



BEIT AHARON בית אהרון

# eBeit

Toldot 26 November 2011 תולדות

## Time and Tide

**Friday**  
**25 November 2011**

Shabbat candle lighting 8.01pm

**Early Shabbat:**  
Candle lighting not before 6.50pm

Mincha 6.30pm followed by Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv

Chazan:  
Rabbi Heilbrunn

**Shabbat morning**  
**26 November**  
**29 Cheshvan 5772**

Rabbi Blesofsky's  
shiur  
9.00am

Shacharit  
9:30am followed by kiddush

Shabbat Afternoon  
Gary Schmidt's Gemara shiur  
7.15pm

Mincha  
8.00pm followed by Seudah Shlishit

Shabbat ends  
Maariv 9.06pm

**Wednesday shiur:**  
Rabbi Meir Rabi  
8.15—9.30pm  
5 Regent St

## Weekly rosters

**Kiddush:** David Weintrob & Bobby Guttmann

### Security:

9.30 am – 10.30 am	Victor Lazar
10.30 am – 11.30 am	Ian Light
11.30 am – 12.30 pm	Ari Maidenberg

**Next week ... Kiddush:** Belinda & Mitch Dobelsky  
**Security:** Arnold Oshry, Gideon Rathner, Ilan Rimer

## Mazel Tov - Eve & Ray Spitz



Eve & Ray Spitz have just become Australian citizens. To mark this occasion they have kindly sponsored this weeks kiddush.

Unfortunately we were unable to organise meat pies for the kiddush but look out for the cold beers and maybe some lamingtons.

## Kabbalat Shabbat this week

This week we have Rabbi Heilbrunn leading our Kabbalat Shabbat services. Come along for a real musical treat in chazanut. Mincha is at its usual time of 6.30pm.



## Rabbi Blesofsky's Shabbat morning shiur

Rabbi Blesofsky's Shabbat morning shiur returns this week. We are working our way through the siddur: examining, discussing and learning about the origins and meaning of the various tefillot .

The shiur commences at 9am —why not join us?

As normal Caleb Dobelsky, Nathan Guttmann, and Rafi Better will be running the older children's activity this Shabbat and Pessia Fetter will be running the program for the younger children. Start time 11am.



## Rabbi's Column: Toldot

This week's parsha begins with a rumble, as Rivkah seeks an explanation for the unusually active progeny forming within her womb.

In the answer that she receives, she is told that she will be the mother of two nations – goyim – who have already begun their rivalry.

Interestingly, the Talmud (Avodah Zara) notes that the word 'goyim' is spelled in an unusual manner. Instead of a vav and a yud, the word is written with two yuds. Says the Talmud, we could easily read this word as 'geyim', meaning, the proud ones.

Fancifully, the Talmud explains that the two 'proud ones' in the Torah refer to Rebbe (Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, compiler of the Mishnah), and Antoninus, a Roman ruler who was Rebbe's contemporary (some identify him as Marcus Aurelius).

Rav Zvi Dov Kanatopsky, in his commentary *The Essence of Simplicity*, elaborates on this gemara by explaining that Rebbe and Antoninus enjoyed a productive and positive relationship, and if it were not for Antoninus' support, Rebbe would have been far less likely to succeed in his endeavour to compile the Mishnah. Apparently these two individuals took well-deserved pride in their work, and contributed to each other's success.

This refreshing example of inter-cultural cooperation is most certainly a timely inspiration for our generation.

Shabbat Shalom.



## Jewish Aid Australia's (JAA) inaugural Run for Change - Sunday 4th Dec

We are still looking for people to join our team. Does not matter if you are young or not so young, fit or less fit, a St Kilda supporter or a Carlton supporter. Actually being a Carlton supporter is a problem but we will make an exception for this very important event.

Please join the "The Beit Aharon Killers" and in so doing assist this very important cause.

Enrolment is via

[http://www.mycause.com.au/mycause/raise\\_money/event.php?mode=event\\_landing](http://www.mycause.com.au/mycause/raise_money/event.php?mode=event_landing)

Alternatively you can sponsor the team by going to

<http://www.mycause.com.au/BeitAharonSupportingJewishAidAustralia>



## Parasha Peep – Toldot

### Peep this...

*"It's difficult to decide whether growing pains are something teenagers have - or are."* - Anonymous

This week's *parasha* opens with the birth of Esau and Jacob, twins of Isaac and Rebecca, and traces the next forty years of their lives. In contrast to Jacob, the wholesome, uncomplicated tent-dweller, Esau emerges as the quintessential hunter, whose cunning allows him to prey both upon animals and his father's sympathies. Whilst Jacob's life path and family choices bring his parents joy and earn him Divine blessing, Esau's lifestyle and marriage partners cause his parents much grief. Indeed even prior to their birth, it was Divinely proclaimed to their expectant mother that Esau and Jacob would be different:

”שְׁנֵי גֵיִים בְּבֶטֶןךָ וְשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֶּעַיֶיךָ יִפְרְדוּ...”

*Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall emerge from within you*

One of the fundamental principles of Judaism is the belief that all human beings have free will, the unimpeded power to choose how they behave and the kind of person they will ultimately become. As such, it was as a consequence of free-willed action that Esau developed as he did. However implicit in the *parasha* is an unarticulated question regarding how a righteous couple like Isaac and Rebecca could possibly sire a child like Esau. Upon whom does the Torah lay blame for Esau's wickedness?

The Talmud (comprised of the Mishna, Gemara and Midrash) is the vast body of literature known as the Oral Law, the explanation of the Torah received in conjunction with the Bible at Mount Sinai, but only redacted and committed to the written form in the first centuries of the Common Era. It is a fundamental article of Jewish belief that the Talmud – like the Torah – is timeless in relevance and application. One of the remarkable things about these holy texts, however, is that their remarkable elasticity allows them also to provide messages which are not only always relevant, but which are also specifically relevant to people in a particular and unique time period. This marvellous elasticity reveals itself in the Midrashic literature relating to this week's *parasha* and the question of who is to blame for Esau's wickedness.

The Midrashic literature is divided in responding to this question. The **Tannaitic Midrash (Sifre)** declares: *"How great is the wickedness of a person who, having grown up in the bosom of a righteous family nevertheless is wicked, for he grew up in midst of a righteous person and did not do as he did. Esau grew up in the midst of two righteous people, Isaac and Rebekah, but did not do as they did."* Here, blame for Esau's wickedness is being placed squarely upon Esau. Given their righteousness, his parents are being exonerated, as it is assumed people of their calibre would have certainly invested herculean effort in raising him properly, Esau's wickedness therefore being a reflection of his intractable evil. In contrast the **Amoraic Midrash (Tanchuma)** unequivocally declares that the cause of Esau's evil was Jacob's poor parenting. *"Whoever refrains from punishing his son will ultimately cause him to go to the bad... This is seen when 'Isaac favored Esau,' hence he went to the bad because he did not chastise him."* Here, Jacob is made fully responsible for the man Esau becomes.

**Sasson** (21<sup>st</sup>C, Israel) notes that the contrast between the Midrashic texts reflects a broader trend; namely that *"Tannaic literature tends to be favorable towards the patriarchs, whereas Amoraic literature, alongside its favorable comments, tends to launch a fair amount of criticism at the patriarchs."* He suggests that this philosophical divide may be attributed to the different polemics in which the Sages were involved in their respective time periods. The *Tannaim* of 1<sup>st</sup>-century Israel were waging religious-cultural wars with pagan Hellenists whereas the *Amoraim* of 4<sup>th</sup>-century Babylonia were fighting attacks against the Torah and their faith by Christianity. The *Tannaim* did not want to provide their opponents with weapons that could be used against Judaism, which explains why there is no trace of any such criticism in works of their times; the overall trend being one of defense. In contrast, as Christianity continued gaining strength – one of its central claims being that G-d had abandoned the Jews because of their sins and failure to accept the Christian messiah – the anti-Christian polemics necessitated a very different approach. The *Amoraim* argued that sinning is not a reason for G-d to abandon His children and take others in their stead. They therefore referred continuously to the Patriarchs, who sinned but nevertheless continued to be His chosen ones. It became vital that they not hide the flaws and errors of these faithful Patriarchs, because G-d's decision to maintain His covenant with them despite their flaws, reinforced the polemics of the *Amoraim* against the Christians of their time.

The Torah, as it reflected in its name, is a guide. As such both the triumphs and grief of parenting and the successes and failures of free-willed action are subject to scrutiny and discussion. May this week's *parasha* inspire only moral behavior and enlighten us as parents.

*Shabbat shalom, Adina B-K*

## “I want it NOW!!!!!!” - Rabbi Marc D. Angel

I have been reading a new book by Israeli Nobel Prize Winner Dr. Daniel Kahneman, “Thinking, Fast and Slow” (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2011). On p. 47, he cites a fascinating psychological experiment conducted some years ago by Walter Mischel and his students.

A group of four-year-old children were given a choice between a small reward (one Oreo cookie) which they could have at any time, or a larger reward (two cookies) for which they had to wait 15 minutes under difficult conditions. They were to remain alone in a room, facing a desk with two objects: a single cookie and a bell that the child could ring at any time to call in the experimenter and receive the one cookie. The room had no toys, books or other potentially distracting items, so the children had to deal directly with the temptation to eat one cookie or to wait 15 minutes and thus be rewarded with two cookies. About half the children managed to wait the 15 minutes.

Dr. Kahneman reports on the follow up of this experiment: “Ten or fifteen years later, a large gap had opened between those who had resisted temptation and those who had not. The resisters had higher measures of executive control in cognitive tasks, and especially the ability to reallocate their attention effectively. As young adults, they were less likely to take drugs. A significant difference in intellectual aptitude emerged: the children who had shown more self-control as four-year-olds had substantially higher scores on tests of intelligence.”

This and other psychological experiments have demonstrated a strong correlation between self-control and personal development. Those who want instant gratification tend to under-perform in major aspects of life; those who are able to be patient often achieve greater rewards and self-fulfillment. One who can keep focused on larger goals, avoiding immediate diversionary temptations, has a far greater likelihood of living happily and successfully.

This discussion sheds light on this week’s Torah portion. Our forefather Isaac preferred his son Esau over his son Jacob. He thought Esau had the strength to be a real leader of people, while Jacob was a quiet boy who stayed close to home. Yet, the Torah describes Esau as an impetuous, tempestuous personality. When he came home from hunting, he was hungry. He wanted his food NOW. He excitedly said that if he didn’t get his food right away, he would die! He sold his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup.

Esau was a classic example of one who wants instant gratification, and who cannot defer his immediate desires to achieve a larger or better goal. To him, satisfaction of his momentary hunger was more pressing than the long-range goal of inheriting the birthright and becoming the next link in the family’s leadership.

Esau was stronger than Jacob. Esau was more energetic and more physically active than Jacob. But Esau is described as someone who says: I want it NOW! I can’t wait. I’ll take a bowl of soup now, rather than wait to inherit the birthright. He was like the child who chose one Oreo, instead of waiting fifteen minutes to get two cookies.

Esau’s impetuosity was his undoing. It undermined his personal development and ultimately allowed the family leadership to devolve upon his younger brother, Jacob. Although Jacob was weaker and quieter than Esau, Jacob was able to keep focus, putting off immediate gratification in order to attain larger goals. Isaac came to realize that his wife, Rebecca, had made a sounder judgment about the future of their sons; she had understood that the quiet strengths of Jacob would eventually prevail over the impetuous strengths of Esau.

It often has been pointed out that the regimen of mitzvot teaches us self-control and self-discipline. We may be tempted to eat this food or that food: but the mitzvot instruct us to wait until we have kosher food and until we recite the appropriate blessings. We may be tempted to do this or that deed: but the mitzvot instruct us to refrain from work on Shabbat and holidays, to refrain from immodest and unjust behaviors, to

put off immediate “gains” for long term commitment to our ideals and values. In short, the mitzvot serve as a basic framework for helping us to fulfill our potentials, and to lead happy and meaningful lives. They teach us to avoid impetuosity and immediate gratification, and to stay focused on our long range goals of living righteous and good lives.

Some people succumb to the “I want it NOW” syndrome; and most such people ultimately undermine their own potential success and happiness. The Torah and mitzvot teach us to maintain our self-control and self-respect. If we keep in mind the vision of our ultimate goals and aspirations—and if we can be strong enough to overcome diversionary temptations—we can hope to achieve a life of personal fulfillment and happiness.

See [www.jewishideas.org](http://www.jewishideas.org) for more articles from Rabbi Marc D. Angel

### Rosh Chodesh Women's Group

The Rosh Chodesh Women's Group for the month of Kislev will be held on

**Wednesday 30th November 2011**

Time: 8pm

Venue: 4 Green St East St Kilda

Speaker: Ms Deborah Wiener, Chairperson of the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence

RSVP: Goldie Freedman by 28th November for catering purposes.

[goldie@truehealth.com.au](mailto:goldie@truehealth.com.au) or 0412952227

Light supper to follow – copies of the just launched book "Will my Rabbi Believe me? Will he understand?" will be available for sale (\$25 cash only). All ladies welcome

**Deborah Wiener** is a Barrister practising primarily in the areas of Family Law and Stalking. She appeared in Victoria's first stalking case, as a result of which the legislation was changed. She has spoken at conferences and on the radio about stalking and published widely in that area. She was on the Victorian Bar Council for two years and served on a number of Bar committees.

She is Chairperson of the Jewish Taskforce against Family Violence.

In that capacity she speaks at different forums about the work of the Taskforce, including multi faith events and mainstream service providers as well as Jewish organisations. In November she is facilitating an event for the Melton course about abuse.

### White Ribbon Day on 25th November

**An international event** when "men say "no " to violence". The JTAfV encourages every Rabbi to speak up about family violence in their drasha and newsletter in the Shabbat closest to WRD.

The JTAfV on November 15 in conjunction with the Rabbinical Council of Victoria launched a book for Rabbis called "Will my Rabbi Believe me? Will he understand?" which arose out of the first group of Rabbi training done 2 years ago. The second group is part way through their training.

## Helen Borowski's paintings on exhibit at Monash University Caulfield.

The last eBeit mentioned the Monash University Graduated Art Exhibition in which Helen Borowski is a participant. For those interested in attending, the show is on from **10am - 6pm weekdays only, from now until December 2**. Helen's work relates to Israel, Jewish history and Jewish religion.

The paintings and other works are on the ground floor of Building D (which is the building closest to the corner of Dandenong Road and Sir John Monash Drive). Enter Building D from the campus side by going through the large yellow entrance. Turn right and Helen's work is at the end of the long corridor, (on the left hand side, next to the sculpture studio and opposite the stairwell). Look for the black and white paintings, the Hebrew text and the Max Brenner chocolate box!

## The 2011 Mount Kilimanjaro Climb in Aid of Keren Malki

**Sunday 27 November 2011 at 7.30pm**

**Goldberger Hall, Upstairs at Mizrahi, 81 Balaclava Road, Caulfield**



Light Supper following the presentation Entry: Donation of \$15 per person to Keren Malki

Keren Malki assists families to provide home-care for their special-needs children by providing essential equipment and therapies.

## Thinking of Getting Married? Engaged?

Yad B'Yad pre-marriage education offers couples the opportunity to explore their expectations, values and goals of marriage in a Jewish context. To obtain registration for the program see the website <http://www.yby.org.au>

### Contacting Beit Aharon

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