

The Challenge

1. Esav I Bereishit 25:30-32; Bereishit 27:24

ויאמר עשו אל יעקב הלעיטני נא מן האדם האדם הזה כי ענף אנכי על פן קרא שמו אדום: ויאמר יעקב מכרה כיום את בכרתה לי: ויאמר עשו הזה אנכי הולך למות ולמה זה לי בכרה: ויאמר אתה זה בני עשו ויאמר אני:

2. Lavan Bereishit 29:12; Bereishit 30:38; Bereishit 31:20

ויגד יעקב לרחל כי אחי אביה הוא וכי בן רבקה הוא ותרץ ותגד לאביה: ויצג את המקלות אשר פצל ברהטים בשקתות המים אשר תבאן לצאן לשקות לנכח הצאן ויסמנה בבאן לשקות: ויגב יעקב את לב לבן הארמי על בלי הגיד לו כי ברם הוא:

3. Kallah Rabti 3:14

"ויגד יעקב לרחל כי אחי אביה הוא, וכי בן רבקה הוא. וכי אחי אביה הוא? והלא בן אחות אביה הוא! אלא כיון דאמר לה "בן רבקה הוא", אמר לה 'מינסבת לי', אמרה ליה 'הן נסובה מינסיבא לך, אלא אבא רמאה הוא ולא יכלת ליה', אמר לה 'אחיו אנא ברמאותא.'
 "And Yaakov told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and he was the son of Rivkah." Was he her father's brother? Was he not the son of her father's sister! Rather: He said that "he was the son of Rivkah," and he said to her, "Marry me." She said, "Yes, I will marry you, but Father is a deceiver and you cannot defeat him." So he told her, "I am his brother in deception."

4. Esav II Bereishit 32:17; Bereishit 33:8

וימתן ביד עבדיו עדר עדר לבדו ויאמר אל עבדיו עברו לפני ורנח תשימו בין עדר ובין עדר: ויאמר מי לה כל המנהה הזה אשר פגשתי ויאמר למצא חן בעיני אדני:

5. Shechem Bereishit 34:6

ויצא חמור אבי שכם אל יעקב לדבר אתו:

6. Michah 7:20

תתן אמת ליעקב חסד לאברהם אשר נשבעת לאבתינו מימי קדם:

Our Halachic Masks

7. Talmud, Yevamot 65b

וא"ר אילעא משום רבי אלעזר בר' שמעון מותר לו לאדם לשנות בדבר השלום שנאמר "אביך צוה וגו' כה תאמרו ליוסף אנא שא נא וגו'" ר' נתן אומר מצוה שנאמר, "ויאמר שמואל איך אלך ושמע שאלו והרגני וגו'"
 דבי רבי ישמעאל תנא גדול השלום שאף הקב"ה שינה בו דמעיקרא כתיב 'ואדוני זקן' ולבסוף כתיב 'ואני זקנתי'.

Rabbi Ela'a taught, citing Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon: One is *permitted* to lie for the sake of peace, as it is stated, "[Joseph's brothers said to him] Your father instructed, So shall you say to Joseph: Please forgive the sin of your brothers."

Rabbi Natan taught: It is a *mitzvah*, as it is written, "And Samuel said: How will I go [to anoint David]? Saul will hear and kill me!" [And Gd then told him to lie about the purpose of his trip.]

It was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishmael: "Peace is so great that even Gd lied for its sake! Initially Sarah said, "And Abraham is old," but Gd later reported that she had said, "And I am old."

8. Mishnah Sheviit 5:9

משאלת אשה לחברתה החשודה על השביעית נפה וכברה ורחיים ותנור אבל לא תבור ולא תטחן עמה... שאין מחזקין ידי עוברי עבירה וכולן לא אמרו אלא מפני דרכי שלום

One may lend her friend, who is suspected of violating *shemitah*, a sifter, sieve, mill or oven, but she may neither sift nor grind with her... one may not strengthen the hands of sinners. All that we permit is only to promote peace.

9. Talmud, Gittin 61a

מפרנסים עניי נכרים עם עניי ישראל, ומבקרין חולי נכרים עם חולי ישראל, וקוברין מתי נכרים עם מתי ישראל, מפני דרכי שלום.

We support needy non-Jews along with needy Jews, and we visit ill non-Jews along with ill Jews, and we bury deceased non-Jews along with deceased Jews, in pursuit of peaceful paths.

10. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deiot 2:3

הכעס מדה רעה היא עד למאד וראוי לאדם שיתרחק ממנה עד הקצה האחר, וילמד עצמו שלא יכעוס ואפילו על דבר שראוי לכעוס עליו, ואם רצה להטיל אימה על בניו ובני ביתו או על הציבור אם היה פרנס ורצה לכעוס עליהן כדי שיחזרו למוטב יראה עצמו בפניהם שהוא כועס כדי לייסרם ותהיה דעתו מיושבת בינו לבין עצמו

Anger is a very bad trait, and it would be appropriate for a person distance himself from it, to the opposite extreme. One should teach himself not to grow angry even at something which warrants anger. If he wishes to instill awe his children, household or community – if he is a leader – in order to restore good conduct, then he should act as though he is angry in order to rebuke them, but his mind should be internally calm.

11. Talmud, Chullin 7a

מקום הניחו לו אבותיו להתגדר בו

Our ancestors left us room in which to achieve.

12. Michah 6:8

...ומהיד' דורש ממה פי אם עשות משפט ואהבת חסד ונהצנע לכת עם אלקיך:

...What does Gd require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk privately with your Gd?

13. Talmud, Bava Metzia 23b-24a

בהני תלת מילי עבידי רבנן דמשנו במלייהו במסכת ובפוריא ובאושפיזא.

A Torah scholar may lie about three topics: (1) Whether he knows a tractate, (2) Intimate details of his marriage, and (3) His host's hospitality.

14. Talmud, Shabbat 55a

וריש לקיש אמר תיו סוף חותמו של הקב"ה, דאמר רבי חנינא חותמו של הקב"ה אמת.

And Reish Lakish said 'Tav' is the end of the Divine seal; as Rabbi Chanina said, "The Divine seal is *emet*."

Two Types of Masks

15. Shemuel II 22:26-27

עם חסיד תתחסד עם גבור תמים תתמם: עם נכר תתברך ועם עקש תתפל:

16. Talmud, Megilah 12a

אמר להם הם לא עשו אלא לפנים אף הקב"ה לא עשה עמהן אלא לפנים

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai told his students: They only participated for show, and Gd only threatened them for show.

17. Soren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*

And now as for you – this phrase ["Either/Or"] is only too often on your lips, it has almost become a byword with you. What significance has it for you? None at all. You, according to your own expression, regard it as a wink of the eye... You take great delight in "comforting" people when they have recourse to you in critical situations. You listen to their exposition of the case and then say, "Yes, I perceive perfectly that there are two possibilities, one can either do this or that. My sincere opinion and my friendly counsel is as follows: Do it/or don't do it – you will regret both." But he who mocks others mocks himself, and your rejoinder is not a mere nothing but a profound mockery of yourself, a sorry proof how limp your soul is, that your whole philosophy of life is concentrated in one single proposition, "I say merely either/or."

In case this really were your serious meaning, there would be nothing one could do with you.... Now on the contrary, since one knows very well that such is not the case, one is not tempted to pity you but rather to wish that some day the circumstances of your life may tighten upon you the screws in its rack and compel you to come out with what really dwells in you, may begin the sharper inquisition of the rack which cannot be beguiled by nonsense and witticisms. Life is a masquerade, you explain, and for you this is inexhaustible material for amusement; and so far, no one has succeeded in knowing you; for every revelation you make is always an illusion. Your occupation consists in preserving your hiding place, and that you succeed in doing, for your mask is the most enigmatical of all. In fact you are nothing... an enigmatic figure on whose brow is inscribed Either/or – "For this," you say, "is my motto..."

Now although nothing you say in that style has the slightest effect upon me, nevertheless, for your own sake I will reply to you. Do you not know that there comes a midnight hour when every one has to throw off his mask? Do you believe that life will always let itself be mocked? Do you think you can slip away a little before midnight in order to avoid this? Or are you not terrified by it? I have seen men in real life who so long deceived others that at last their true nature could not reveal itself; I have seen men who played hide and seek so long that at last madness through them obtruded disgustingly upon others, their secret thoughts, which hitherto they had proudly concealed. Or can you think of anything more frightful than that you thus would have lost the inmost and holiest thing of all in a man, the unifying power of personality?...

Yaakov's Shield

18. Re-connecting Bereishit 28:16-22; 32:10-13; 33:18-20; 35:1-7

וַיִּשְׁכַּם יַעֲקֹב בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח אֶת הָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר שָׁם מִרְאשֵׁיתוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתָהּ מַצְבֵּה וַיִּצַק שָׁמֶן עַל רֵאשָׁהּ: ... וַיִּדַּר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם יִהְיֶה אֱלֹקִים עִמָּדִי וַשְׁמֶרְנִי בַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבְגָד לְלַבֵּשׁ: ...
וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֱלֹקֵי אָבִי אַבְרָהָם וְאֱלֹקֵי אָבִי יִצְחָק ד' הָאֵמֶר אֵלַי שׁוּב לְאַרְצָךָ וְלִמְוֹלָדֶיךָ וְאִיטִיבָה עִמָּךְ: קִטְנִיתִי מִכָּל הַחֲסָדִים וּמִכָּל הָאֱמֻנָה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת עַבְדְּךָ כִּי בְמַקְלֵי עֵבְרִיתִי אֶת הִרְדֹּן הַזֶּה וְעַתָּה הִייתִי לְשָׂנִי מִחַנּוּת: הַצִּילֵנִי נָא מִיַּד אַחֵי מִיַּד עֲשׂוֹ כִּי יָרָא אֲנֹכִי אֹתוֹ כֵּן יָבוֹא וְהִכְנִי אִם עַל בְּנָיִם: וְאַתָּה אֲמַרְתָּ הֵיטֵב אִיטִיב עִמָּךְ וְשָׁמֶרְתִּי אֶת נַרְעֶךָ כַּחֹל הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִסְפֵּר מְרֹב: וַיָּצַב שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא לוֹ קַל אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא לְמָקוֹם קַל בֵּית קַל כִּי שָׁם נִגְלוּ אֵלָיו הָאֱלֹקִים בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אַחִיו:

A Third Mask

19. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith* (2006 ed.) pp. 35-36

And defeated must Adam the second feel the very instant he scores his greatest success: the discovery of his humanity, his "I" identity. The "I" awareness which he attains as the result of his untiring search for a redeemed, secure existence brings its own antithesis to the fore: the awareness of his exclusiveness and ontological incompatibility with any other being. Adam the second suddenly finds out that he is alone, that he has alienated himself from the world of the brute and the instinctual mechanical state of an outward existence, while he has failed to ally himself with the intelligent, purposive inward beings who inhabit the new world into which he has entered. Each great redemptive step forward in man's quest for humanity entails the ever-growing tragic awareness of his aloneness and only-ness and consequently of his loneliness and insecurity.

20. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith* (2006 ed.) pp. 37-38, 40

Adam the second is still lonely. He separated himself from his environment which became the object of his intellectual gaze. "And the man gave names to all the beasts and to the fowl of the heaven and to every animal of the field." He is a citizen of a new world, the world of man, but he has no companion with whom to communicate and therefore he is existentially insecure. Neither would the availability of the female, who was created with Adam the first, have changed this human situation if not for the emergence of a new kind of companionship.

At this crucial point, if Adam is to bring his quest for redemption to full realization, he must initiate action leading to the discovery of a companion who, even though a unique and singular as he, will master the art of communicating and, with him, form a community. However, this action, since it is part of the redemptive gesture, must also be sacrificial. The medium of attaining full redemption is, again, defeat. This new companionship is not attained through conquest, but through surrender and retreat. "And the eternal Gd caused an overpowering sleep to fall upon the man." Adam was overpowered and defeated—and in defeat he found his companion...

Since loneliness reflects the very core of the "I" experience, and it is not an accidental *modus*, no accidental activity or achievement – such as belonging to a natural work community and achieving cooperative success – can reclaim Adam the Second from this state. Therefore, I repeat, Adam the Second must quest for a different kind of community. The companionship that Adam the Second is seeking is not to be found in the depersonalized regimentation of the army, in the automatic coordination of the assembly line, or in the activity of the institutionalized, soul-less political community. His quest is for a new kind of fellowship, which one finds in the existential community. There, not only hands are joined, but experiences as well: There, one hears not only the rhythmic sound of the production line, but also the rhythmic beat of hearts starved for existential companionship and all-embracing sympathy, and experiencing the grandeur of the faith commitment: there, one lonely soul finds another soul, tormented by loneliness and solitude, yet unqualifiedly committed.