



OVERVIEW

After 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, Rome and 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 soul. 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 day's 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, prophetically alluding to the three future Temples. 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.



KEDUSHAH [HOLINESS] -- IT'S THE REAL THING

The Torah describes that Yaakov dressed up in the garments of his brother Esav, and entered his blind father's room. "Yitzchak smelled his clothing" (begadav) and proclaimed, "See the aroma of my son is like the aroma of the field that G-d has blessed" [27:27].

The Medrash comments that the pasuk which we translated "Yitzchak smelled his clothing" should not be interpreted based on the word begadim [clothing] but rather based on the word bogdim [from boged -- a traitor]. Yitzchak 'smelled' (i.e. -- he sensed through Ruach HaKodesh [Divine Inspiration]) the traitors of the Jewish people. Yitzchak knew prophetically that there were descendants of Yaakov Avinu who would be rebellious and traitors to G-d. Therefore, Yitzchak was inspired to give Yaakov a blessing.

What is the meaning of the Medrash? Why did a negative prophecy inspire Yitzchak to bless Yaakov? This Medrash can be understood based on the example that the Medrash then relates. The Medrash gives the following example of the type of traitors that Yitzchak saw, who inspired him to give the blessing.

The Medrash relates an incident with an individual named Yosef Meshisa. When the Romans came to destroy the Beis HaMikdash [Holy Temple], they did not know their way around. They needed a guide. They took a Jew -- a traitor to his G-d and a traitor to his nation -- to help them out and show them around the Beis HaMikdash. They told him that as payment for the 'tour' he could take whatever he wanted from the "spoils" of the Beis HaMikdash.

Yosef Meshisa went in and took out the Golden Menorah. Imagine how low a Jew can sink to do such a thing, to steal the Menorah itself! However, the Romans told him that it was not appropriate for a commoner to have such an item in his house. "Go back and take something else -- anything else, just not the Menorah."

Yosef Meshisa replied, "I can't go back in." They promised him that the income from the next three years of tax collection would be his, but he persisted. "I cannot go back in. Is it not enough that I angered my G-d and defiled His Temple one time, I should have to do it again? I can't do it."

The Romans tortured him until he died. As long as he was alive, while being tortured, he mourned "Woe unto me, for I have angered my Creator".

The Ponevezher Rav asked, "What happened here? What made Yosef Meshisa do Teshuvah? He was apparently a Jew who had no sensitivity whatsoever to Jewish values, and then he turned around and was prepared to die as a martyr.

What transpired that transformed him from a wicked person to a righteous person?"

The Ponevezher Rav answered that the very fact that Yosef Meshisa entered into a holy place transformed him. He was exposed to holiness. He went into the Beis HaMikdash for the worst of reasons and with the worst of intentions -- but he walked out a different person. There is something real about holiness and purity. Mere exposure to the presence of the Shechinah [G-d's Divine Presence] can change a person for life.

That is what happened to Yosef Meshisa -- he was exposed to something holy.

This, says the Medrash, is an example of the 'traitors' that Yitzchak perceived. It is possible to have a Jew that is so removed from his G-d that he can willingly enter the Temple, help the enemy, and take the Menorah -- and yet that same Jew can turn around on a dime, do Teshuva [repent], and say "No more. I have done enough. Kill me, torture me -- but I won't do it again."

That power of Yaakov's descendants, to raise themselves from the depths of lack of spirituality to its greatest heights, is the trait of the 'bogdim' that Yitzchak saw, that inspired him to give the blessing. This is what the Medrash relates. It is an amazing Medrash.

Lest one should claim that this power is unique to the Beis HaMikdash, lest one claim that today there exists nothing comparable which can so instantaneously turn a wicked individual into a righteous one, I will tell you a true story.

The story is about a Jew named Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929). Franz Rosenzweig recorded this true story in his book, *The Star of Redemption*.

Franz Rosenzweig was a totally secular Jew. He was a prolific author and a great philosopher, but totally secular -- to the extent that he was preparing to convert to Christianity as part of his engagement to a non-Jewish woman. He was a Captain in the German Cavalry in World War I, and was stationed in a Polish town on what happened to be the night of Yom Kippur. As an observer, he went into a Polish Shteible [small synagogue] on the night of Kol Nidre.

Franz Rosenzweig walked into the Shteible just to see what it was like, strictly out of curiosity. He walked out of there a Baal Teshuvah [a "returnee" to religion]. He broke his engagement and became a religious Jew. This was not in America in 1990 where it is a common phenomenon for Jews to return to their religion and become Baalei Teshuvah, but in Germany in 1915, where it was almost unheard of for a secular Jew to become religious.

What did it? What was it? It was the same as with Yosef Meshisa. He was exposed to Kedusha. A person who is totally secular, or even anti-religious, or even a person who is prepared to adopt another religion, who goes to a shul -- not to pray and not to participate, but merely to observe... Someone who is merely exposed to such a place of holiness, on such a night of holiness -- that can do something to a person's soul. It can change a person. It is real.

Holiness, Kedusha, is real. Purity, Taharah, is real. And through his exposure to Kedusha and Taharah, Rozenzweig became a different person. This does not require exposure to the Beis HaMikdash. It just takes a minyan of honest Jews praying sincerely to the Master of the World. That can change a man forever.

Rabbi Frand
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MAIN SHUL KIDDUSH



This week's Main Shul Kiddush is kindly part sponsored by **Zvi & Denise Ofer** in honour of the birth of their granddaughter **Hadar Itzhamar & Noa (nee Ofer) Elad** in Kdumim, Israel

YORTZEITS

- **Des Goldberg** for his late father
- **Martin Smith** for his late mother
- **Sam Michel** for his late father

CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS

Benjamin Sher
Dina Sher

Happy Birthday!

MAZELTOV!

MazeltoV to **Gavi Wolberg** for winning the Israel Quiz 2015! Gavi is the youngest winner of the quiz to date! MazeltoV to proud parents **Stanley & Charlene Wolberg** and to proud grandparents **Alter & Nadine Chamey** and **Lily Wolberg**.

SHABBOS AFTERNOON SHIUR

RABBI AUERBACH

DAVENING FOR RAIN AT A TIME OF DROUGHT

Shabbos afternoon at 5.20pm

BNOS²⁰¹⁵ THANK YOU!



On behalf of the community, thank you to **Racheli Levitt, Racheli Fine, and Batsheva Oudemeyer** for being dedicated Bnos Madrichim.

Watch this space for Bnos 2016!