

HASHKAMA WEEKLY

פרשת תולדות
א' כסלו תשפ"ו
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חכמה ב-א' תאמין?

By Dr ChatGPT

Consider the following “Halachic” thought, generated by ChatGPT: Did the AI get it right? Do you find it to be accurate, or did technology miss the boat?

In Parshas Toldos, the Torah introduces us to the struggle between Yaakov and Eisav even before their birth—“vayisrotzetz habanim bekirbah” (Bereishis 25:22). Rashi, citing Chazal (Bereishis Rabbah 63:6), explains that each child was drawn toward a different destiny: Eisav to batei avodah zarah, Yaakov to batei midrash. Rav Eliyahu Dessler (Michtav Me'Eliyahu, chelek 1) teaches that this prenatal tension symbolizes the lifelong inner conflict each Jew faces between the pull of spirituality and the allure of materialism. But notice Rivkah's response: “vatomer, im kein—lama zeh anochi?” She doesn't simply despair; she seeks clarity by turning to the beis midrash of Shem and Ever. The Litvish approach cherishes this model: when confronted with confusion, we don't freeze—we ask, we analyze, we seek daas Torah. Later in the parsha, Yitzchak's blessing of Yaakov—disguised at Rivkah's urging—presents a tension of its own. The Ramban (Bereishis 27:19) notes that Rivkah wasn't manipulating events; she was safeguarding the prophetic message she had received that “rav ya'avod tzair.” Rav Chaim Shmuelewitz (Sichos Mussar 5731) explains that sometimes the road to truth is not straightforward, but requires courage and deep commitment to Hashem's plan. Here lies the connection to the first episode: Rivkah's strength in seeking truth during pregnancy becomes Rivkah's strength in acting on truth when blessings are at stake. First she clarifies; then she follows through. For a Litvish kehilla, this is a powerful message: Torah demands both intellectual honesty and decisive action. Practical Takeaway: This week, let's practice Rivkah's model. When faced with a dilemma—large or small—pause to seek clarity from Torah sources or from someone wiser. Then, once clear, act with confidence. Clarity without action is theory; action without clarity is chaos. Our avodah is to unite the two.

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With Cholent, Kugel, and Short Shuir

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לרפואה שלמה של אריה לב בן חנה



Shabbus Zmanim

1:30 pm	מנחה
4:15 pm	הדלקה
4:33 pm	שקיעה
5:26/5:40 am	עלות השחר (16.1/72)
6:52:24 am	נץ החמה
7:15 am	שחרית
Hot kiddush & Shiur after davening	
8:41/9:17 am	סי' קריאת שמע
9:41/10:05 am	סי' תפילה
11:42:15 pm	חצות היום
12:12:15 pm	מנחה גדולה (30)
2:31:16 pm	מנחה קטנה (גר"א)
3:31:39 pm	פלג המנחה (גר"א)
4:32 pm	שקיעה
5:22 pm	צה"כ (50)
5:24 pm	מעריב (52)
5:32 pm	צה"כ (60)
5:44 pm	צה"כ (72)



Next Week's Zmanim

1:30 pm	מנחה
4:11 pm	הדלקה
4:29 pm	שקיעה
7:15 am	שחרית
4:29 pm	שקיעה
5:21 pm	מעריב (52)

This Week's Riddle

Riddle: Was Eisav circumcised?

Answer: Some say that he was not circumcised being that he had a reddish color to his skin of which Jewish law mandates to delay the circumcision until his skin returns to normal color. By that time, Eisav was already an adult and refused to get circumcised.



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משל ונמשל ב-א תאמין?

By Dr ChatGPT

Mashal: Imagine a yeshivah bochur who receives two sets of keys from his Rosh Yeshivah. One key opens a small, quiet beis midrash, where the shelves are worn and the lighting flickers. The other opens the brand-new otzar hasefarim, gleaming and filled with the latest editions. The Rosh Yeshivah tells him: "One room will help you grow, and one room will distract you. Choose wisely." The bochur, assuming the sparkling otzar must be superior, spends all his time there—but he grows confused, overwhelmed by endless options, unable to focus. Only later does he realize that the simple, humble beis midrash—though not as glamorous—was designed to bring out his true kochos. The beauty of the room was not in its appearance but in the clarity and purpose it offered.

Nimshal: This is the dynamic of Parshas Toldos. When Yaakov purchases the bechorah from Eisav (Bereishis 25:31–34), Rashi explains that Eisav treated it with disdain, viewing it as a burden tied to avodah in the Beis HaMikdash (Rashi ad loc.). Eisav judged the bechorah by externals—its obligations, its weight, its lack of glamour. Yaakov, however, saw its inner value. Later, when Rivkah guides Yaakov to receive Yitzchak's brachos (Bereishis 27), she senses—through nevuah—what Rashi (27:13) notes: that the true brachos belong to the son who embraces ruchniyus, not the one who chases surface-level honor. Like the bochur who misreads the keys, Eisav chooses the glitter of the moment, while Yaakov chooses the quiet, steady light of eternal purpose. The mesorah teaches that what looks simple—learning Torah consistently, performing mitzvos without fanfare—is often the doorway to the deepest blessings.

Practical Takeaway: In a world that prizes the shiny, the loud, and the instantly gratifying, Parshas Toldos reminds us to choose with the eyes of Yaakov, not with the impulses of Eisav. This week, take one area of avodah—perhaps five uninterrupted minutes of mussar seder, a small improvement in tefillah b'kavannah, or greeting another Yid with extra warmth—and commit to it with quiet consistency, even if no one notices. These "simple rooms," so to speak, are often where Hashem hides the greatest growth. By training ourselves to value depth over appearance, we align with the legacy of Yaakov Avinu, whose strength lay not in noise but in truth—and whose blessings endure through every generation of Bnei Yisroel.

GOOD SHABBUS!