

I SHALL MOVE THE WORLD!

by Rabbi Label Lam

And HASHEM told her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two manners of government will separate themselves from your inwards, and one form of government will be mightier than the other, and the greater will serve the lesser." (Breishis 25:23)

Rivka was informed that she carried two nations in her womb who would represent two different forms of social government. The one state would build up its greatness on spirit and morals, on the humane in humans, the other would seek its greatness in cunning and strength. Spirit and strength, morality and violence oppose each other. One form of government will always be more powerful than the other...The whole of history is nothing else than a struggle as to whether spirit or sword, or as our sages put it, whether Caesaria or Jerusalem is to have the upper hand. (Rabbi S. R. Hirsch ztl.)

Here we have a prophetic description of the seesaw relationship between Yaakov and Essav. When one will be up the other will be down. Essav will be a prominent and dominant force in the world and yet the verse tells us that "the greater will serve the lesser". How is this possible? How can the lesser, seemingly weaker element overwhelm the apparently prevalent power?

Imagine two boys of equal weight, let us say 100 pounds each, sitting opposite each other on a seesaw. Seated equally distant from the center bar they remain balanced and with just some subtle maneuvering they can playfully bounce up and down. That's how it's done in playgrounds across the globe. Let us say now that one boy weighs 200 pound while the other weighs 100 pounds. The poor fellow of lesser girth will remain hopelessly stuck up in the air. How can a smaller object possibly exert enough pushback and defend itself against a much larger opposition?

Let us call upon the great Greek philosopher and mathematician Archimedes who said the following truism based on a simple mechanical phenomenon: "Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it and I shall move the world." If the 100 pound boy was sitting 10 feet from the fulcrum and the bigger 200 pound boy was 2 feet away then he might stand a greater chance of counterbalancing the greater size of his rival.

We have only to apply this principle by extending the analogy to discern Yaakov's winning strategy! What makes a lever longer or shorter? What determines the placement of the fulcrum? (Same

question basically) Essav had a glaring weakness. Over and over again he employs a certain word that continually exposes his vulnerability. That word is "ZEH"- this! "What good is this birthright to me?" "Give me some of this red- red soup!" Essav was focused on the here and the now! His whole world was Olam HaZeh- This Worldly! That was how he came to sell his entire future for a bowl of cholent. His eyes were impressed by color and appearances. He was a master of manufacturing facades and manipulating impressions. This is his craft, his art, decorating and conquering "this". This is very close to the person. He does not see or consider the past or the future in his deeds because he's reactive to the passions of the moment. That lack of farsightedness places the fulcrum at his feet, at this spot, here, wherever he is.

Yaakov, in contradistinction, saw in the birthright the future of an as yet unborn nation. He realized the fulfillment of the promise of the birthright would not be in his lifetime but many generations later. Essav rejected it because it had little present value. Yaakov's vision included the whole scope of human history. He understood the entirety of the mission of the Jewish People including his role as an individual and as a Patriarch. His ultimate reward would be reaped in Olam Haba- The World to Come! We might say that the length of the vision of a person, the distance they can see historically backward and farsightedness going forward and beyond, determines the length of the lever. Now we can go back to Archimedes' quotient and appreciate how Yaakov is expected to ultimately assert his spiritual influence and move the whole world in spite of Essav. Almost nobody in history has had such a long lever as Yaakov, with his far reaching intent, while Essav and his ilk are parked next to the fulcrum. "Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it and **I shall move the world.**" DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.