

much, either. Mediocrity is readily available to all of us.

Great people, however, stick their necks out. They take personal risks in order to make a difference. They are not afraid of challenging situations and not afraid to engage the world. But the bigger the stakes you play with, the more significant the mistakes when you make them. One of the signs of a great man is that his mistakes are big mistakes. But his accomplishments are equally impressive.

The path of least resistance might lead to fewer mistakes, but it will also mean missing the opportunity to leave a lasting impression on the world. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob may have made great mistakes, but their accomplishments changed the world forever.

Live & Laugh

A Czech immigrant went to apply for a driver's license. First, of course, he had to take an eye sight test. The optician showed him a card with the letters.

'C Z W I X N O S T A C Z.' 'Can you read this?' the optician asked. 'Read it?' the Czech guy replied, 'I know the guy'

Calendar

*Shabbos Mevorchim Kislev
Molad: Sunday 00:57:00*

- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall.
- ◆ Greetings from Israel **ZAKA Chairman and founder Yehuda Meshi-Zahav & Chief Operations Officer Mati Goldstein**
- ◆ **Sushi & Black Label Farbrengen.**
- ◆ Mincha: 6:00 pm
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 7:10 pm
- ◆ **Rosh Chodesh: Sunday 19 Nov**

- ◆ The **Scottish Leader Signature** whiskey at Shul is sponsored by **Distell &** available for purchase at **Norman Goodfellows.**
- ◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**
- ◆ **Vehicles wanted. Any make, any condition. Best prices. Phone ARNOLD ORKIN 082 823 7826**
- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org, aish.com
- ◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.

DIS-CHEM REACH FOR A DREAM
GOLF DAY
of the Sydenham Shul

• MAKE UP A FOUR BALL
• SPONSOR A HOLE
• DONATE PRIZES
• BUY RAFFLE TICKETS

WEDNESDAY
22 NOV
KILLARNEY COUNTRY CLUB

Join us for another great day away from the city noise and stresses

Please speak to Selwyn Kahlberg, Chairman of the Golf Day Committee, Ingrid Seeff, or Rabbi Goldman.

Big Amazing Raffle:

1st Prize - Long Beach Mauritius:
5 nights including air tickets;

2nd Prize - Ivory Tree Lodge,
Pilansberg;

3rd Prize - 65" Big Screen TV

4th Prize - Glenmorangie family of 5

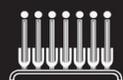
5th Prize - Kindle e-reader

Tickets available at Shul office or on
www.sydshul.co.za
Draw on 22 November.



Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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18 Nov 2017 Parshas Toldos 29 MarCheshvan 5778

Generations by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Here in South Africa, there is a popular soap opera called "Generations." While the subject matter of this week's *parshah* is indeed rather dramatic, its significance goes way beyond the stuff that "soapies" are made of. It deals with the burning issue of Jewish continuity.

These are the generations of Isaac, son of Abraham, begins the reading. We learn of the birth of Jacob and Esau, how they go their different ways and how, rather circuitously, Isaac bestows the all-important blessings on Jacob. The commentaries explain that this was not merely a blessing but the symbolic handing over of the Jewish legacy to the next generation. Isaac was passing the baton of destiny on to Jacob. (Can you imagine if Esau received those critical blessings and would have become one of our founding fathers? Surely that would be "The Weakest Link"!)

Long ago, one of the sages of the Talmud said he had "learned much from his teachers, more from his colleagues, but the most from his pupils." I can go along with that. Some time back, a man for whom I had great respect came to see me to discuss certain issues he wanted his rabbi to clarify. This was a gentleman who had reached the apex of his profession, a highly intelligent and sensitive human being--and amongst other things, he said he had a confession to make. Now we rabbis have no experience at taking confessions--we refer people directly to G-d for that sort of thing. But this man voluntarily wanted to share his most personal disappointment in life with me and I was profoundly flattered to

have been found deserving of his trust.

This was his story. He came home from the wedding of his eldest daughter and, inexplicably, found himself crying. His wife said, "Why are you crying? You should be bubbling with joy." He answered, "I'm crying because I have just given away a daughter I don't know to a man I don't know." It had suddenly struck him with the force of a ton of bricks that he'd spent years and years building up his business but he had neglected his family. And suddenly the daughter he didn't really know was leaving the family home forever.

Thank G-d, this man resolved to rectify the situation and went on to succeed admirably. But his story made a deep impression on me.

It is not only from a family point of view but also from a Jewish faith perspective that we need to know our children well. We tend to mistakenly assume that whatever positive feelings of faith, morals and *yiddishkeit* we imbibed as children from our parents will somehow automatically be transmitted to our own children. Wrong! It does not happen genetically. It takes lots of hard work and years of intimate, personal guidance by dedicated parents.

It's a new generation, folks. The influences on our kids' lives today are dramatic, powerful and not always pleasant. Internet, television, movies, computer games and even cell phones are making our children more sophisticated and grown-up at increasingly younger ages. If once upon a time young people were spared the test of assimilation by staying in a secure social circle, today one can get chat-up by anyone in the whole wide world right in

the family study on the computer through the internet.

Tragically, children from the finest homes have gone terribly astray. If we don't transmit a healthy value system to the next generation, the vacuum will very likely be filled with other willing teachers, many of whom we may not approve of.

The good news is that our kids actually do want our guidance. As autonomous as they may appear, they actually crave direction in life. And at the end of the day, what they learn at home will make a far more lasting impression than what they pick up at school, or dare I say, even at shul.

Let my friend's story serve notice. Don't wait until after the wedding. Jewish continuity and future generations depend on it. G-d bless you with success and lots of *yiddishe nachas*.

Parsha Pointers

*Toldos: Artscroll Chumash pg 124;
Living Torah pg 117*

Rivka (Rebecca) gives birth to Esav (Esau) and Ya'akov (Jacob). Esav sells the birthright to Ya'akov for a bowl of lentil soup. Yitzchak (Isaac) sojourns in Gerar with Avimelech (Avimelech), king of the Philistines. Esav marries two Hittite women bringing great pain to his parents (because they weren't of the fold).

Ya'akov impersonates Esav on the counsel of his mother in order to receive the blessing for the oldest son by his blind father, Yitzchak. Esav, angry because of his brother's deception which caused him to lose the firstborn blessings, plans to kill Ya'akov, so Ya'akov flees to his uncle Lavan (Laban) in Padan Aram -- on the advice of his parents. They also advise him to marry Lavan's daughter.

Esav understands that his Canaanite wives are displeasing to his parents, so he marries a third wife, Machlath, the daughter of Ishmael.

Sydenham Shul 24 Main Street, Rouxville, 2192.

Telephone: 640-5021, Fax: 485-2810

E-mail: sydsbul@sydsbul.co.za

Website: www.sydsbul.co.za

www.facebook.com/sydenhamshul

Heart and Mind: Esau and Jacob

By Rabbi Menachem Feldman

Your mind and heart are opposites.

Your mind breaks everything into small bite-size pieces, while your heart sweeps everything together as one.

Your heart knows no details. If your heart is in love, it is in love completely. If it loves someone, then the totality of that person, with all his or her complexities, are all swept up in that love. If someone tells you, "I love all of you, except for one small detail about you that annoys me," then you know it is not her heart talking; it's her mind talking. For the heart is blind to detail—which is precisely why it is so passionate. When you weigh every detail individually, somehow, the magic escapes.

Your mind, on the other hand, is analytical. It breaks an idea into small parts, accepting some, polishing others, and throwing some out. When something exciting happens, your mind's job is to cool you down. It knows that indeed the news is exciting, but it is smart enough to know that "the devil is in the details." The mind tells you things like "Sure, you love the new job offer, but are you really willing to put up with the extra commute time?" or "Sure, he makes you happy, but is he really right for you?"

So which do you follow, the analytic mind or the passionate heart? Today the trend is to "follow your heart," to lead a lifestyle that is driven by desire. Chassidic thought says otherwise. Sure, the heart's passion and drive are powerful forces that can propel you to great heights, but without the mind's guidance, your passion may propel you to a place you don't want to be. For the heart is from the world of Tohu, "Chaos," a world of intense passion but no direction, while the mind is from the world of Tikkun, "Order."

So the next time you're not sure if what you love is right for you, take out a sheet of paper and list the pros and cons. What you are doing is bridging the heart and mind, leading to a more integrated, holistic life. In Kabbalistic terminology, only the World of Order can elevate the World of Chaos.

This, says chassidic philosophy, explains all you

need to know about Esau and Jacob.

Isaac loved Esau. Why? Because he saw the energy of chaos. For Judaism to survive, argues Isaac, you need passion, commitment and emotional strength. The intellectual may have the right ideas, but he also has no drive to fight for and protect those ideas. You need an Esau to carry, safeguard and implement your message.

Rebecca disagrees.

Esau has awesome potential, indeed. But he needs Jacob as his compass. Left to his own devices, Esau may use the blessings to further his base desires rather than to perpetuate his grandfather's legacy. Rebecca therefore convinces a reluctant Jacob to steal the blessings designed for Esau. She understands Esau's potent quality. But she realizes that Esau's chaotic power needs direction.

It needs Jacob.

A Double Gift

By Rabbi Yitschak Meir Kagan

Isaac blesses his son Jacob: "...And may G-d give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fat of the earth..." The famed commentator Rashi explains the implication of the words "And may G-d give you": "The Al-mighty will give, and give again."

What was missing in G-d's initial giving, that could be perfected and completed by a second giving? Man is finite, limited; should he give even a magnificent and generous gift to another, it can still be improved upon by additional giving. But even the initial "gift" of the omnipotent and perfect Creator would be perfect. What could be added by "giving again"?

An analogy from the education of a pupil by his teacher might clarify the problem:

A teacher may reach two different levels of achievement with his pupil. He may successfully impart his knowledge to the pupil so that it is completely absorbed and becomes the pupil's own knowledge -- but the pupil may still not be able to creatively develop the line of thought further on his own. There is a second, higher level of instruction in which the teacher so perfectly guides the pupil, that he develops the ability to exercise his own intellectual creativity on the subject, and further extends and expands -- in his own unique contribution -- the knowledge received.

The Mishna records an example of these two levels among the pupils of Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai. One of Rabbi Yochanan's pupils was Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkanus and another was Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch. "If all the wise men of Israel (including Eliezer ben Aroch) were on one end of a scale and Eliezer ben Hurkanus on the other, he would outweigh them all," states the Mishna. But then it declares, "If all the wise men of Israel were on one end of a scale, even together with Eliezer ben Hurkanus, and Eliezer ben Aroch was on the other end, he would outweigh them all!"

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkanus was like " ... a cemented well that loses not even a drop." His reception and absorption of wisdom was superior even to that of Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch. But Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch was "...as a well-spring gushing with ever-increasing force," indicating an ability to expand, add and innovate. His creative genius was greater than that of Eliezer ben Hurkanus.

The implication of G-d's "double blessing" that Isaac imparted to Jacob is now clear: not only would the Divine blessing itself be full and perfect, but it would also have the additional effect of enabling Jacob to extend and expand the blessing himself.

Big Person, Big Mistakes

By Rabbi Shaul Rosenblatt

It's interesting to note that every one of the great founders and leaders of Judaism made mistakes. Not just minor mistakes, they made big mistakes. In this week's Torah portion, for example, Isaac believes that Esav -- a murderer, adulterer and thief -- should become the leader of the fledgling Jewish people in place of Jacob, his righteous brother.

Only God is perfect. Making mistakes is part of being human. And we see very clearly that small men make small mistakes, but great men make great mistakes.

The reason is obvious. A person can lock himself away in his own little ivory tower. By avoiding the challenges inherent within changing his world, he will also avoid the risks associated with doing so. He might not make too many mistakes, but he will not achieve all that