

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	5:47 PM
Candlelighting	5:47PM
Daf Yomi	7:30 AM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush	8:30 AM
-Sof Zman K'S- גר"א 10:12 < 9:32 ז"א	
Mincha	2:15 PM
Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos	5:40 PM
Maariv -	6:55 PM



Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

ראש חודש Sunday ראש חודש

Shacharis I	6:30 AM
Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	7:30 AM
Shacharis II	8:30 AM
Mincha / Maariv	4:45 PM

Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	5:45 AM
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Shacharis:

Monday ראש חודש	6:30 AM
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Thursday	6:40 AM
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Tues., Wed., Friday	6:45 AM
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Mincha (Mon-Fri)	1:45 PM
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MINCHA/MAARIV: GONE TO MIAMI

Daf Yomi -Take II (Mon-Thurs.)	9:00 PM
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Maariv (Mon.-Th)	9:45 PM
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Issue# 308

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A Study in Contrasts

I: This week begins the long and arduous journey of the life and times of the “choicest” (בִּרְעָא) of the Patriarchs, Yaakov Avinu. The vast majority of the book of Breishis is devoted to the details of Yaakov’s ordeals specifically.

We are taught that each of the Patriarchs represent a different fundamental attribute in its most perfected state:

Avraham is the embodiment of **חסד**, *kindness*, as portrayed in his magnanimous attitude towards the arab wayfarers and in his sincere appeal to save the wicked inhabitants of Sdom.

Yitzchok personifies **דין** *גבריה*, *strict* and *powerful adherence* to the word of G-d, as evidenced in his unflinching willingness to submit himself for slaughter upon the altar at the Akeidah.

Yaakov radiates **אמת**, through his utter and undeterred devotion to the study of *Torah* and in his allegiance to this ultimate *truth*.

Yet, other than an ambiguous reference to his being a “dweller of tents”, which is midrashically understood as referring to “tents of study” (תריגם אונקלים), nowhere is Yaakov’s special attribute described in any direct way.

II: If Yaakov epitomizes Torah and its affect, to perfection, then we must assume that he also attained the prerequisite conditions to reach that pinnacle, namely the forty eight ways to acquiring Torah as enumerated in the sixth chapter of Pirkei Avos.

The illustrious 15th century Sage, HaChosid Yaavetz, who was among the Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492, breaks down these seemingly diverse forty eight ways into six definitive categories.

The first set of goals; *study, listening, verbalizing, comprehension of the heart, awe and fear, humility, joy, purity, serving the sages, companionship with one’s contemporaries, debating with one’s students, tranquility, study of the scriptures and the Mishnah*, emphasize the need to put one’s self to the task of acquiring the vast knowledge of Torah. One must situate one’s self in an environment that is conducive to uninterrupted learning, both in terms of an atmosphere permeated with a positive attitude as well as the appropriate teachers and colleagues.

The second series of objectives; *moderating sleep, moderation in intimacy, moderating engagement in business, moderating talk, moderating gaiety, moderating pleasure*, all relate to the need to reduce our dependency from physical comforts and distracting pleasures. When we succumb to desires that instinctively drive us, it is impossible to benefit from the effects of the Torah. Physical indulgence creates layers of separation that prevent a full and healthy immersion in the Torah’s nourishing waters.

The third grouping of “ways”; *slowness to anger, good heartedness, faith in the sages, acceptance of suffering, knowing one’s place, satisfaction with one’s lot*, each reflect on our healthy emotional connection to G-d, placing our trust in Him, which is the primary factor in obtaining inner happiness and acceptance of fate. Anger, stinginess and depression all stem from a sense of dissatisfaction with ourselves. One who is firm in one’s relationship with G-d will never allow any obstacle to stand in one’s way to achieving inner calm. Anxiety clouds our thinking. One who has mastered these traits will possess a clear mind that is so vital to studying Torah.

The fourth category of attainments; *making a fence around one’s personal matters, not taking credit for oneself, likableness, love of G-d, love of humanity, love of charity, love of justice, love of rebuke, fleeing from honor, lack of arrogance in learning, reluctance to hand down rulings*, all equip us to deal effectively with people. The goal of Torah is to enrich and elevate the world, with its values and lessons. One who has fine tuned one’s interpersonal skills through the study of Torah, will surely succeed in transmitting the beauty of its message and in building a society infused with peace and harmony.

The fifth listing; *participating in the burden of one’s fellow, judging others favorably, correcting him, bringing him to a peaceful resolution [of his disputes], deliberation in study, asking and answering*, relate to qualities necessary for the healthy interaction among close associates and friends, maintaining the quality and depth of a relationship by being fully attuned and attentive to the needs and sensitivities of those closest to us.

The last group; *listening and illuminating, learning in order to teach, learning in order to observe, enlightening one’s teacher, precision in teaching, and saying something in the name of its speaker*, is merely a reiteration of our primary obligation; to continue to learn no matter how much we have achieved. Keep listening, develop your understanding and impart it to others.

III: **וְלֹא שְׁלוֹת וְלֹא שְׁקֵטוּת וְלֹא חַיֵּי וְיָמֵי רַבּוּ (אִיב ג כד)**, *I could not find any well-being, nor quietude, nor rest, and then the disaster came.*

The Midrash says that all of Yaakov’s troubles are alluded to in this verse: *I could not find any well-being; after Esav nor quietude; after Lavan nor rest; after Dinah and then the disaster came; the catastrophe of Yosef was thrust upon him.*

There were four challenges that would forge Yaakov’s personality, where his attribute of **אמת**, the power of his bond with Torah, would illuminate this world.

But before encountering these hurdles, Yaakov would first lay the foundation of Torah upon which he would build up his character to perfection as he successfully faced and grew from each eventual challenge.

That is the Torah’s first portrayal of Yaakov as the “abider of tents”, building a base of knowledge that would equip him with the tools for spiritual success. This picture corresponds to the first set of goals as enumerated

in the Mishnah.

As they matured, Esav began to part ways with his younger brother.

In counterpoint to Yaakov’s quiet and devoted studies, Esav is portrayed as the **אִישׁ צֵיד** *אישׁ שדה* (בראשית כה), *a hunter, a man of the field*, one whose restlessness keeps him preoccupied in the playing fields of fun and game and is left without a foundation on which to construct a meaningful identity.

IV: In the next snapshot of these twin brothers, Yaakov is industriously attending to responsibility in preparing food for his mourning father, after Avraham had died.

The word used to describe the activity of cooking is **רִיזָה** *רִיזָה* (שם שם כט), *he simmered a stew*. The root **רז** connotes a premeditated intentional act (RSH)

Yaakov is engaged in purposeful activity never allowing himself to lapse into instinctive behaviors.

Esav is described as **עָיָה** (שם שם ל), *exhausted*, totally spent from a foray in the fields of decadent indulgence and sin.

Isn’t this depiction of Yaakov, as contrasted with Esav, symbolic of the very notion to draw from the world of pleasures with moderation, the second requirement in achieving refinement through Torah?

This is the challenge of *Esav*, a battle of wills, the will of G-d against the will and instinct of man. That quest for power, lust, and honor would haunt and compel Esav time and again to lash out and vie against his brother Yaakov. But Yaakov remained the mightier one because he possessed the power of contemplated fortitude that would assure him the ultimate victory.

V: The next obstacle for Yaakov to overcome was that of Lavan. Lavan, the “white” one, has no identity, is colorless. His frantic manipulations, whether with his daughters and their prospective groom, or in his dishonest ways in commerce, all stem from one who is faithless and duped into thinking he can master his own fate. Lavan’s contemptuous attitude toward Yaakov is rooted in an inability and unwillingness to value character.

Yaakov nevertheless, despite all the deceptions, remains a loyal shepherd tending to his father-in-law’s flocks with commitment, devotion and honesty. A man who lives with faith never has reason to lose his cool or his integrity.

Doesn’t this echo the third grouping of attributes? Yaakov’s strong emotional connection to the Almighty, finely tuned through his understanding of Torah, is what enables him to deal with Lavan with dignity and grace.

This contempt that generates from a lack of belief in a higher power echoes the derisive attitude displayed by Esav after selling his birthright where the Torah reports, **וַיִּבְרָא** (שם שם ל), *He spurned... the birthright*.

One who doesn’t believe will display disdain for the values of those who do, in a perverted sense of defensiveness.

V: The third challenge that Yaakov dealt with was the ravishing of Dinah by Shechem and his frustration in his children’s violent response to the crime.

Yaakov feared that his mission representing “truth” to the world would be besmirched by Shimon and Levi’s deceptive and forceful tactics.

This parallels the fourth section of values enumerated in the Mishna that accentuate our duty to uplift a world by the sheer force of our character.

So often we react impulsively without thought, expressing purposeless rage that serves to diminish our greatness in the eyes of others. This is what Yaakov was concerned with when he admonished their reactive anger. In intended contrast, Yaakov when hearing Shimon and Levi’s indignation over the defilement of Dinah, chooses quiet contemplation, remaining silent rather than responding angrily with rebuke. He resets the value system in a mighty display of self-control.

This flaw of Shimon and Levi too and its challenge, finds its origin in Esav’s explosive reaction when he realizes that Yaakov has snatched the blessing from him.

וַיִּבְרָא *he cried out an exceedingly great and bitter cry.*

In Yaakov’s silent pain abides the greatness of the Torah and its lessons.

VI: Finally the test of Yosef and the brothers.

The multi-faceted children of Yaakov are the group from which the brilliant mosaic of Torah in all its applications would emanate to inspire a world.

It was imperative for this mighty union of talent to maintain peace and harmony if they are to accomplish their goal.

Closeness breeds resentment, jealousy and hatred for one another. Doesn’t this ring similar to the hatred Esav harbored towards Yaakov after he receives Yitzchok’s blessing. **וַיִּשְׂטֹם** (שם שם כז), *Now Esav harbored hatred... because of the blessing.*



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Ronnie & Lisa Pachino On the Yartzheit of their son Erik

This corresponds to the fifth combination of traits, the need to maintain regard and respect for one another despite our differences. One must be thoughtful and generous in evaluating the intentions and actions of others if one is destined to thrive as a team.

In opposition to Esav’s seething anger, when Yaakov senses dissension among the brothers after observing the brother’s reaction to Yosef’s dream and its implication of his superiority, Yaakov responds to the unfolding drama with calm reflection.

וַיִּבְרָא *his father kept the matter in his mind.* Yaakov the exemplar of one who has risen through the forty eight ways in acquiring Torah, processes the information, carefully considering and avoiding quick condemnation.

VII: Finally, as Yaakov leads his family down into Egypt he reasserts the obvious by instructing Yehuda to first set up Houses of Study. Despite their previous achievements in Torah, Yaakov Avinu directs us to continue to grow and commit to the study of Torah, for in it lies all of our successes.

VIII: We must measure the quality of our lives against the backdrop of Esav and Yaakov.

Esav’s pursuit of restless activity, his indulgences, lack of real faith and its accompanying angst and contempt, his explosive reactions and his vengeful hatred are all weaknesses we each confront on a daily basis.

Without the purposeful dedication of Yaakov, his industriousness, his confidence in G-d, his contemplative calmness and regard for others, we are doomed to a life of frustration.

We must rededicate our efforts to immerse in the refreshing waters of Torah and acquiring it, so that we may experience its warmth, brilliance and solace.

באהבה, צבי טייטלמן