

## The first one emerged red entirely like a hairy mantle; so they named him Eisav. After that his brother emerged with his hand grasping onto the heel of Eisav; so he called him Yaakov. (25:25, 26)

*Rashi* teaches that Eisav was named by everyone present at his birth. In contrast, the “he” referred to in the phrase, “so he called him Yaakov,” was actually Hashem, Who gave Yaakov *Avinu* his name. The name is a play on the word *eikav*, heel, a reference to Eisav’s heel which Yaakov grasped at birth. The fact that Hashem named Eisav as a result of this incident, suggests that Yaakov’s holding onto Eisav’s heel has considerable cosmic significance. A number of questions present themselves. First, did Yaakov grasp Eisav’s heel by design or by chance? Furthermore, is it not most appropriate for a righteous person to distance himself as much as possible from a wicked person? Why would Yaakov want to be in Eisav’s proximity – let alone hold onto his heel? Last, we address the text of the *Midrash Rabbah*, *Atun krisun l’chaziraschen shem, af ana l’beni bechori*, “You gave a name to your pig; I will also give a name to my firstborn son.” Hashem seems to be referring to Eisav as a pig. Why? As a result, He names Yaakov. Clearly, this *Midrash* alludes to a profound thought.

**Horav Pinchas Friedman, Shlita**, tackles the above question in his inimitable manner. He quotes the **Avnei Nezer**, who explains the two kosher signs of accepted animals. They must have completely separated hooves and chew their cud. The Torah then goes on to list four animals. These include: the camel, hyrax and hare – all which chew their cud, but do not have split hooves. They are not kosher. The fourth animal is the pig, whose hooves are split, but who does not chew its cud.

*Chazal* observe that the Torah has cited only four unkosher animals. They explain that each animal symbolizes one of the four *galuyos*, exiles, which we, as a nation, have experienced. The camel represents Bavel; the hare, Greece; the hyrax, Media; and the pig, Edom/Rome – or our present exile. In addition, *Chazal* teach that *Galus* Edom is equal to the other three exiles. Apparently, this is because the *klipah*, spiritual husk of the *chazir*, pig, equals that of the other three.

The *Avnei Nezer* explains that Yaakov *Avinu’s middah*, attribute, was *emes*, truth. The Patriarch personified absolute truth. He serves as the nation’s *briaich ha’tichon*, middle bar, which miraculously extended the full length of the *karshei ha’Mishkan*, planks of the *Mishkan*, keeping the walls braced and sturdy. Likewise, the Patriarch, symbol of truth, maintains the integrity of the Jewish People. The pig has one kosher sign which it thrusts forward, displaying its cloven hooves, as if to mislead onlookers into perceiving it as kosher.

We now begin to understand the incongruity between Yaakov, the symbol of truth, and

Eisav/Edom, represented by the pig, the animal that defies integrity, presenting itself as kosher, when, in fact, it is *treifah*, unkosher. There is nothing as false as the pig, due to its misleading nature. This is like *Malchus Edom*, which arrogates itself as righteous and humane, when this is nothing but a ruse, as we have seen throughout the millennia by the Edomites of each generation. Rome reared its ugly head in Western Europe, specifically Germany, with its Crusades, which were nothing more than license to murder and plunder innocent people. It culminated with the Nazis and, regrettably, continues to this very day by those who present themselves as humane, honest people when, in fact, they are the heir apparents and modern-day successors to the Roman/Edom/Eisav tradition.

Yaakov is Eisav's nemesis. The Patriarch represents the very foundation of *emes*, which has kept *Klal Yisrael* spiritually solvent. Eisav is worse than the other three representatives of evil, because, unlike them, he conceals his malevolence under the veneer of righteousness and piety. A quick perusal of world history supports this idea. Eisav lived a life of aspersion and subterfuge. He spent his time and expended his energy in deceiving everyone. Rather than make the effort to do it right, he looked for ways to cover up the wrong. He was by nature a liar, a swindler.

Rav Friedman takes us further along on a journey through esoteric commentary. The *Orach L'Chaim, Parshas Lech Lecha*, quotes the *Baal Shem Tov*, who renders a passage in the *Talmud Shabbos 75A*, homiletically. *Chazal* question: "One who slaughters on *Shabbos* – what sin (which of the 39 *Avos Melachos*, main categories of labor) does he transgress?" Rav says *tzovea*, dyeing. The blood which spurts out colors the skin of the animal. *Tosfos* adds three cryptic words: *a shochet d'alma kai*. He refers to the one who slaughters the world. This is the literal translation. *Tosfos* actually is explaining that the *Talmud's* question is concerning a regular *shochet*/ritual slaughterer, but, in a play on words, the word *alma*, which usually is translated as common, is homiletically translated by the *Baal Shem Tov* as "the world." This refers to the *yetzer hora*, who slaughters the inhabitants of the world, destroying their lives by inciting them to sin.

The *Talmud* in *Succah 52A* teaches: "In the future (End of Days) Hashem will take the *yetzer hora* and slaughter it." We now understand the question posed by *Chazal* in the *Talmud Shabbos*: "When Hashem slaughters the *yetzer hora*, why does He do this? After all, the evil inclination is only 'doing his job.' His function is to seduce people into sinning, a job he carries out with great expertise and success. Why hold it against him?" To this (interpretation of the question) Rav answers: "Because of *tzovea*, dyeing." One who dyes a garment covers up its actual color. A hypocrite is an *adam tzavua*, a "dyed man," a faker, a deceiver.

There are two ways the *yetzer hora* can "attack" a person. The first is a frontal attack, in which the *yetzer hora* goes openly and without embellishment, attempting to convince the individual to sin. While this *yetzer hora* is clearly dangerous, he can overcome it. The mere fact that it acts overtly allows a G-d-fearing person to perceive its attack and circumvent it. It is the other *yetzer hora* that gives us the greatest challenge and trepidation when it comes at us covertly, with subterfuge and cunning. "This" *yetzer hora* knows that, under normal circumstances, the person

will not sin. Therefore, it presents the *aveirah*, sin, as a *mitzvah*, a good deed, something that will be good for the community. This *yetzer hora* is the one from which we have most to fear. This personifies Eisav in all his infamy.

Hashem created the *yetzer hora* to seduce man to sin. There was, however, a precondition: man must be made aware of the pitfall; he must realize that he is about to transgress G-d's word. The *yetzer hora* has a mind of its own. It rebels against its Creator, because it takes its job seriously, with glee and vitriol combined. Thus, in the End of Days, Hashem will slaughter the *yetzer hora* – because this is what it deserves. *Chazal* questioned this: "After all, why? He is doing his job!" The immediate response is, "*Tzovea!* He fools people. That is not his job!"

Eisav is the father of all this evil. Like the pig, it proudly displays cloven hooves as a ruse to fool people. Yaakov *Avinu*, the antithesis of Eisav, the father of Truth, attempted to prevent Eisav's subterfuge. Therefore, he grabbed for his heel – in order to pull back on his foot! Symbolically, Eisav, the "pig," was trying to fool him. I am making an attempt to call attention to his hypocrisy. It was Hashem Who gave Yaakov his name, because Hashem was thereby making a statement: "I support Yaakov in his battle against the pig, Eisav. Yaakov is truth – I am truth". Eisav must immediately be stopped, at all costs. The only way we will triumph in *galus* Edom is by clinging to Yaakov's *middah* of *emes*. This can only be effected through the study of Torah. The Torah provides us with the spectacles to see through the sham of the outside world and its conveyors of falsehood.