

# WHAT A MAROON!

*by Rabbi Dovid Green*

In this week's parsha the Torah relates to us the birth and maturation of Yaakov and Eisov, the twin sons of Yitzchok and Rivkah. About them the Torah states: "And the children grew, and Eisov was a skilled hunter, a man of the field. Yaakov was a simple man (uncomplicated, not street-wise), who dwelled in tents. The sages say that Yaakov engaged in spiritual and intellectual pursuits in the study halls of Shem and Eiver, great sages who transmitted G-d's word in those days.

"And Yaakov was cooking food when Eisov came exhausted from the field. 'Give me some of that red stuff, because I'm exhausted' said Eisov. 'Sell me your birthright today,' replied Yaakov. 'I'm going to die (anyway), what do I need a birthright for,'" concluded Eisov. (Genesis 25:27-32) Eisov sold his birthright which had only to do with spiritual entitlements, for a portion of red lentils, and he didn't even give it a second thought.

Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky, of blessed memory, writes that Eisov thought the whole issue of the birthright was a big joke. The Midrash states that Eisov brought a group of lawless friends who joined in the fun of belittling the birthright and lauded Eisov for getting the better end of the deal. "Ha Ha, what a maroon!"

Years pass, and the incident becomes part of the distant past. Yitzchok becomes blind. Aware of his own mortality, Yitzchok decides that the time has come to bless Eisov, his first-born. These blessings go hand in hand with the birthright. Rivkah overhears Yitzchok sending Eisov to hunt for food which he will eat before giving the blessings. She convinces Yaakov to pretend to be Eisov and receive the blessing in his stead. He succeeds, and in the end Yitzchok even agrees to Yaakov being the beneficiary of the blessings. Eisov returns, and the day's events become clear. "And Eisov cried an extremely great and bitter outcry." "Bless me as well, father. Don't you have one blessing left father?" Eisov is exposed. He sold the birthright for a bowl of lentils. Eisov is no longer laughing.

Eisov teaches us a great lesson with his deeds. This event in the life of Eisov analogizes the choices we face in our own lives, and their repercussions. The bowl of lentils represents the material world. Wholehearted pursuit of the material world is often at the expense of our spiritual growth, and the opportunity to develop a relationship with the Creator. Material attainment often ends in disappointment. What was absolutely ridiculous to Eisov before he carefully considered it was a source of extreme pain and regret at a later point in his life. This is the meaning of the words of our Sages: "the evil are filled with regrets."

A great man once said that we don't only need to prioritize what is important, and unimportant. We also need to prioritize what is important, and what is more important. Our sages comment: "the only things which accompany us into the afterlife are our Torah study and performance of commandments." Everything else which we amass we leave behind. Ask yourself: do my priorities only encompass things pertaining to the material world? Am I selling my birthright (my heritage) for the proverbial bowl of beans? Am I truly happy and satisfied with my successes? What gives me a sense of true fulfillment? Let us learn from Eisov, and not repeat his ill-fated choices.

Good Shabbos!

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