature of Yaakov is also described in **Genesis 25:27** when it is said **“while Jacob was a man of integrity, staying in the tents.”** This expression “staying in the tent” (literally seating in the tent) is a typical expression to say that he was studying the Word of G-d and the Will of God. I don’t know how Abraham transmitted to his family the word of G-d of his time, but Yaakov studied it. The Jewish tradition says that these tents where the Yeshivot (school) of Shem and Heber, that means Yaakov was educated spiritually by the spiritual men of G-d and spiritual leaders of his time. This expression reminds us also about Joshua who liked also to stay in the tent, and it was the Tabernacle. **“The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.” (Ex. 33:11).** The tent was really the symbol of spirituality, prayer and study. That was the great sign Rivka recognized to be sure that Yaakov was the spiritual son, who has to receive the promise of Abraham.

**Sources:** These comments of the parasha are based on comments published by Rabbi Zalmen Pakouz, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, Rabbi Ozer Alport, Rabbi Ari Kahn, Rabbi Noson Weisz, and Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek, from Aish HaTorah (Aish.com). By Rabbi Naftali Reich, Rabbi Berel Wein and Rabbi Yochanan Zweig, Rabbi Yissocher Frand from Torah.org (Project Genenis). By Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair from Ohr Somayach, by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky. and Rabbi Zalmen Marozov.

## LANGUAGE OF THE BIRDS

A simple Jewish farmer, who lived in a village, hired a rabbi to teach his child. The teacher spent much of his free time in the forest outside the village. The farmer always wanted to know what the learned man was doing in the forest, but he refused to tell.

One day the farmer insisted that he tell him. He told the farmer, "I spend my time in the forest studying the language of the birds and listening to what they are saying." The farmer was impressed. He asked the teacher to teach him to understand what the birds were saying. The teacher initially refused, telling him that it was not to his benefit to know this. But, knowing that his job was at stake, he eventually relented and taught him.

One day, as the farmer was traveling through the forest, he heard one bird telling another bird, "Tonight thieves will steal this farmer's cow." Upon hearing this he immediately returned home and was able to save his cow. A week later, he again overheard a bird saying, "This farmer will have a financial loss due to fire." As a result, he again was able to save his fortune.

Some time later, as he was again traveling through the forest, and heard one bird telling the other that soon this farmer will die. He immediately went back home and approached the holy man and told him what he heard. "Twice, thanks to you, I understood what the birds were saying and saved my possessions. What can I do now?"

The teacher said to him, "I warned you that it was not good to know everything! Originally, it was decreed in heaven that you shall die, but then it was decided to spare your life in exchange for the loss of your possessions. Now that you have saved your possessions, the original decree was reinstated!"

The lesson of the farmer can apply to us all. "Who is rich? He who is happy with his lot" - Although one may be lacking in some areas, perhaps it is precisely this lacking that spared them from something far worse!

## ASK TO KNOW TO PRAY

A Chasid once came to the Tzadik Rabbi Mendel of Kotsk and poured out his heart to the Rebbe about his inability to make a decent living. The Chasid asked

the Rebbe for his blessings. "Pray to G-d and He will give you your livelihood in abundance!" instructed the Rebbe.

"But Rebbe," replied the Chasid, "I don't know how to pray!"

"In that case you have a much bigger problem! You would be better off asking for a blessing to know how to pray!"

## ON THE TOP OF BEAR

A bear was standing in the marketplace adorned with many diamonds and precious stones. A man called out, "Whoever will go on top of the bear can have everything on it."

A wise person in the crowd called out, "You may all be watching the diamonds that are on top of the bear, but I'm watching its teeth..." So too, says the Midrash, when the fat of the land is preceded with "the dew of the heaven - spirituality and purpose" then wealth is a blessing. But, if the "fat of the land" is more important than the "spiritual purpose," then one must be aware of the dangers of the "teeth of the bear..."

## CONTINUE TO PRAY

If a person sees that his prayer wasn't answered they should continue to pray as it is written, 'Hope and pray to G-d, strengthen yourself and He will give you courage.' One should not get discouraged but continue to pray as long as needed.

## EDITOR

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# HAFTARA

## Malachi 1: 1 - 2:7

This week's Parasha is about the dysfunctional family of Rivka, Itzchak and their two boys, Yaakov and Esav. The birth of the twins is described in this way: "The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esav. Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esav's heel; so he was named Yaakov. Itschak was sixty years old when she bore them." (Genesis 25-26). Yaakov was faithful to God and Esav was not. That is why G-d made a strong judgment on Esav. "I have loved you, says the L-RD. But you say, "How have you loved us?" Is not Esau Jacob's brother? says the L-RD. Yet I have loved Jacob" (Malachi 1:1). Why does G-d remind us this judgment about Esav? Because the behavior of Israel did not follow the example of their father Yaakov, they became like Esav. That is why the first chapter of Malachi is also about the priests and the leaders of Israel who deserved G-d's reproaches "O priests, who despise my name. You say, "How have we despised your name?" By offering polluted food on my altar. And you say, "How have we polluted it?" By thinking that the L-RD'S table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not wrong? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not wrong? Try presenting that to your governor; will he be pleased with you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 1:6-8). G-d is not happy with what happened in the temple. "Oh, that someone among you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not kindle fire on my altar in vain!" (Mal. 1:10). However the prophets does not want to be too negative with the people of G-d. If God sends reproaches to Israel, it is because he loves Israel and wants them to repent and to come back to him: "I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue," says the LORD Almighty. "My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin. (Malachi 2:5, 6) What a great hope for each one of us what has been our life, it is still time to come back to G-d and to be "blameless" or "Tam" as Yaakov who was loved by G-d

# BRIT HACHADASHA

## Rom 9:13

In the parasha of this week we have the story of Isaac trying to educate his children with Rivka. It was certainly not easy to raise these two boys who were very different and of everything opposed. Esav was a hunter, rooted on the ground, attracted by the women of Canaan, a man full of energy and life. The second one Yaakov was an introverted man, a spiritual man, who loved to pass time in the tent, that means to study. Esav was not interested by this spiritual rights, maybe he did not believe the story of Abraham, the promise of God were not a reality for him. That is why one day he came tired from his hunter party, saw Yaakov cooking a dish of lentils asked him to share it with him, and accepted to sell his rights for this dish. For Esav it was certainly a game, but not for Yaakov, who knew exactly what was the will of God for him. That is why in the aftarah it is said that Yaakov is loved and Esav is hated by G-d. The Brith Hachadasha confirms the same affirmation: "Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." (Rom. 9:13). Thus the task of Rivka and Itzchak were not easy, God entrusted them two boys in order to start the people of God, I am sure that these two boys were raised in the same manner, they were twins, that means apparently no big difference between them. However, today we know what are the difference between twins, they could be Monozygotic, in this case they are identical in everything or they are dizygotic not identical twins. Esav and Yaakov were dizygotic twins. That is why they were so different. This text is also speaking about free will, we can be born in the same family, we can be raised in the same way, we could even be twins, but each one is free to follow God's will or not. Yaakov decided to follow G-d's will but Esav no. The responsibility of the parents is not engaged. Their responsibility is to give them an education according to the will of God and then when the children are adults they are responsible for their own choices. That is why in the Bible Itzchak is always associate with Abraham and Yaakov as the fathers of G-d people, and its salvation is confirmed by Yeshua in Matatyahu "I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 8:11)