

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"l, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



אמרות שמשון

How Yitzchak's Blindness Was the Cause of Him Wanting to Bless Eisav

וַיְהִי כִּי יָקַן יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶינּוּ עֵינָיו מֵרְאֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֶת עֶשָׂו בְּנֹו הַגָּדֹל וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בְּנִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הֲנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה נָא יָקַנְתִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי יוֹם מוֹתִי עֲתָה שָׂא נָא כְּלִיד תְּלִיד וְקִשְׁתְּךָ יֵצֵא הַשֶּׁדֶה וְצוּרָה וְצוּרָה לִי צִידָה (ציד) וְעֲשֵׂה לִי מִטְעָמִים כְּאֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֵּתִי וְהִבִּיאָה לִי וְאָכְלָה כְּעַבְדְּךָ תִּכְרְכֶךָ נַפְשִׁי בְּטָרִם אֲמוֹת (כז א-ד):

And it was when Yitzchak had become old, and his eyes dimmed from seeing, that he summoned Eisav, his older son... And he said "See, now, I have aged; I know not the day of my death. Now sharpen, if you please, your gear... Then make delicacies for me... so that my soul may bless you before I die".

The simple understanding of this Passuk is that when Yitzchak saw himself aging, he called over his son, Eisav, and told him that now that he is growing old, he understands that his day of death is coming closer, and thus he wants to bless him before he dies. There is a difficulty with this simple explanation; why does the Passuk feel it necessary to mention that Yitzchak's eyes have dimmed, as it doesn't seem to have anything to do with the discussion at hand, of Yitzchak wanting to bless Eisav, for it seems that it was Yitzchak's old age alone which compelled him to do so.

The Midrash tells us a reason why Hashem caused Yitzchak to lose his eyesight. אמר רבא ברע, מראות ברע, מראות ברעתו של רשע. אמר הקב"ה, יהי יצחק יוצא לשוק ויהוון ברייתא אמרין דין אבנה – דההוא רשיעא, אלא הריני מכהה את עיניו והוא יושב בתוך ביתו. 'And his eyes dimmed from seeing'. R' Elazar ben Azarya said in explanation of this Passuk; Yitzchak's eyes dimmed to prevent him from seeing evil, that is, from seeing the evil of the wicked one, Eisav. Hashem said, "Yitzchak will go out to the marketplace and people will say about him, "This is the father of that wicked person". Rather, to avoid this, I will dim his eyes and, inevitably, he will need to remain inside his home".

We find another Midrash that tells us an additional reason why Hashem caused Yitzchok to become blind. אמר רבנן, רבון העולמים אדם מת בלא יסורין מדת הדין מתוחה כנגדו, מתוך שאתה מביא עליו יסורין אין מדת הדין מתוחה כנגדו. אמר לו הקב"ה, חייך דבר טוב יצחק requested physical afflictions. He said, "Hashem, at present a man dies without having experienced any afflictions, and consequently,

following his death the Divine Attribute of Justice is extended against him. However, as a result of Your bringing afflictions upon him during his lifetime, following his death the Divine Attribute of Justice will not be extended against him". [i.e. The suffering that one endures in this world has the effect of cleansing him of his sins, and can therefore spare him from punishment in the next world]. Hashem said to him, "You have requested a good thing. I will therefore grant your request, and I will begin this practice with you...", as the Passuk states, 'And it was when Yitzchak had become old, and his eyes dimmed from seeing...'

When Yitzchak became blind, he initially understood that the reason for his blindness was as the first Midrash explains; in order to protect him from seeing Eisav's wickedness. Thus, he realized that when the time would come for him to bless his children, although Eisav was the older brother, and it would only make sense that he should receive the blessings, nevertheless, because he was wicked, so much so as to cause Yitzchak to need to become blind, he definitely was not worthy of receiving the blessings.

But when Yitzchak realized the timing of losing his eyesight, that it was only after his becoming old, he understood that because he had aged, it was within reason to assume that his day of death was getting closer, and thus his blindness had nothing to do with Eisav at all. Rather, his blindness was a fulfillment of his request to Hashem, that before passing away one should be afflicted with physical ailments, so that the Divine Attribute of Justice will not be stretched against him following his death.

Thus, his blindness which came with old age, brought Yitzchak much clarity. It made him realize that his day of death was coming closer; it also made him realize that there was no reason to believe that his blindness had anything to do with Eisav, and thus he was indeed worthy of being blessed.

Accordingly, we can understand why the Torah says, 'When Yitzchak became old and thereafter his eyes dimmed from seeing', for indeed it was only the fact that Yitzchak became old, and subsequently became blind as well, which caused him to recognize that his day of death was near, and thus made him feel that the time had come to bless one of his sons. It also brought Yitzchak to understand that there was no reason to doubt Eisav's worthiness, as his blindness had no connection to Eisav, and therefore, 'he summoned his older son, Eisav, and said to him, "Now that I have aged and do not know the day of my death, please sharpen your gear and make delicacies for me so that my soul may bless you before I die".

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The Salvations That Never Cease!

"Toldot" in Parshat Toldot

In the week of **Parshat Toldot** in the year 5777 (2016), Rabbi Tzvi Grenevitz sat down with his study partner, Reb Moshe Rub, to study the book **Zera Shimshon**, as was their daily custom. During their study, they discovered a fascinating and captivating passage dealing with faith and trust in Hashem. The teachings left no room for doubt regarding true faith in **Hashem Yitbarach**, offering those who study it a clear and uplifting faith that elevates them to new spiritual heights. The **Zera Shimshon** states (**Parshat Toldot**, Letter 12):

"Incidentally, one can derive a life lesson: every person must recognize in all their actions the wonders of Hashem's deeds, for no one has the power to do anything without the kindness of Hashem. No person even snaps their fingers in this world unless it has been decreed from above. Likewise, in any gain a person achieves, one must not attribute it to his own efforts but to the grace of Hashem. If one attains greatness, one must not say it was due to his wisdom, but only due to the kindness of Hashem."

The author proves this through the words of Yaakov Avinu. When his father Yitzchak asked how he had prepared the requested food so quickly, Yaakov responded: **"Because Hashem, your God, brought it before me."** Yet the goats he brought had already been in Rivka's possession, so there was no need for Hashem to "bring" them specifically to him. From this, the author concludes that a Jew must know that even what they already have at home, and seems natural, is also a kindness of Hashem. Nothing is obvious or natural on its own.

Rabbi Tzvi and Reb Moshe were deeply moved by this gem they had discovered. Rabbi Tzvi exclaimed with excitement, "A passage so prominent and valuable about faith must be shared with the renowned Maggid, the Gaon Rabbi Elimelech Biderman, **shlita!** Tens of thousands of Jews hear his teachings every week; we must grant them the merit of hearing these words of faith from the author. This way, we achieve a dual merit: strengthening Israel with a message of faith, and fulfilling the will of the **tzadik** in an extraordinary way, by spreading his teachings among tens of thousands of Jews and ensuring that his lips continue to utter Torah eternally."

Without delay, Rabbi Tzvi contacted Rabbi "Meilech" to share this gem with him.

At the time, Rabbi Tzvi was in need of a personal salvation and thought to himself: **"May it be that this merit of spreading these words among the People of Israel benefits me!"**

Rabbi Meilech himself promptly reviewed the **Zera Shimshon** and was deeply inspired by its message. During his two regular lectures that week, both in Hebrew and Yiddish, he repeated the author's words. Before citing them, he announced that studying the lessons of the **Zera Shimshon** could bring about miracles and wonders:

"We must learn this life lesson: every person must recognize in all their actions the wonders of Hashem's deeds, for no one has the power to do anything without the kindness of Hashem."



The **Be'er Ha'emunah** publications distributed that week also featured this inspiring message at the beginning of their articles, allowing tens of thousands of Jews to read and hear these Torah words and be strengthened by them. Since then, each year, when **Parshat Toldot** arrives, Rabbi Meilech, **shlita**, passionately repeats these words from the **Zera Shimshon**.

The leaders of the Worldwide Organization for the Dissemination of the Torah of **Zera Shimshon** met with Rabbi Tzvi and told him: **"You have had the merit of tens of thousands of Jews studying the Zera Shimshon! Undoubtedly, the tzadik author will show you his power of salvation, for you were the messenger to bring his uplifting words to tens of thousands of homes in Israel."**

Though Rabbi Tzvi regularly studied the **Zera Shimshon**, over time he forgot this episode.

A year passed. On the Monday of the week of **Parshat Toldot** in 5778, Rabbi Tzvi and his wife were blessed with the birth of a daughter after years of waiting and yearning for more children.

During the grand **Kiddush** celebration he organized, Rabbi Tzvi had no recollection of what had occurred the previous year during the same **Parshah**. After the Torah reading, announcing the baby's name and finishing the **tefillah**, the congregants sat down to enjoy refreshments at the **Kiddush**. A little later, even members of nearby synagogues came to offer congratulations. Among them was Rabbi Yisrael, one of the foremost students and promoters of the **Zera Shimshon**. Approaching Rabbi Tzvi, he said directly:

"Do you remember what happened last year during Parshat Toldot? Do you recall finding that wonderful passage about faith and sending it to Rabbi Meilech? I was one of those who told you then that your merit was very great! Thanks to you, tens of thousands of Jews studied the Zera Shimshon! Do you still have doubts that you would see salvations through this merit?"

Rabbi Tzvi immediately recalled the events of the previous year, and a great emotion overtook him. An incredible miracle! Exactly one year after having the merit to spread the author's inspiring words during **Parshat Toldot** (**toldot** means "descendants"), he himself was blessed with a descendant—a daughter—during the same **Parshah**. **Toldot in Parashat Toldot!**

In a recent conversation with the leaders of the Worldwide Organization for the Dissemination of the Torah of **Zera Shimshon**, Rabbi Tzvi testified about the heavenly process that began when Rabbi Meilech Biderman, **shlita**, started quoting yearly the **Zera Shimshon** thanks to him. Each year, around the time of **Parshat Toldot**, he experiences personal salvations in the matters that he needs. Truly an extraordinary phenomenon!



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