

Yaakov simmered a stew, and Eisav came in from the field and he was exhausted. Eisav said to Yaakov, “Pour into me, now, some of that very red stuff. Yaakov gave Eisav bread and lentil stew.” (25:29, 30:34)

Eisav asked for soup. Yaakov *Avinu* was a magnanimous host, and he gave him soup and bread! Why did Yaakov give Eisav bread in addition to the soup? This question was asked of **Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita**, who rendered a *halachic* response. There is a question in *Meseches Berachos* concerning which *brachah* one should recite on beans that have been cooked for a long time. Should it be *Borei pri ha'adamah*, since beans grow from the ground; or, because they have been cooked so long, should the *berachah* be, *She'ha'kol ni'heh'yeh b'devaro*? To avoid any *halachic* issues, one should wash on bread and make the *brachah*, *Ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz*, a blessing that would include almost anything eaten during the meal. To circumvent any problems Eisav would have concerning the *berachah*, Yaakov gave Eisav bread. This reply intimates that Eisav was a *halachic* scholar who might have been concerned with the blessings he recited on food.

Horav Eliyahu Mann, Shlita, then asked *Rav Kanievsky* concerning a comment he once made regarding a statement made by the **Meshech Chochmah**. Apparently, this comment was not consistent with his present explanation of Yaakov's actions. The *Meshech Chochmah* observes from the text of (24:54, 55) that Lavan and his mother did not eat together with everyone at Rivkah's *seudas eirusin*, festive meal, in honor of her betrothal to Yitzchak. Apparently, Besuel, their husband and father, had suddenly died, rendering them *aveilim*, mourners. Thus, they could not partake of the festive meal. *Rav Chaim* commented that the *Meshech Chochmah* turned them into bigger *lamdanim*, scholars, than they were. “If so,” queried *Rav Mann*, “why did *Rav Kanievsky* turn Eisav into such a big *lamdan*?” Not fazed, *Rav Chaim* replied that Eisav had a father who was a *talmid chacham*, who had certainly studied with him. Lavan's pedigree was not as distinguished. He had no one to teach him the *halachos* of *aveilus*.

Rav Mann countered, “Could Eisav have been so concerned with *hilchos berachos* when he was, in fact, returning from his first major sojourn into iniquity? He was guilty of murder, immorality and heresy. Could such a person have cared about which *berachah* to recite?”

Rav Chaim replied, “Yes. There are many people in today's society who act in a like manner.”

We might add that, while they might not kill with bullets, they kill with slander; they maim with their mouths. Immorality also comes in many forms. It does not have to be outright adultery to be considered immoral. Last, one does not have to deny Hashem to be viewed as a heretic. *Chazal* have expressed various parameters of activity which fall under this category. Yet, these same individuals still stand for a long *Shemoneh Esrai* and pontificate with righteous indignation every

instance that Torah observance does not own up to their perverted system of calibration. Eisav was evil; only he did not necessarily dress or publicly act the part. This makes his nature even more insidious