

A MORAL DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



“RICH PIZZA”

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion discusses the story of how Esav sold the right of the firstborn to Yaakov. Many commentaries discuss how the right of the firstborn can be sold. The Mizrahi says that this really could not be sold through a financial exchange and was only transferred because of Esav's oath.

There is a mitzva in the Torah (See Sefer Hamitzvos Hakatzar Positive 67) to observe Kinyanim, the Torah's modes of acquisition.

The following moral dilemma story involves a question about acquisition and purchase.

Seven friends were once spending time with each other. As lunch approached they decided to send someone to pick up a slice of pizza for



THE UNMASKING

In this week's Parsha, Toldos we find a story that shapes the destiny of our people which has so often been misunderstood. It is the story of Yaakov stealing the blessings from his father Yitzchok that were intended for his brother Eisov.

In Judaism we understand that our life in this world is similar to an obstacle course in which we are given obstacles to overcome for the purpose of perfecting ourselves. The areas of personal perfection are unique to each individual. Every person has their unique mission for which they were cut out. One person's mission may be to develop his generosity, while another person's mission is develop his integrity. Naturally, each obstacle course will differ based on what the intended mission is.

Our father Yaakov's outstanding quality was *emes*, integrity and honesty. It was this quality that HaShem wanted Yaakov to develop. The story that unfolds in our Parsha is therefore quite puzzling.

The background of the story begins with the development of the twin brothers, Yaakov and Eisov. Yaakov was a great scholar and Eisov was a man of the field - a materialist. Yaakov's interest lay in the area of the intellect with no interest in the physical world. Eisov's interest lay in the area of the physical with no interest in the world of the intellect. Their parents, Yitzchok and Rivka were split in their relationship towards Eisov. Although they both recognized Yaakov as being a person of great integrity and a flawless character, regarding Eisov they were not on the same page. Yitzchok had a special affection for Eisov as he recognized him as a good hard working simple honest person. Rivka, understood that Eisov's image of being a simple honest hard worker was a front. In reality he was a scam artist and his father was his victim. She was therefore very wary of Eisov.

When Yitzchok reached his 123rd birthday he understood that it was time for him to portion out his blessings for his two boys who were now 63 years old. Yitzchok told Eisov to please go out into the field and catch a deer and prepare it for a meal that he would enjoy. At that meal he would give his blessings to Eisov. Rivka overheard this conversation and she understood that Eisov was not deserving those blessings. She understood that Yaakov should receive them and she therefore instructed Yaakov to trick his father and present himself to Yitzchok, who was blind, as Eisov and extract Eisov's

each of them. Aliza, one of the friends volunteered to pick up the pizza. Each friend gave Aliza money for one slice.

When Aliza arrived at the pizza store she saw a sign in the store advertising a new promotion. For every pizza pie purchased, one will get a state scratch-it lotto ticket where one can win up to \$5000. Aliza was given money for seven slices. Aliza decided to buy an additional slice and get a whole pie instead of seven slices. She used her own money for the difference in price. After she was given the pizza pie and the scratch-it lotto, she sat down and scratched the ticket.

To her great surprise, she saw that she won the \$5000.

She returned to her friends and excitedly told them that she won. She told them that she used her own money to buy the whole pie and earned the ticket on her own.

"Whoa, do you mean to tell us that you used our money to buy that pie. Then we should split the \$5000 equally into seven parts," her friends argued.

"I don't agree", Aliza countered. "You would never have won the prize if I had ordered seven slices like you asked me to. I used my extra money for the additional slice and that is why I won. I should get the entire prize money myself."

Who is right? Does Aliza get all of the winnings or just an a seventh?

On one hand without Aliza adding her own money, they never would have gotten any ticket.

On the other hand, she won with the aid of their money.

What do you think?

probably sounded something like this. Rivka would say, 'honey, don't you realize that Eisov is fooling you into believing that he is so honest'. To which Yitzchok would say 'but just the other day he asked me how to give charity from his salt, he is certainly is a good fellow'. To which Rivka said 'my dear, I was raised in my father's home and you know what type of person he was. You also know my brother, Lavan, who claims to be such an upright person but you know him to be a scam (Yitzchok did, in fact, agree to this fact). Take it from me, I know a scam artist when I see one'. To which Yitzchok remained adamant that he could not be fooled. And this went on until the day that this event occurred.

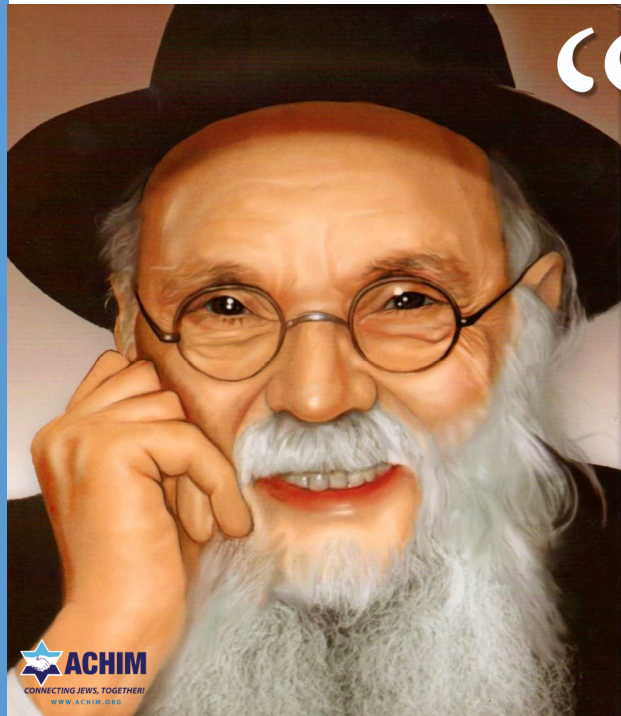
Rivka understood that she had her last chance of demonstrating her point to her husband - how easily fooled he is. If she lost this opportunity Eisov's deceit would prevail and those special blessings would become Eisov's. She therefore encouraged Yaakov, who was the paradigm of integrity (and Yitzchok knew it) to fool his father. When his ruse succeeded in extracting those blessings and Yitzchok discovered what transpired he suddenly recognized that Rivka was correct - he **had** been fooled for all those years. This was why he immediately responded "Let Yaakov remain blessed" He conceded that Rivka had been correct; Eisov was truly undeserving of his blessings.

This episode in Yaakov's life was HaShem's obstacle course for Yaakov to develop a sharpened sensitivity in his remarkable quality of integrity. There are times when honesty requires deception. When one encounters deception the truthful way to deal with it is with deception itself. As King David sang in his poem regarding Hashem's interaction with Man "*With the pure You act purely, with the corrupt You act perversely...*"

How fortunate we are that the roots of our people are so well grounded in truth, honesty and integrity and the understanding when to practice purity and when to practice deceit.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



“Each object has a specific Kinyan (means of acquisition). How is one Koneh a talmid (student or child)? With Meshichah (drawing close) and then Hagbah (uplifting).”

Rabbi Avraham Pam

blessings for himself. Yaakov, who was the epitome of honesty was naturally reticent but nevertheless followed his mother's orders and proceeded with the ruse.

Yaakov's ruse succeeded and he tricked his father into giving him the blessings that were intended for Eisov but the moment Eisov arrived home Yitzchok realized that he had been tricked. What is most amazing in this entire story is that at that the moment Yitzchok discovered the ruse he immediately declared "*Let Yaakov remain blessed!*" What changed? A moment earlier he wanted to bless Eisov and suddenly when discovering that Yaakov tricked him he wants that Yaakov should be the recipient?!

If we read this story as a child reads a novel we will walk away thinking that our nation was built on deceit and deception. There is nothing further from the truth. Anything built upon deception cannot stand the test of time and our people, for the past 3,300 years, are most certainly standing the test of time. So let us examine this story and appreciate what transpired with an admiration for who our father Yaakov was and the expectation HaShem had set for him.

We must understand that this dispute between Yitzchok and Rivka was discussed many times in the course of their marriage. The conversations

SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

AIR PRESSURE

I'm sure all of us know that water has weight, and that its pressure increases dramatically as the depth increases.

Certain fish that exist in the very bottom of the ocean are especially engineered by Hashem to withstand this tremendous pressure. If brought quickly up to the surface, they practically explode. This is because the pressure that Hashem put into their muscular structure is still there on the inside when they are brought up where the pressure is not exerted from the outside.

This is a wonderful fact, but do you realize that we, too, live in the bottom of an atmospheric sea, which also has tremendous weight? At sea level we are living down at the bottom of a very heavy, dense covering. As the ocean is to the fish, so the atmosphere is to us. Every moment we live, a pressure of 14 pounds per square inch is exerted upon our body structure, and that's pretty heavy.

We think a man is strong if he can carry 200 pounds on his back. In fact, the strongest man that ever lived put only 415 pounds over his head. Yet, every single form of life in this world, whether it's a 90-pound woman or a burly man, has a constant pressure of over 15 tons at sea level pushing and pressing upon them from every direction. That's 30,000 pounds! Amazing.

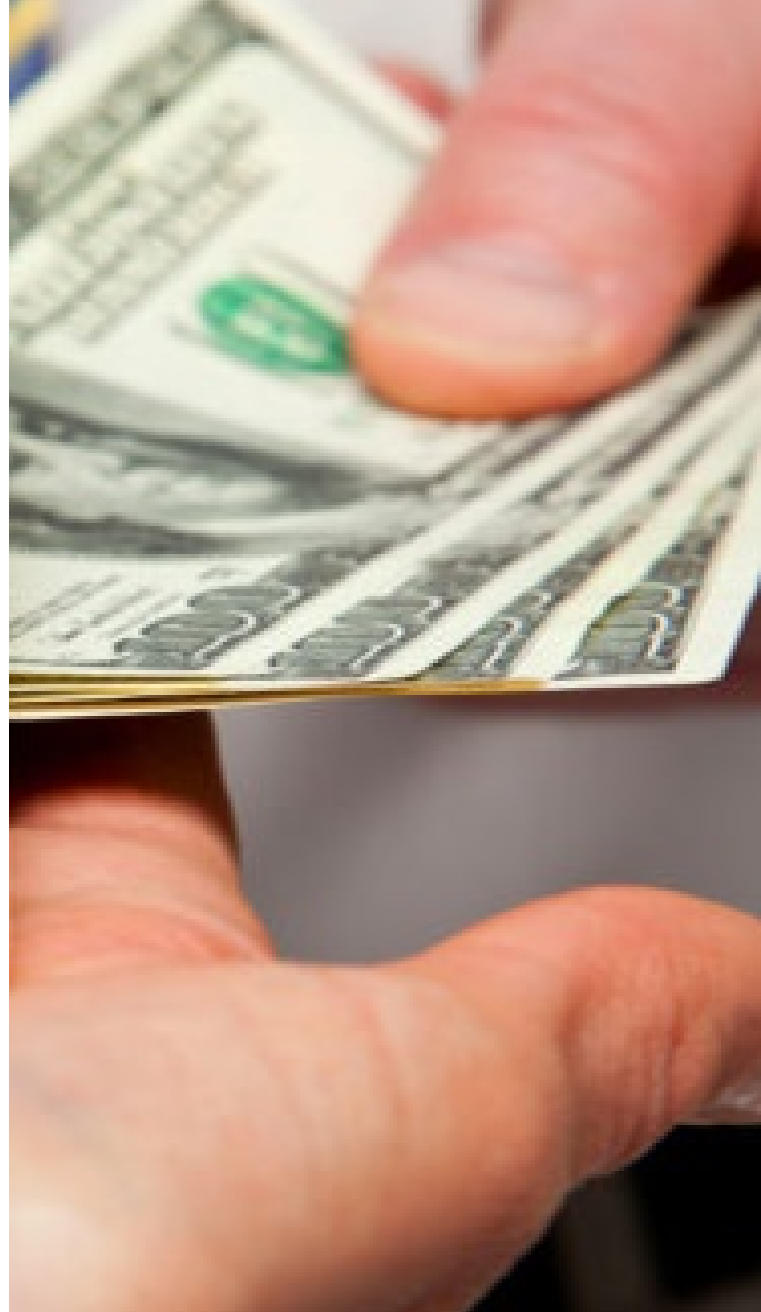
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THE HOLY FEUD

Nosson Grossman lived in Yerushalayim in 1949. It was very hard to earn a living. He made a livelihood by selling milk door to door. After a while he developed a steady milk route and was able to make a meager but sufficient parnassa to support his family. But tragically he became ill, and the doctors said he had to be hospitalized for several weeks. A few days after he was admitted to the hospital he heard that his competitor, Pinchas Ravitz began selling milk on his route. Nosson said to his family "it makes sense. Someone has to do it and I can't be there for my customers. Hashem will provide for my parnassa in another way". After a few weeks he was finally able to return home. On the first night home he began to think about new options for a livelihood now that his milk route was taken over. Suddenly a man knocked at the door. It was Pinchas Ravitz, his competitor. "How can I help you?" Nosson asked. Pinchas took out a large stack of bills, "I have your money". "What money"?, asked Nosson. "Well, while you were sick I decided to continue your milk route so that you can continue to have a parnasah", answered Pinchas. "I can't take it. It is your money. You did all of the work", said Nosson. "No it was your customers and I did it for you", said Pinchas. They each refused to give in and decided to go to a Din Torah. In their love for each other, Pinchas insisted that Nosson take the money and Nosson insisted that it belonged to Pinchas. (Based on Visions of Greatness 2 Page 135, By R' Yosef Weiss)

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The Jewish people need connection; both a connection to Hashem as well as to each other, now more than ever. Achim is building a community-wide learning network for all members of our Jewish community in order to deepen their relationship with Hashem and deepen their relationship with each other.

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