

# ESAV & YAAKOV

## *The Archetypes of Good & Evil The Integration of Intellect & Intuition*

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The relationship between the twins Esav and Yaakov is an archetypal expression of the relationship between good and evil. While many believe the false assumption that good and evil are diametrically opposed and glaringly visible as opposites, the message of Torah is clear, Esav and Yaakov, are twins.

Good and evil can appear identical and like with human beings, unless one delves beneath appearances it is impossible to discern the good from evil. Appearances are almost always confusing and many times they are the opposite of what they truly represent.

Esav and Yaakov are twin; however different they still share a lot in common. The only real difference that Torah distinguishes between their appearances is the nature of their skin. Esav is hairy and Yaakov is smooth. Such images also have become archetypes in their own right. Hairiness has become a symbol of man associated with the physical side of his humanity; whereas smoothness has come to symbolize humanities more intellectual properties. Indeed, Torah embraces these same archetypes in the unfolding saga of Esav and Yaakov, not only in their lifetimes, but also in the continuing centuries that outline the history of their descendants.

Thus even as Esav and Yaakov are twin brothers, the Torah message implies that the physical side and the intellectual/spiritual side of humanity are equally twin brothers. This message seems to be foundational to Torah, although the Torah's understanding of it, needs to be understood beneath the apparent surface of the thing.

Long ago, the great Sages commented in the Zohar that if we only understood the Torah at its surface level, it would be easy to write an even better one. Yet being that there are sublime secrets hanging on every word and letter, the surface superficiality must be penetrated in order to understand Torah's true meaning and message. Not only is this true with regards to the written word of Torah, but this same profundity also pertains to the stories told long ago by the Sages. Although they were not prophets they were the children of the prophets and thus walked in their path and made full use of their techniques.

Without this fundamental understanding the works of the Sages, be they in areas of Torah Law (Mishna & Gemara) or Agadah (legends & stories) will never be properly understood. This revelation is even



reported by the great Sage, Rabbi Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna (Even Shelema 8:21). With this foundation now laid, let me share with you one of these coded stories of the Sages, its real profound meanings and what we learn from them that applies to our topic at hand.

The story is told that when Yaakov died and was being taken to Makhpelah cave to be buried alongside his father and mother, Esav arrived with an army to contest and prevent the burial. Esav claimed the cave as his own and a great argument broke out between the sons of Esav and the sons of Yaakov. Husham the son of Dan was allegedly deaf and did not understand what was happening. His father motioned in sign language to him what was happening and Husham, simple man that he was, took matters in his own hands, drew out a sword and decapitated Esav. Needless to say, this led to an all out war between the sons of Esav and the sons of Yaakov.

In the end the sons of Yaakov won the day but they also allowed a compromise and permitted the severed head of Esav to be buried in the lap of his father Yitzhak inside Makhpelah Cave. Thus Yaakov was laid to rest in his place and Esav was split, with his head being alongside his father and brother and his body removed to be buried elsewhere.

Now, this is a nice story; whether or not it is historical fact cannot be ascertained. However to this day in the Makhpelah Cave building one can find alongside the caves of all the Patriarchs and Matriarchs the Cave of the Head of Esav. So, historical or not, this legend dates back to ancient times. Now, aside from the irrelevancy of whether or not this is historical, let us delve beneath the surface of metaphor to understand the sublime truths being taught here.

Good and evil have never been fully understood by most believers in religion. We are usually taught that good and evil are absolute opposites engaged in an eternal struggle for dominance. Yet, this concept is not what the Torah teaches. G-d clearly states through the prophet Isaiah (45:7) that, *"I form light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am HaShem, that does all these things."* G-d is the creator of evil and darkness just as he is the maker of light and peace.

In this respect, let us remember it was G-d who ordained that Rivkah be impregnated with the twin souls of Esav and Yaakov. G-d called down both souls from Heaven and placed them together to be born as twins. G-d did this, not Yitzhak and not Rivkah. We might very well ask why would G-d send the soul of the archetypal evil Esav to be born as a brother to the archetypal righteous Yaakov? What is G-d telling us by this mating? As different as Esav and Yaakov grew to become, in the end they were still brothers, bound by common parents and common blood. What is this telling us about the relationship of good and evil?

This apparently bizarre relationship between good and evil did not begin here with Esav and Yaakov, nor did it end here. In Kabbalistic writings, we read something even more profound. *"Do not be surprised that you find written in the Holy Zohar regarding the Tree of Knowledge that the Good therein is Metatron, and the Evil therein is Samael"*.

Just as Esav and Yaakov are brothers below so is the Angel of G-d uniquely related with the evil angel commonly known as the Satan. This follows the ancient Torah adage, "as it is below so it is above." Yet, just what this is telling us is a profound revelation about the nature of the universe and how G-d operates within it and with us.

Good and evil are both agents of G-d and serve Heaven to accomplish the Divine purpose. Torah however commands us to choose good and to avoid evil. This is for our own benefit. Just because G-d creates a thing, allows its existence and even in a way nurtures its existence does not necessarily mean that such a thing is a benefit for us. G-d created all types of poisonous plants and allows them to flourish, yet nowhere does He suggest that we ingest their poison. Why then does G-d allow them to exist, this is a question that only Heaven can answer, an answer unknown to us.

Although G-d has created evil and bad things, He allows them to exist and warns us to stay away from them; and still, like Yaakov and Esav, sometimes the evil and bad things are not so clearly discerned. We often have a hard time recognizing the evil from the good. We often mistake the visage of Esav for the visage of Yaakov. When this happens and we embrace Esav instead of Yaakov, thinking all along that we are embracing Yaakov, we are in for one very rude awakening. We often forget to pay attention to Esav's metaphorical hairiness, which is a metaphor for harshness and severity.

Yitzhak Avinu, physically blind as he was, taught for posterity how to recognize the difference between Esav and Yaakov all the while that the eyes are blind to see. When Yaakov came to him in Esav's garments, Yitzhak said, "*The hands are the hands of Esav while the voice is the voice of Yaakov.*" From this, our Sages understood the prophetic tone in Yitzhak's words. The way of hands is the way of Esav and the way of voice is the way of Yaakov. Although Yaakov can turn to the ways of Esav's hands, nonetheless, his true power is in his own voice.

Torah/Kabbalah teaches that the Adamic race became entangled and trapped in this physical dimension through what is called the eating of the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil. By the metaphorical eating of this forbidden fruit, humanity lost its intuitive psychic edge and moral compass and instead had to rely completely upon our rational intellectual faculties to guide our way through life in this world.

As we have learned through the course of human history, the intellectual faculty alone, bereft of morals is not enough to guide us safely through all of life's intricacies. Knowledge by itself, unguided by the heart can be both good and evil. Intellect alone, without any inner sense of intuitive awareness and morals can lead one to embrace what appear to be entirely logical conclusions which at the same time are evil and destructive. One embraces the Satan all the while believing that one is embracing the Angel of G-d.

Intellectual analysis of life and struggle is a two-edged sword that can lead one to good conclusions or evil ones, or both. This is simply the dual nature of intellect when it is detached from intuitive psychic awareness that is received from and connected to a higher source of knowing.

Humanity was originally designed to think intuitively and intellectually simultaneously. With such a mental capacity we would be able to traverse worlds both seen and unseen, keeping both in proper balance and alignment. When, however, we lost contact with our intuitive edge, we also lost our ability to properly perceive the depths of the realities that face us. We enter life and pass through it in a relative state of blindness. We are always bumping into this or that thing, crashing into something and breaking something else, all because we do not have the mental eyes or the sensitivity to avoid danger.

The metaphorical hands of Esav, represent human endeavors that follow what we call the natural course. These are never enough to guide us in the paths of righteousness. Therefore, Esav represents all those who approach life through detached intellect, without the balance of the metaphorical voice of Yaakov that rises, ascends above and unites the worlds, conscious with unconscious. Rational intellectualism, without any psychic, intuitive interaction is a dry form of expression that leaves a bitter taste in one's mouth. This is why the Torah referred to it as the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and prohibited us from eating it, which means to get involved with it.

Yet, curious human beings that we are, had to find out the truth. This time, the truth cost us dearly and we are still paying the price. Every day we eat of the forbidden fruit of stale, detached intellectualism and fall under the dominion of Esav/Samael. Every day we use the hands of Esav instead of the voice of Yaakov. Every day we succumb to the curse that G-d has placed on Esav's descendants. Every day we fail to recognize that Esav's descendants are not his bloodline, but rather those who walk in his psychological and spiritual footsteps; for the most part this means many of us.

The voice is the voice of Yaakov; this is what defines the righteous. Therefore, righteousness is not defined exclusively by one's actions; for even evil people can perform proper or righteous actions. Righteousness is actually a state of mind that leads to a state of being.

In order to be righteous one has to not eat of the forbidden fruit of detached rationalism devoid of psychic intuitive awareness. Needless to say, this flies in the face of most religious leaders and practitioners today. What a bizarre twist of fate how many Jewish leaders today, religious and secular alike are actually walking the path of Esav instead of speaking the voice of Yaakov.

Especially in the religious camps, where rationalism has been elevated to holiness at the expense of what is called mysticism, such so-called Rabbis, in spite of whatever Torah they think they are teaching, they are actually teaching Torah the way of Samael and not the way of the Angel of G-d.

The results of this are self-evident; we see nothing but trouble arising out of their camps. There is abundant intellectual accomplishments but it is all void of spiritual depth and devotional attachment to Heaven. Morals are twisted and behaviors are beyond the definition of bizarre, and all of it is justified, viewed and proclaimed as holy. This is the byproduct of eating the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. These hypocritical leaders have lost the ability to distinguish between good and evil. They have mistaken Esav for Yaakov and do as Esav does, instead of speak as Yaakov speaks. More so, my words here will only fall upon their deaf ears, just like the words of admonishment spoken by centuries of Sages and prophets were also ignored and scorned.

Distinguishing between Esav and Yaakov has always been difficult. Since their birth, they have been twins and ever since then many have confused the two. Yet, never has there been such dire consequences from such an apparently minor mistake. It is imperative for us to learn to speak with the voice of Yaakov and to cease interpreting this to mean mere rational academic Torah study devoid of heart and mysticism.

Yaakov's voice ascends to Heaven in meditation and prophetic communion, just like he learned in the tents of his grandfather Avraham. Yaakov alone and those who follow his example, today are the ones who can direct where and how the Heavenly ladder descends to Earth. Those Rabbis who would distance themselves and others from the embrace of the mystical and emotional aspects of Torah are in the words of the holy Zohar destroying the world (ref. T.K. 47). Elsewhere the Zohar refers to them as Amalek, the sworn enemy of G-d (ref. Zoh. 1, 25b). Such Rabbis are Esav disguised as Yaakov. The old saying states that fruit does not fall far from the tree; we see from what Tree these disconnected rationalists eat.

Learn to distinguish between good and evil, between Yaakov and Esav, between the Voice that ascends and the hand that destroys. These Esavs in Yaakov's clothing are destroying the Torah world. It is up to us who use the Voice to fight this and to restore Esav to his subservient place.

In the end, G-d has His Divine purpose for allowing all this to happen. One lesson for us to learn is that if we partake of the Tree of Life (Torat HaSod), we will never again become susceptible to the infection and poison emanating from the Tree of Knowledge and the influence of Samael/Esav/Erev Rav/Amalek who have risen to the heights of power in the religious and secular camps and unwittingly are using their influence to destroy everything sacred and holy. Only when we choose to act with the voice of Yaakov do we stand the chance to break the hands of Esav.

Without moral and psychic intuitive development, Torah will forever remain a closed book to us and we continue to walk in the blindness of detached intellectualism that is leading us all over the cliff of moral bankruptcy and personal and societal collapse.