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Director

*Maase Avot
Siman LeBanim*

When we read the Chumash, sometimes the Avot and Imahot seem very hard for us to relate to. Avraham was on such a high spiritual level who was willing to sacrifice his own son for God! This is hard for us to even imagine.

In addition, the Torah tells us very little about Yitzchak and who he was. However, Yaakov Avinu comes across as a very down to earth character. We know that he had many ups and down in his life. Since he is the last of the Avot he is closest to us not only chronologically, but also in his relatability to our lives.

At the outset of the Parsha, the Torah tells us that Yaakov was extremely afraid of his reunion with Esav. There is a unique moment after his family crosses over Maavar Yabok that Yaakov decides he must go back over the river for an unclear reason. Rashi tells us that Yaakov crossed back over to search for the “pachim ketanim” tiny jugs and containers. Why at this critical moment was Yaakov concerned with something so seemingly unimportant? I think the answer simply is that Yaakov felt a sense of anxiety due to his fear of Esav which caused him to act irrationally.

For us, the message could be that even the greatest people who we see as constants and unshakable in our lives can also have moments of fear and anxiety. The Torah wants us to recognize the Avot as human beings, and that even though they were great tzadikim and tzidkanioit it doesn’t mean they don’t have moments of fear and doubt like the rest of us.

I would like to conclude with a story that emphasizes the relatability of Tzadikim. A Rosh Yeshiva once met with Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt”l and told him that the boys in yeshiva were finding it difficult to focus on Torah learning for many consecutive hours in a row. He approached Rav Chaim for advice. Rav Chaim responded sweetly and said, “I also find it hard to focus on learning for such a long period of time, so I tell myself just five more minutes!”



Gadi Pollack
11th Grade, Efrat

**Emunah and
Bitachon in
Hashem**

Our Parsha opens up with Yaakov and Eisav meeting up after not seeing each other for many years. Yaakov is afraid that Eisav still hates him and tries to appease him in many different ways. Yaakov even bows down to Eisav 7 times.

How could Yaakov bow down to such

a Rasha? Shouldn't he have acted like Mordechai who refused to bow down to Haman? Rav Hutner explains as follows: The Gemara says that one is obligated to sacrifice their lives in order to avoid serving Avodah Zara. The Gemara asks how is it possible that Daniel chose to bow down to an idol instead of sacrificing himself. The answer given is even on the outside it looked like he was worshiping Avodah Zara, but on the inside he was davening to Hashem.

So to Yaakov, when he bowed down to Eisav it was only on the outside, but on the inside he was davening to Hashem.

The message for us is when we feel like we don't have control over our lives we should remember that the person or the situation that we are dealing with is really just a *kli*, because ultimately Hashem is the one behind the scenes. We should be *zocheh* to recognize Hashem's presence in this world by realizing that we can't control everything and instead of becoming frustrated with the situation that we

are dealing with, we should be curious and excited knowing it's from Hashem and Hashem only wants the best for us!!! ■

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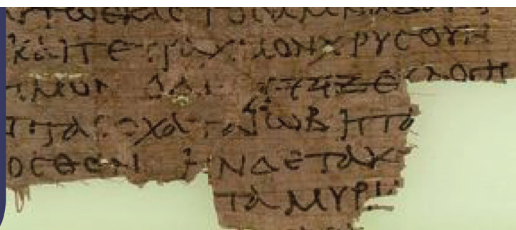
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PRE CHANUKA
LECTURE



Septuagint, Synagogue, and Symbiosis:
The Jews of Hellenistic Egypt

Gary A. Rendsburg

Blanche and Irving Laurie Chair
in Jewish History Rutgers University

10 December 2022
Motzei Shabbat

8:00pm

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael in Yemin Moshe
Rechov Pele Yoetz 2, Yemin Moshe