



# JewishTimes

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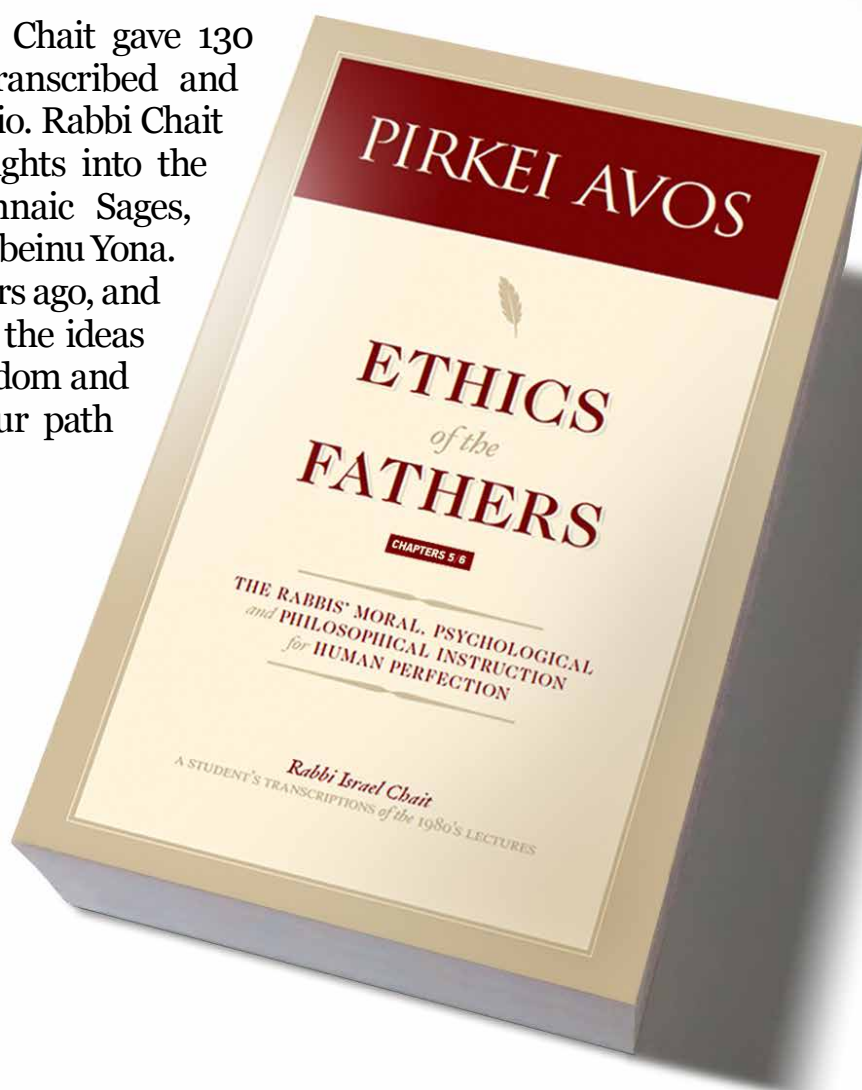
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Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim



## When Rabbis are Wrong

No, we do not, as a Rabbi's jurisdiction is limited to halacha—Jewish law—and not other matters:

"In accordance with the instructions given to you and the law they tell you, you shall perform. You must not deviate from the matter that they announce to you either to the right or to the left" (Deut. 17:11).

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

God commands that we adhere to the Rabbis' "laws," but in philosophical matters, as Rabbi Israel Chait taught, there is no ruling, and no obligation to listen to any Rabbi. In fact, it is impossible to say "I agree" when a Rabbi opines a philosophical view to which we do not agree. But halacha is a different matter, and concerns how we "act," not what we "believe." So, although we might not agree with the Rabbis' halachic rulings, we must act as they say.

I recently heard a leading rabbi endorse another rabbi. The latter said he did not wish to understand God's reasons for tragedies, for if he did, then he would accept [justify], the tragedies and not seek to defend people from tragedies. But Torah disagrees. The Prophets were dedicated to truth over all else. They unanimously preferred knowledge over ignorance. The rabbi said, "By understanding why bad happens to good people, one thereby accepts the bad and no longer fights for improvement." I disagree: Knowing God's justice doesn't cripple one from repenting and avoiding the bad. Lamentations 3:40 endorses a search for truth:

*"Let us search our ways, and examine them, and return to Hashem our God."*

Never should one opt for ignorance over knowledge. That denies the Tzelem Elohim—human intellect—which God dictates we follow. Accepting and even preferring blindness or ignorance is a sinful Christian ethic that has seeped into Jewish thought, but must be expunged. And one should never assume that

bad happens to a totally righteous person. Maimonides stated as follows:

*"There is no death without sin, and no affliction without transgression." Every intelligent religious person should have this faith, and should not ascribe any wrong to God, who is far from it; he must not assume that a person is innocent and perfect and does not deserve what has befallen him" (Guide, book III chap. xxiv).*

Abraham too said this:

*"What if there should be fifty innocent within the city; will You then wipe out the place and not forgive it for the sake of the innocent fifty who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (Gen. 18:24, 25).*

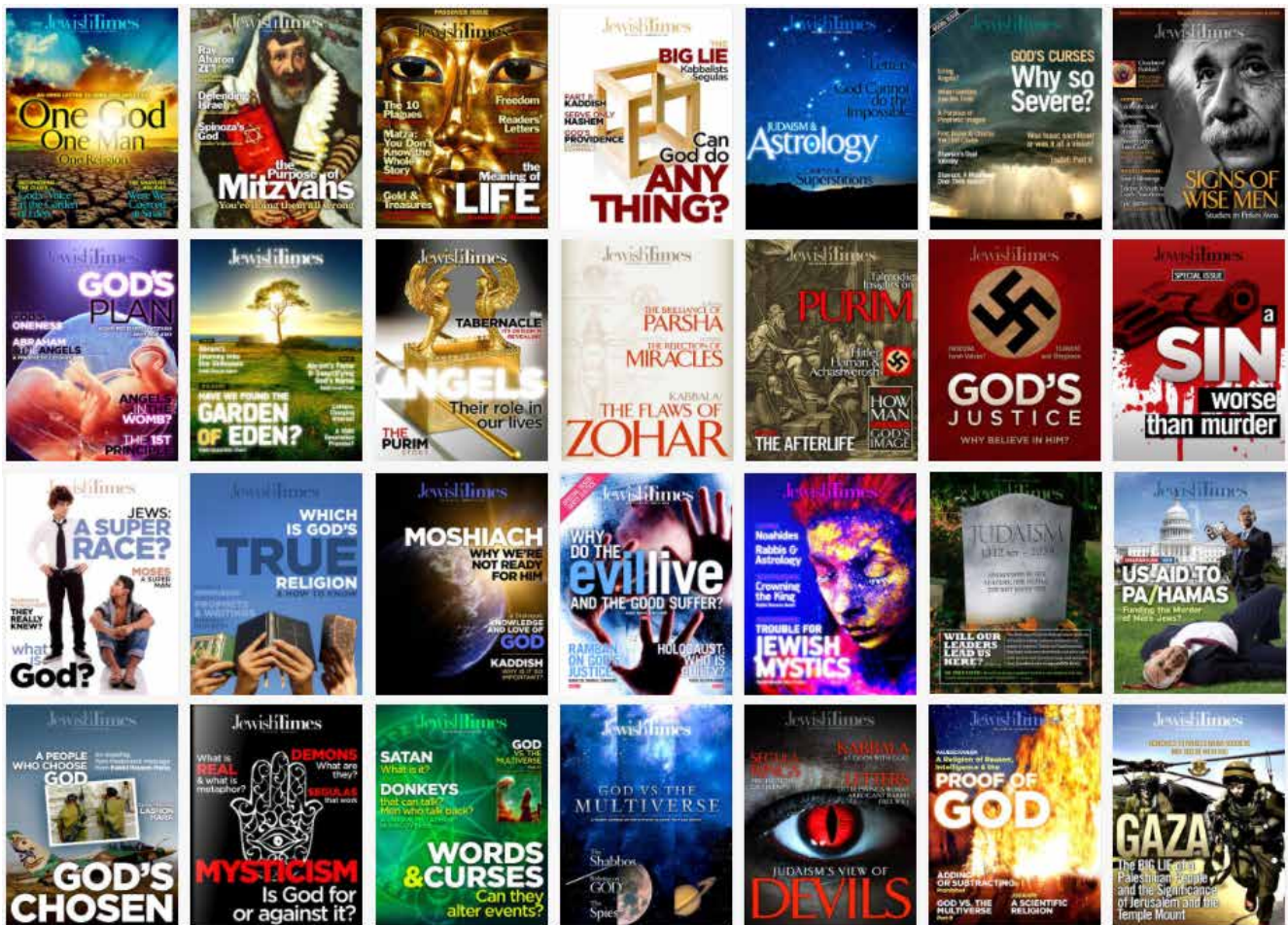
Abraham was emphatic in his conviction that God is just. He inquired into how God's justice works. He did not remain with a question, as the rabbi quoted above preferred to do. And Maimonides teaches that evil meets only those deserving of it. One must then follow Lamentations' lesson and introspect and repent, and not remain ignorant. We should most certainly desire to know the cause of the Holocaust so it might be prevented from recurring.

The vital rule: God's words are truth. Keep studying Torah so you are not misled by reputations or the impressed masses. ■



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PARSHA

# How God Guides Our Lives

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

## Part I

Reading the Parsha each week, at times we gloss over “simple” information, assuming nothing more is intended below the surface. But this cannot be the case. Maimonides teaches, “There is a good reason for every passage; the object of which we cannot see. We must always apply the words of our Sages: ‘It is not a vain thing for you’ (Deut. xxxii. 47), and if it seems vain, it seems your fault.’” (Guide, book III, chap. I.) With this in mind, let’s recap the story of Toldos and then isolate the questions.

Rivkah experienced a troubling pregnancy: the children were moving violently within her. Ibn Ezra says that Rivkah first asked other women if her pregnancy was the norm. When the women told her that her pregnancy was abnormal, she sought counsel from God via a prophet (either Abraham or Shem, Noah’s son). Rivkah was aware of God’s providence; initiated with Abraham and sustained unto Isaac and herself. The nation of the Jews was to be established through her. This pregnancy was unnatural and must be due to God’s will.

The prophet informed her that she will give birth to twins (two nations) and that the “greater son will be subservient to the younger.” This was the primary message. When she finally gave birth, Esav exited first, and the Torah describes him as red and covered with hair. Jacob then exited; his hand was seizing Esav’s heel. The Torah then says that Esav became a hunter while Jacob was a dweller in tents. Isaac loved Esav, for he captured food for Isaac, while Rivkah loved Jacob. The Torah hints at an imbalance.

We then learn of the sale of the birthright. Jacob’s alacrity in requesting the birthright in exchange for the lentils appears premeditated. Later, Rivkah “somehow” hears Isaac preparing to give the blessings to Esav. Rivkah dresses Jacob in goat skins and in Esav’s garments scented from the field to deceive the senses of the now blind Isaac into thinking Jacob is the hairy hunter Esav. The ruse works. And not a split second after Jacob leaves Isaac’s presence, Esav enters requesting the blessings. This greatly frightens Isaac, as he realized through a successful blessing of Jacob that he must have been wrong about Esav. The blessings’ success indicated divine providence favoring Jacob, while all along Isaac favored Esav.

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Now our questions:

What was God's intent that Rivkah experience an unnatural, tormenting pregnancy?

Why was Rivkah's response to inquire about God's providence from a prophet?

And why did she inquire from the prophets Abraham or Shem, but not of her own husband Isaac?

Of what significance is Esav's hairy nature?

Why are we told that Jacob seized Esav's heel at birth?

Of what significance is it that "Rivkah loved Jacob, while Isaac loved Esav?"

How was Jacob "instantly" prepared to purchase the birthright from Esav when he asked for the lentils?

Why are we told that Rivkah heard that Isaac was about to bless Esav?

Why did Rivkah and Jacob agree they must deceive Isaac to obtain the blessings; why not ask Isaac openly?

Why was Isaac shocked when Esav came before him to receive the blessings?

It is clear: God intended Rivkah to obtain information vital to the establishment of the Jewish people. Her difficult pregnancy was intended to direct her to one who would inform her of God's intentions. With that new information obtained via the prophet—"the older would serve the younger"—Rivkah now cherished Jacob over Esav, as she learned through that prophecy that a matter of "nations" depends on the younger Jacob. (She was told that two nations would issue from her.) The prophecy taught her to be instrumental in securing the younger son's success, as a means of establishing the nation of Israel. She also deduced that for good reason, God bypassed Isaac, withholding from him this prophetic information.

The patriarchs and matriarchs did not function in accord with simplistic favoritism. We must not erroneously project such motivation onto them. Thus, when the Torah teaches that, "Isaac loved Esav while Rivkah loved Jacob" it teaches an important lesson. It appears this lesson is that Isaac was not as well informed as was Rivkah about the natures of their two sons. Thus, the Torah saw fit to teach us the imbalance of their divergent loves, so we might appreciate how God orchestrated His providence. As Isaac was misled by Esav's "capturing his father

with his mouth" (Gen. 25:28), Isaac desired to bless Esav and not bestow these blessings upon Jacob. Isaac was deluded by Esav's ostensible good nature, as Esav disguised himself as upright with inquiries of proper conduct (capturing him) only to earn Isaac's favor. In truth, Esav was evil. In contrast, the Torah teaches that Jacob was a "dweller of tents" (ibid 25:27): he was complete in his perfection and delved into the study of God.

Jacob's proper lifestyle did not present the facade offered by Esav's veneer. Esav presented himself in the manner he knew his father would cherish. He "captured his father with his mouth." Thus, the Torah thereby informs us of the need for God's providence to work through Rivkah; she had clarity. From the very outset of the lives of Esav and Jacob, Rivkah was taught that the younger Jacob was to rule his older brother and that Jacob was to receive the blessings. This was also substantiated through Jacob's clutching of Esav's heel. This strange phenomenon taught Rivkah that Jacob—right out of the womb—was one who could contend and usurp his twin. Rivkah relied on this knowledge later in her plan to deceive Isaac.

It was also vital that Rivkah receive the prophet's communication before giving birth. Now that she understood the younger was to be favored, she could interpret Jacob clutching Esav's heel as a divine message. God was showing Rivkah the means that He implanted into human nature to ensure her success. God also created Esav with a hairy exterior, which would also play a vital role in Rivkah's plan.

The Torah tells us how Esav arrives home exhausted. The Rabbis teach he had murdered, committed adultery and idolatry, for on that day, Abraham had died. Esav—a man seeking an Earthly, hedonistic existence alone—was frustrated that his grandfather Abraham would actually perish from this Earth. Esav's immortality fantasy was abruptly shattered. He no longer clung to any role model displayed by Abraham: "For what good is life, if it ends?" Esav felt. He therefore went astray from Abraham's values and committed these grave acts. Esav, exhausted and famished, requested the lentils which Jacob had cooked. Jacob "instantly" countered with his offer to purchase the birthright from Esav, in exchange for the lentils. Thus, Jacob's purchase was premeditated. He had already

planned to obtain the birthright prior to this event; now the moment was ripe. We might explain Jacob's readiness to obtain the birthright was due to Rivkah's informing him of her knowledge obtained via that earlier prophecy. Rivkah most probably explained to Jacob years earlier what she learned, that the younger Jacob was to rule over the older. This is supported by Jacob's readiness to purchase the birthright.

Later, when Rivkah "happens to overhear" (divine providence) that Isaac was about to give the birthright blessings to Esav, she urges Jacob to deceive his father and to disguise himself as Esav. The point here is that Rivkah is not first informing Jacob "that" he must obtain the birthright, but rather, "how" he can accomplish this. Thus, we find proof that Jacob already knew he was to obtain the birthright blessings. This is why he purchased them from Esav at the outset, for Rivkah must have instructed him to do so. Otherwise, without a proper purchase, what right would he have to take the birthright later? And without Rivkah informing Jacob that he should have the blessings, why would Jacob even think to purchase them? It must be as we suggest, that Rivkah learned through prophecy that Jacob must obtain the blessings and told Jacob. Therefore, Jacob was prepared at all times for the right moment to purchase them. Then, he must act to obtain them, even through deceit. For a lie is not absolutely prohibited by God. As we see God told Samuel (Sam. I; 16:2) to make believe he was offering a sacrifice, although he was truly en

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route to anoint David in Saul's place. Samuel feared that Saul would learn of this and would kill Samuel for attempting to replace him with a new king. Thus, God instructed Samuel in a deception. Jacob too did not argue with Rivkah about the deceit here. He was only concerned that his father would not curse him, but he had no concern about the deceit itself as a sin to God. Jacob knew a lie is necessary at times. And Rivkah—as well as many others—lied for just reasons. Ibn Ezra teaches there is no harm in lying if it is for a proper motive (Gen. 27:13).

In summary, Rivkah required divine instruction due to the imbalance between Esav and Jacob, and between her and her husband. She would have to act to bring about the nation of Israel. God orchestrated an abnormal pregnancy precisely to educate Rivkah on matters of this pregnancy: the issuing nations of Jacob and Esav and how they must be guided through her, as “she loved Jacob,” i.e., in this matter she grasped reality whereas Isaac did not. Compelled to inquire from a prophet, she avoided asking Isaac about the pregnancy as she understood Isaac was lacking clarity. Rivkah became equipped with the divine knowledge, vital to ensure the blessings are bestowed upon the proper recipient.

There was a need for Rivkah to learn of the different natures of her two sons. She learned through prophecy that Jacob would be the superior. But she also learned one more essential lesson through seeing his hand clutching Esav's heel: Jacob possessed the natural tendency to usurp Esav. It was only through this knowledge gained by seeing his hand grabbing his brother's heel that Rivkah thereby learned that she must harness his nature to ensure the prophecy comes to be. Had she merely received knowledge that Jacob was to be superior, this knowledge alone does not compel her to act through Jacob. Rather, it was the act of Jacob grabbing his brother's heel whereby Rivkah understood she was seeing this for a reason. She deduced that this competitive display was necessary to indicate that her two sons have various natures, through which she must play a role to ensure these natures are acted out. She must make Jacob topple Esav in “status” when the time is right.

Rivkah teaches Jacob this prophecy when he is young, and from that point forward,

Jacob is ever-prepared to purchase the birthright. And at the right moment, Rivkah and Jacob strategize a plan that succeeds, but again, only through God's providence. For we see that, “no sooner that Jacob left, did Esav return.” This is to teach that God controlled the timing to the second, ensuring Rivkah and Jacob's success (Gen. 27:30). And finally, Isaac too attests to Jacob's rightful receipt of the blessings, as he tells Esav, “and he is surely blessed” (ibid 27:33). For Isaac realized that since he was able to utter the blessings, then it must have been God's will that Jacob had received them.

Isaac's sudden fright (ibid 27:33) also explains why Rivkah did not inquire from her husband about her abnormal pregnancy, but only from Abraham or Shem. For she understood that Isaac would reject the idea of Esav's unfit character. That is why Jacob too could not openly ask for the blessings, even though he rightfully purchased them. Until Isaac successfully uttered the blessings, he would not accept Esav as unfit. Therefore, Rivkah avoided approaching Isaac with her concerns regarding her pregnancy, and also when securing the blessings for Jacob. And Isaac again confirms to Esav that Jacob was correct in taking the blessings, as Isaac says to Esav, “your brother came with wisdom and took your blessings.” Why does Isaac say, “with wisdom”? Perhaps to teach Esav that Jacob was correct.

The obvious questions and the clues to their answers are the true “codes of the Torah.” This is God's method of directing us to unlock the Torah's mysteries, imbuing us with an ever-growing appreciation for His wisdom, the development of our minds and souls, and understanding the perfection of our matriarchs and patriarchs.

Could it be that God prepared Rivkah to be Lavan's sister, so she might learn of his cunning, as a preparation of this necessary deceit of Isaac? And could it be that Rivkah's training of Jacob to use deceit helped to prepare Jacob to deal with Lavan for those 20 years when Lavan tried again and again to deceive Jacob? If so: it ends up that Lavan's cunning came back to haunt him. For he displayed deceit to Rivkah in their childhood home. Thereby, Rivkah learned to be cunning herself and achieved a good outcome of the blessings. Through Rivkah's cunning, Jacob learned how to deal with

Lavan. Lavan's cunning came full circle and ended up ruining him.

It is also clear from here and other Torah stories that God works with His prophets and righteous individuals through wisdom. God merely handed Rivka certain clues, without spelling out a plan. For God desires His servants to engage wisdom and devise their own plans, and not disengage their minds. God told Abraham that Sodom was exceedingly evil, yet, there existed the option that He would not destroy them. Again, God hinted to a matter that generated curiosity in Abraham's mind, and so he inquired of God's system of justice.



## Part II

Having read this, my friend Shaye Mann asked a fine question: “I understand that ‘after’ Rivkah witnessed Isaac favoring Esav, that Rivkah had grounds to omit Isaac from her prophecy and her plans. But before she even had the prophecy, prior to giving birth...she avoided asking Isaac for an explanation of her abnormal pregnancy! She asked either Shem or Abraham. How can you explain this avoidance of Isaac ‘before’ Isaac ever expressed any favoritism towards Esav?”

I recognized the problem Shaye had raised, and immediately went back to the verses. Reading from the very beginning of the parsha, I was bothered by the first two verses:

“And these are the generations of Isaac son of Abraham; Abraham bore Isaac. And it was when Isaac was forty that he took Rivkah the daughter of Betuel the Arami from Padan Aram, the sister of Lavan the Arami, for a wife”.

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Think about this: the first verse already says, “Isaac son of Abraham.” Why then does it repeat, “Abraham bore Isaac?” And in verse 2, if we are already told that Betuel, Lavan’s father was an “Arami”, (ostensibly a nationality), why are we told again that Lavan was also an “Arami”? If Lavan’s father was an Aramite, then we know Lavan his son is also an Aramite!

There are no redundancies in God’s Torah. I thought about the first question. I realized “Abraham bore Isaac” must indicate something new. Abraham sought a wife for Isaac. We thereby learn that Isaac was incapable of selecting one for himself. We may suggest, “Abraham bore Isaac,” means that Abraham “raised” Isaac. In other words, Isaac—more than any other—was in need of paternal dedication and guidance. He was not as others, who approached marriage independently. His self-sacrifice on the altar had a profound effect on his nature. He was not even allowed to leave the land, as God told him to remain in Gerar and not descend to Egypt. Therefore, this first verse seeks to emphasize Isaac’s nature as greatly dependent upon Abraham.

The second verse teaches an apparent redundancy as well. We know Betuel is an Arami, so it is unnecessary to teach that his son Lavan was also an Arami...if that means a nationality. Or Hachaim teaches that Arami in fact is not indicating a nationality, but a character trait. Switching two letters (in Hebrew) “Arami” becomes “Ramai,” meaning a swindler; a liar. In this verse, we are being taught that Isaac married a woman whose father and brother were liars. So even though we are taught that Betuel was a liar, we must also be taught that Lavan too chose this lifestyle, as it is not inherited, as seen from Rivkah’s upright stature. Now the questions.

Why must we learn of Isaac’s dependency on Abraham? Why must we learn that Rivkah’s father and brother were liars? I feel these two verses answer my friend Shaye’s question.

We are taught that Rivkah—one who observed cunning personalities in her father and brother—was able to detect Isaac’s shortcomings in terms of interpersonal issues. This prompted Rivkah to avoid approaching her husband Isaac with matters of her pregnancy. The Torah cleverly hints to the reason why Rivkah avoided Isaac: he was not fit, and she was cunning enough to know this from experiencing shrewd human nature

in her home. We now understand why she went to Abraham or Shem—and not Isaac—when she was in need of understanding the nature of her pregnancy, and how it might affect the establishment of B’nei Yisrael.

These two verses appear at the very start of our Parsha, as they explain the succeeding verses, and Rivkah’s actions.

No question in Torah is without an answer. This time, we were fortunate enough to discover it. Thank you Shaye.

It is amazing how subtle redundancies can shed light: one of the true codes of Torah.

### God’s Providence

Esav born unnaturally covered with hair conveys Divine intent. The only other mention of Esav’s exterior is the means through which Jacob deceived his father. This teaches that God’s providence was in play at the very birth of these twins. God ensured a means existed through which the blessings would be successfully transmitted to Jacob.

First, God provides the impetus (a troubling pregnancy) to direct the righteous Rivkah towards obtaining greater knowledge. He gave Rivkah prophetic insight into the future of the Jewish nation, emanating from Jacob. It is clear that God wishes men and women to engage their intellects; we are not to sit back while God runs the world. The opposite is the case: God desires the path and progress of mankind to be steered by mankind. We are to use all in our power to achieve the best for all others and ourselves. God says this in Genesis 1:28, “Fill the Earth

and conquer it.” But since man cannot know most variables or control even a few of them, God assists man when necessary. Therefore, God imparted to Rivkah His plan and the necessary tools with which to attain success. These “tools” include Rivkah’s own cunning personality adopted from her brother and father, Esav’s physical hairy nature, Jacob’s personality as capable of usurping Esav, and the knowledge of events such as Rivkah hearing Isaac’s wish to bless Esav and Esav’s wish to kill Jacob. And besides reacting to God’s clues, Rivkah devised her own methods, such as dressing Jacob in Esav’s clothing in her anticipation of Isaac’s smelling the fragrance of the field, thereby assuming this was Esav before him.

Why were the blessings necessary at all? God can certainly achieve His plan without man! I believe Isaac’s words of blessing were required as a means of silencing those descendants of Esav claiming shared rights to his legacy, along with Jacob. Talmud Sanhedrin 91a teaches how Ben Pasisa responded to Alexander when the Ishmaelites sought claim on Abraham’s legacy. Ben Pasisa responded, “If a father sends away all his sons and gives them gifts while yet alive, do these sons have any future claim on the father’s legacy?” (Referring to Abraham’s casting of all sons except Isaac, [Gen. 25]) This silenced the Ishmaelites. And I believe Isaac’s words too were necessary—not as causative of blessings, but as his exclusive selection of Jacob. Future generations of Esav can no longer justly claim an inheritance from Isaac, now that Isaac declared Jacob his sole inheritor. ■



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# Everyone Has Choice

Rabbi Reuven Mann

**T**his week's Parsha, Toldot, describes the history of Yitzchak and Rivka. After experiencing difficulty in conceiving, they turned to intense prayer, which Hashem heard and answered. Rivka became pregnant and was thrown into a tailspin.

That is because "the children contended within her and she said, 'If so, why am I thus?' and she went to inquire of Hashem." Rivka experienced great turbulence and recognized that it had a supernatural explanation.

We can learn from this that there might be a deeper meaning behind the physical infirmities we sometimes endure. Many afflictions are bothersome and seemingly immune to cures. We should not just drop the matter and develop a reliance on pain killers. Rather, we should think deeply into the matter.

The famous Dr. John Sarno demonstrated that many chronic and persistent maladies, especially lower back pain, have no physical basis, but stem from repressed frustrations. These are not supernatural phenomena like Rivkah's stormy pregnancy, but they indicate the intensity of the mind-body connection. Knowing the self can be a vital component of both our physical and mental

health.

Rivka was apprised that there were twins in her womb who possessed extraordinary energy and would develop into two mighty nations destined to have an extreme impact on the world.

Some interpret this to mean that Rivka was given advance notice about the characters of her sons. The two could not have been more different, as Yaakov was whole-hearted and a "dweller of tents" (that is, Houses of Study) and Esav was an outdoorsman who "knew to hunt." Yet Yitzchak, who was not privy to the information conveyed to Rivka, regarded Esav as a tzadik (righteous man), while his wife knew who was who.

The notion that the twins' characters were preordained is reflected in certain statements of the Rabbis. Rashi explained the turbulence that Rivka felt by saying that when she passed a house of idolatry, Esav would struggle to come out, and when she passed a Beit Midrash, Yaakov would strive to exit.

Superficially, this seems to say that Yaakov's and Esav's characters were formed in the womb, but that is entirely against the fundamental Torah principle of Free Will. As the Rabbis say, "Everything is in the

Hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven." This means that our basic moral choices are not controlled by extraneous forces. We ourselves are responsible for the paths we choose to traverse and for the good or evil that we do.

So what did the Rabbis mean by their depiction of two fetuses choosing between going to a place of idolatry or one of Torah study? They meant precisely to further elucidate the doctrine of free choice. To what extent does it go? What about the seemingly uncontrollable behaviors and inclinations that some people seem to exhibit?

The amazing thing about the human species is its endless variety and diversity of types. Reading about some of the cruel characters of history, you wonder, are these people truly human? Can it be that Hitler and Albert Einstein are both members of the same species? Can Yaakov the righteous man of the study halls occupy the same womb with the paradigm of evil, Esav?

In spite of the great divergences in human nature, we assert that man has free will. This means that the rational side of man is endowed with the capacity to subdue and control the animalistic side. None of us are compelled to act out our instinctual proclivities and inclinations. We have the control to

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gratify or deny ourselves.

This is illustrated in the story of the twins. Esav was “formed in the womb” ready and disposed to be a hunter of animals and of people. He had an entirely different constitution than Yaakov, who thirsted for knowledge and understanding.

Each one of the brothers had a different challenge. Esav needed to dedicate his talents toward the service of Hashem. He could have been a warrior who fought the battles of the Lord and enforced justice in the world. He could have used his business skills to establish institutions of learning in which Yaakov and his many students would be able to thrive.

Yaakov, on the other hand, desired to live in peace so he could sit and study. He had no desire to be at war with unscrupulous people. Yet that was his fate as he came up against the likes of Esav, Lavan, and Shechem, who kidnapped and raped his daughter Dina. He needed to put aside his peaceful nature and learn how to contend with his adversaries.

Yaakov and Esav had entirely opposite dispositions by nature. But both had the choice to utilize their skills and capabilities in a manner that served Hashem. There were times in his life when Esav did recognize and serve Hashem, but ultimately he failed.

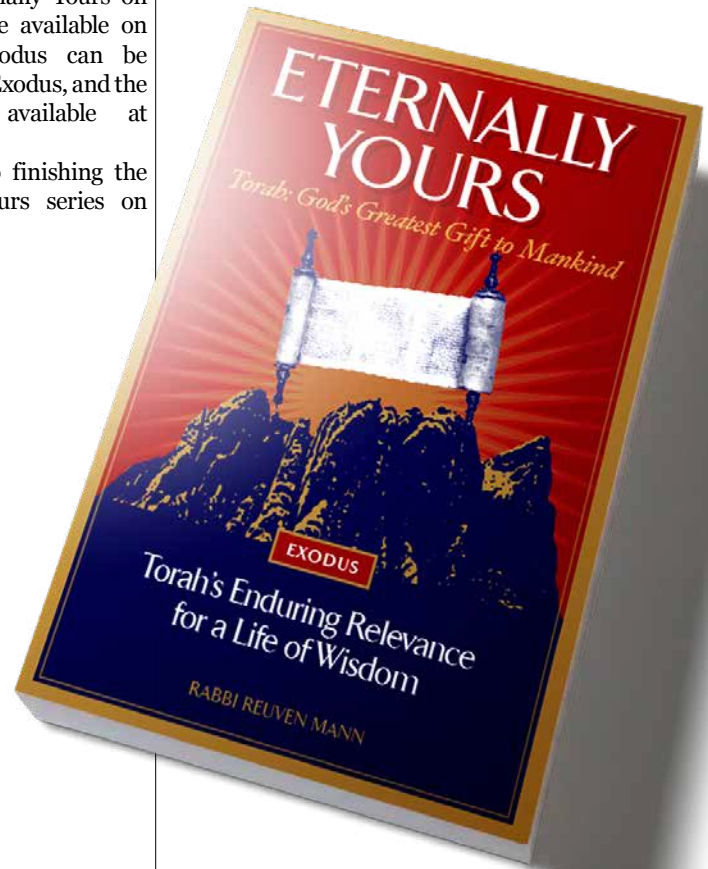
We must understand our individual natures and learn how we can best use our particular talents in the service of Hashem. We should strive to bring our individual constitutions to perfection. We should never

seek to become someone we are not. We should always be joyful in the knowledge that we are being the person Hashem wants us to be.

Shabbat shalom. ■

P.S. My two books Eternally Yours on Genesis and on Exodus are available on Amazon. The book on Exodus can be obtained at <http://bit.ly/EY-Exodus>, and the book on Genesis is available at <http://bit.ly/EY-Genesis>.

And now we are close to finishing the third in the Eternally Yours series on Bamidbar. Please stay tuned.



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## *Relative vs. Objective Praise*

# 2 HALLELS

*Rabbi Israel Chait*

*Transcribed by a student*

What is Hallel? It is comprised of 5 matters: the Egyptian exodus, the splitting of the sea, the giving of Torah, resurrection of the dead, and the messianic era. The songs are tied to events. And when one's song is tied to an event, it is not shira (song of praise) on the highest level. One recites shira regarding an event that he experienced. But the ultimate shira does not need an event; it is an affirmation of God and His wisdom, and the song that comes forth is regarding God's wisdom. This refers to Hallel Hagadol:

*"The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Lord our God; the spirit of all flesh shall glorify and exalt Your remembrance always, our King. From the world and until the world, You are the Power, and other than You we have no king."*

That is a verse from Tehillim (106:48). The midrash says, "From the world that we were not in, to the world we do exist in." The shira in Egypt refers to the world in which we exist; the world that relates to man. But shira which is independent of ourselves, a world in which we do not exist, is a completely objective praise of

God divorced from ourselves, sung solely because we recognize God's greatness. That is the highest level of shira—the new song (shira chadasha) in the future. That's not tied to anything related to man emotionally. The Hallel of the future is the Hallel of knowledge of God. The Hallel of the past recognizes God for certain events, such as the splitting of the sea and the Egyptian exodus. But the Hallel of the future has nothing to do with any event. It is about knowledge of God. And that is what we say:

*"The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Lord our God; the spirit of all flesh shall glorify and exalt Your remembrance..."*

"Every" and "all" refer to every human being, regardless of his experiences:

*"Thank the Power of powers since His kindness is forever. To the Master of masters, since His kindness is forever. To the One who alone does wondrously great deeds, since His kindness is forever" (Hallel).*

This Hallel addresses knowledge of God. ■

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