This Week in Jewish History

Jacques Blau – A Young Orthodox Violin Prodigy Who Inspired a Generation

On 17 November 1907, Jacques Blau — a young Jewish violin prodigy from an observant, traditional family in Antwerp — stunned audiences when he performed as a soloist with the Brussels Philharmonic at just twelve years old. With limited opportunities for Jewish musicians at the time, his achievement became a source of pride for European Jewish communities. Blau practised for hours each day, balancing school, family, and religious life, and used his talent to support charitable causes throughout his short career.

For our students today, Blau's story is a reminder that music can be more than entertainment: it develops discipline, perseverance, confidence, and a healthy way to express what words sometimes can't.

Question for the Table - How does learning or listening to music help you express who you are — and what qualities do you build when you practise a skill over time?

Notices

Next week's timetable will be **Week A**

Shacharis starts on **Friday 8:10**

Edited By **Eli Bondt & Avi Abeles** For sponsorships please contact **avi@abeles.co.uk**

השבוע ביבנה

#018 **תולדת** Start 3:48 End: 4:58

Last week in Toras Yavneh former Yavneh Boy Zalman Coleman who ran Toras Yavneh 4 years ago came and spoke about the life of Soroh Imeinu and the importance of making a Legacy that lasts.

Rosh Chodesh on Friday meant we enjoyed a musical Hallel

This week in Leil Shishi we learnt about the Halochos of Chanukah, followed by Pizza!

Avraham, Yitzchak... and You

Rabbi Cohen

In Toldos, the Torah pauses the story of Yaakov and Eisav to tell us about Yitzchak facing famine. Just like his father Avraham, he plans to go down to Egypt. But Hashem stops him and tells him to remain in Eretz Yisrael, praising Avraham for keeping His mitzvos, chukim and toros.

Rashi, based on the Gemara, says this means Avraham even kept Mitzvos like Eruv Tavshilin, long before they were formally given. This is difficult to understand: how could he keep Mitzvos that did not yet exist, and which were responses to later events?

Rav Kook explains that Avraham didn't keep these Mitzvos in the literal way we do. Instead, he lived the core values behind them. Eruv Tavshilin teaches the ability to distinguish not only between weekday and holy, but even between different levels of holiness - bein kodesh lekodesh. Avraham had that sensitivity in every situation. He understood that different moments call for different types of spiritual response.

This is exactly the message Hashem gives Yitzchak: Don't simply imitate your father. Your mission, your circumstances, and your level of holiness are different. Yitzchak must develop his own path of Avoda, rooted in who he is.

Perhaps the Torah teaches this lesson precisely as Yitzchak and Rivkah raise two extremely different children. For us as students, the message is clear: every one of us has a unique type of Kedusha. We don't all grow the same way, and we don't all succeed in the same areas. Our Avoda is to recognise our strengths, develop our own path, and serve Hashem in the way that brings out the best in us

Salt and Straw

Shloimy Beenstock - Year 9

Rashi says in this week's Sedra, Eisav deceived Yitzchak by asking him how to tithe salt and straw. The issue is that salt and straw are not subject to tithing at all. So instead of looking pious, Eisav's question should have exposed his ignorance. If he grew up in Yitzchak's home, he surely saw that Yitzchak never tithed these items. So why ask such an obviously wrong question?

Another basic question that could be asked, Eisav asking "how to tithe," sounds strange because tithing simply means giving one tenth. What is complicated about that?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains the above by first stating that Rashi is not referring to the later halachic mitzvah of tithing crops. Rather, he is referring to a more general practice of giving a tenth of one's possessions, something our forefathers did long before Sinai.

Avrohom gave a tenth of everything he owned to Malki-Tzedek. Since Avraham commanded his children to continue his ways, Yitzchak also practiced this all-inclusive form of tithing. This means he tithed all possessions, not just crops.

If so, salt and straw would indeed be included in this pre-Torah custom. Eisav's question was therefore about how to calculate a tenth of items whose value depends largely on how they are used rather than their own independent worth.

Salt and straw are nearly worthless on their own. Their value appears only when they are combined with other things:

- Salt dramatically improves food while being cheap by itself.
- Straw is almost worthless alone but essential in brick-making.

So Eisav's question might have been: Should their tithe be calculated based on their intrinsic low value, or based on their far greater value once used?

Based on this explanation, Eisav's question begins to make sense and appear very "meticulous," which is why Yitzchak thought Eisav was being scrupulous in Mitzvos.