

Yitzchak loved Eisav

In this week's Parsha, we find a very strange phenomenon. The Torah says, "וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו כִּי צִיד בְּפִיו, וְרִבְקָה אֲהָבָת אֶת יַעֲקֹב", "Yitzchak loved Eisav because he partook of his food, while Rivka loved Yaakov".

It behooves us to explore why Yitzchak loved Eisav. We also need to understand why Yitzchak and Rivka were not on the same page regarding this issue. If Rivka had information that Yitzchak was unaware of, why did she not inform him?

A superficial reading of the Parsha would lead one to believe that Yitzchok was "blind", not just literally, but also figuratively.

Everyone in the world knew who Eisav was, with one exception: his father. In a way it makes sense. A father can see no wrong in his child. Especially, his first-born son. But, was Yitzchak really so oblivious?

Let us probe a bit deeper. Yes, Yitzchak knew that Eisav had checked out from Yeshiva. Okay, Yaakov was a better learner. Learning is not everything. Eisav also had some redeeming factors. He brought his parents food. When he found a particularly juicy animal, he prepared it for them. In fact, the Medrash relates that Eisav put on his Shabbos clothing when serving his parents, in honor of the Mitzvah.

Yitzchak focused on the fact that Eisav cared about his parents. This was his saving grace. He practiced kibud av v'em, one of the

greatest mitzvos, and Yitzchak used this as a catalyst to love him.

Giving Eisav the Brachos

While we can understand, perhaps even applaud, Yitzchak's love for Eisav, the Parsha of giving him the Brachos seems very odd.

Why would he raise Eisav up above Yaakov. As much as he worked on himself to continue loving the wayward child, surely the "good" son, the Tzaddik, the one who never strayed, deserved the Brachos.

Not only did Yitzchak want to give Eisav the Brachos, he was very careful to make sure that it was actually Eisav that came to receive them. He double-checked and challenged every dissonant chord.

"Who are you, my son?" he asked.

Yaakov answered, "I am Eisav, your bechor".

Yitzchak was suspicious, and declared, "You got back very quickly!"

"Hashem helped me very much", Yaakov responded.

Yitzchak was very skeptical of this response. "Come over and let me feel you. I wonder if you are really Eisav", he expressed.

Rivka had prepared Yaakov for this. He was wearing especially hairy goat-skins on his arms and neck, and Yitzchak was misled.

Still doubtful, he exclaimed, "הַקּוֹל כְּקוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדַיִם כְּיָדַי עֵשָׂו", "The voice speaks like Yaakov, but the arms seem like Eisav!"

Yitzchak was wary, and needed to verify one last time. He asked Yaakov a direct question. "Are you my son, Eisav?" Only when

Yaakov replied in the affirmative, did he consent to bless him.

It is remarkably obvious that Yitzchak had absolutely no intention of blessing Yaakov at this time. The Brachos were reserved for Eisav exclusively.

However, when Eisav mentioned that he had sold the bechora, the first-born right, to Yaakov, Yitzchak pronounced גַּם בְּרוּךְ יִהְיֶה, "In that case, he deserves the blessings!"

Let's explore why Yitzchak was so adamant to bless Eisav, why Rivka insisted that Yaakov must go instead, why Yaakov emphasized "I am the **bechor**", and why Yitzchak was satisfied when he learned that Yaakov had indeed purchased the bechora.

What is the Bechora?

The first-born son is Holy, and is intended to be a Kohen. His job is to work in the Bais Hamikdash, and to perform the Avoda. He is an emissary of Hashem, and an agent of Klal Yisrael. His entire life is dedicated to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and to the community.

In order for the Bechor, or the Kohen, to accomplish his duties, he is given access to many benefits, and can even contact the source of all blessing. During Birchas Kohanim, the Kohen is the aqueduct through which the blessings flow.

However, if a Kohen is unworthy, it requires especial effort to channel the blessings through him. This is exactly why Yitzchak wanted to bless Eisav. He was aware of Eisav's defects, and needed to create a conduit for the goodness to flow through. He requested

that Eisav prepare him a festive meal, and to be meticulous in the Mitzva of Kibud Av. Thereby, Yitzchak would be able to open the fountain of Brachos, to enable Eisav to perform his responsibilities to Klal Yisrael.

However, Eisav had sold the Bechora. A life of obligation, of responsibility and pressure, did not work for Eisav. He wanted a life of leisure, not stress, and sold the Bechora to Yaakov.

If Yitzchak would have known that Eisav had sold the Bechora, he would not have felt the need to bless Yaakov. An honest person, a man of quality, a Torah scholar, a righteous individual, has access to the reservoir of blessings in his own merit.

But Hashem knows that not all Yidden are like Yaakov. Sadly, there are many Jews that subscribe to Eisav's mentality. They require assistance to attain the source of blessing. Thus, Rivka got a prophecy, which directed her to command Yaakov to solicit the Brachos. The "Eisav's" within him need them. As the Bechor, he deserves it. As the forefather of some "Eisavs", he requires it.

We are so grateful that we have Bnei Torah in Klal Yisrael, who connect deeply to Hashem, and they are the source of all blessing and goodness. In the merit of these righteous people, the entire nation is blessed. We win our wars, gain wealth and prosperity, good health, fine children, and long years of happiness.

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