

IN THE QUIET OF SHABBOS

by Rabbi Label Lam

So Yosef went up to bury his father and with him went up all of Pharaoh's servants, the elders of his house and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all of Yosef's household, his brothers and his father's household...When they went up with them were chariots and horsemen and it was a very imposing camp. They came to the threshing place of Atad which is on the other side of the Jordan, and there they held a very great and imposing eulogy...His sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the field of Machpela, which Avraham purchased for bought as a burial place, from Ephron the Hittite, facing Mamre. (Breishis 50:7-13)

Yaakov's funeral was a huge international event. Ultimately he received the honor he deserved. However, the Talmud tells us that Yaakov, our father, faced opposition from a likely source even at the moment of his burial. Who do you suppose showed up and protested Yaakov's burial in Kiryas Arbah the cave of HaMakpela? None other than Essav! We are told all about it and at great length in Tactate Sota (13A) how Essav persuasively appealed that the last burial plot right next to Leah, who was at one time considered to be his intended or destined soul mate belonged to him.

The children of Yaakov, of course countered with arguments of their own claiming that he had effectively forfeited his plot when he sold the birthright to his brother Yaakov so many years earlier. Essav contended that he still was deserving of this part of his inheritance. The children of Yaakov claimed to be in possession of proof to the contrary but the papers were in Egypt. So they sent swift footed Naftali who was titled in this week's portion as, "a gazelle - like messenger, he delivers pleasant sayings." (Breishis 49:22) While Naftali was hustling back to Egypt to retrieve the documentation, Yaakov remained unburied.

Now Dan had a son whose name was Chushim. (Chushim -sensory is a euphemism because he was actually deaf) He was observing all that was going on with clear eyes, unclouded by all of oratory emanating from Essav mouth.

All he saw was that his holy and well-respected grandfather was being openly denigrated while this fellow Essav was holding sway over his listening audience with his theatrics. Chushim was not influenced by Esau's words and legalistic jargon. He saw the truth in all its raw reality, and therefore he took action. The Talmud tells us that he picked up a club and hit Essav in the head. I'll spare you the rest of the gory details.

How was Chushim able to cut through all the false verbal fat of Essav's rhetoric? What was his special talent? The answer is already plain and obvious. He was deaf! Chushim was like that little boy in the story about the Emperor and his new clothing who saw the naked unadorned truth with pure eyes.

At the risk of editorializing we can observe how around us today a web of words are woven to cover-up and gain permission for the worst behavior. An innocent child, if you can find one, can see right through the scheme and the scam that is taking place right before our eyes. Irresponsible nations fashion weapons with the vilest intentions while couching them in noble terms. The most deviant conduct is celebrated as happiness with synonyms of joy while all mouths are stricken dumb. Many pundits, thinkers, and plain folk are dazzled by the confusion of conversation while the clouds of chaos seem too thick to cut.

Boruch Hashem, on Shabbos we can step back from the world and in doing so willfully make ourselves like Chushim, temporarily deaf to all the sound and fury that signifies nothing. In that island of sanity our inner ear opens up and we become sober and possibly innocent again. In one of the Zemiros that we sing on Friday night it says, "All who thoroughly enjoy Shabbos will merit great happiness and will be rescued from the birth pangs of Moshiach" What are these birth pangs? What does the pleasure of Shabbos do to alleviate that tribulation? It could be that the biggest possible pain is the feeling of panic that comes from a lack of clarity and so too the clearest form of relief is found **in the quiet of Shabbos**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).