

# *Parsha Toldos*

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## *1. The Preservation of Free Choice*

We read at the beginning of the parsha, “And these are the offspring of Yitzchak son of Avraham – Avraham fathered Yitzchak”. We see from the beginning of the pasuk that Yitzchak was the son of Avraham. Why does the pasuk say later “Avraham fathered Yitzchak”? It seems obvious that if Yitzchak was the son of Avraham then Avraham fathered him.

Rashi cites the Midrash that explains that the deprecators of the generation were gossiping that Sarah, Avraham’s wife, had been barren for over 50 years and after one night with Avimelech she conceived. Evidently, Avimelech was Yitzchak’s father and not Avraham. In order to counter such claims, Hashem made Yitzchak’s face almost identical to Avraham. Because of this similarity between Avraham and Yitzchak, the world attested to the fact that Avraham was indeed Yitzchak’s father regardless of the situation with Avimelech.

We know that the pedigree of a Jew is sacred. We also know that Sarah was a tzaddekis and her power of prophecy was even greater than Avraham. How could Hashem allow her to be sequestered with a heathen such as Avimelech? How could Hashem have allowed there to be a question about Yitzchak’s pedigree? In order to mitigate the damage caused by the questions arising from Yitzchak’s pedigree, Hashem caused Yitzchak’s face to be identical to that of Avraham in order to be a confirmation of his true pedigree. How can we understand this situation?

The purpose of existence is to enable man to make choices. Every moment is a choice between right and wrong due to a lack of complete clarity. If we make the right choices we succeed and if not we fail. Avraham was the role model of all existence. When *Avram* became *Avraham* he became the father of all the nations. He was a man that introduced monotheism into existence. Avraham was not only one of the most wealthy individuals in the world he was also the most spiritual. Avraham radiated with holiness and his very presence minimized one’s ability to choose. How could a person choose to do wrong after being exposed to Avraham’s level of spiritual clarity? For this reason, we know that throughout existence there is always a balance of good and evil. Who is the counterbalance to Avraham? Nimrod (who threw Avraham into the kiln of Kasdim) was the antithesis of Avraham. In fact, the Chazal tell us that the day that Nimrod was killed by Esav, Avraham passed away. We see that there cannot be a day where there is no counterbalance.

Avraham’s successor was Yitzchak. He was the son of the father of all nations. In addition, he resembled Avraham. In a way they are both equated. If this is the case then how is Yitzchak’s level of holiness counterbalanced in the world? How could there be free choice if there is no counterbalance? Therefore Hashem created a situation where people would question Yitzchak’s pedigree. Is he the son of Avimelech (the heathen, murderer, and adulterer) or is he the son of Avraham? A woman who is barren for over 50 years conceived after one night with Avimelech – it must be the case that he is the

father and not Avraham. Hashem performed a miracle in order to confirm Yitzchak's true pedigree. Because of the conflicting evidence, Yitzchak's level is diminished due to the fact that people would question his pedigree. It is through this conflict of evidence that Hashem is able to preserve the power of choice in the world. Despite the resemblance to Avraham, people could still choose to see the situation incorrectly and question. Yitzchak's ability to affect the world was no longer at Avraham's level because of this ambiguity.

We see that the counterbalance of good and evil is repeated clearly with Yaakov and Esav. This is the conflict between the Jews and Amalek. Hashem says that his throne will not complete until Amalek is obliterated from the face of the earth. Amalek is the thorn in the side of all existence since it epitomizes evil which undermines all the good of existence. Chazal explain to us that Amalek's attack on the B'nai Yisroel as they left Egypt was analogous to someone jumping into a scalding bath. Though the first person to jump into the bath will get burned, he will make the bath cooler for everyone else to dive in. All the nations of the world stood in awe of Klal Yisroel because they knew that the Jews had defeated the Egyptians who were the mightiest nation. Nevertheless, Amalek attacked the Jews thus diminishing our appearance of invincibility. We see again the counter balance and the ambiguity in perceiving the world. It is through this ambiguity that free choice is maintained in the world. If we are able to choose the right path then our reward will be of the highest degree in the face of ambiguous options.

## 2. *The Center of Creation*

We read at the beginning of the parsha, "And these are the offspring of Yitzchak son of Avraham – Avraham fathered Yitzchak". We discussed above one understanding of this pasuk. Rashi cites another interpretation of "Avraham fathered Yitzchak". He says that only after Hashem changed Avram's name to Avraham could he father Yitzchak. Does the Torah need to use four additional words simply to communicate that it was *Avraham* and not *Avram* that fathered Yitzchak? What do we learn from this?

We need to understand the difference between *Avram* and *Avraham*. According to Chazal, Avram was a great astrologer and that he was able to interpret the stars that informed him "Avram will not father a son, but Avraham will". But there must be a deeper meaning besides a simple name change that prompted the Torah to use four additional words at the end of the first pasuk of Toldos. When Avraham was concerned that Eliezer may become his heir, Hashem told Avraham that he should look to the heavens and see that, as the stars cannot be counted, so too will be his progeny. The *Yalkut* notes that there is an extra letter "hey" at the end of *hashamayimah* when Hashem instructs Avraham to look to the heavens. The word for heaven should have been spelled *hashamayim* without the "hey" at the end.

Hashem tells Avraham that he created this world with the letter "hey". We also find in the Gemara that there is a pasuk in *Tehilim* that Dovid Ha'Melech states that with the letters of "yud" and "hey", Hashem created the worlds. With the power of the letter "yud", Hashem created the spiritual world and with the "hey" He created the physical world.

Hashem explained to Avraham that just as the letter "hey" was needed to form all of existence, so too would he, in order to become the Father of the Jewish people, require a letter "hey" in his name. The letter "hey", which created the entire world, caused Avram to become a new dimension of person in the world who was equivalent to all existence. This is also the meaning of the additional "hey" in the word *hashamayimah*. With this, we

can also understand the Mishna that states that saving a single Jewish life is equivalent to saving the entire world. Because the same energy force (influence) was needed to create the world as was used by Hashem to bring about the Jewish people through *Avraham*.

Chazal explain that at the word found regarding creation - *biheebbar'am*- (When He created them) contains the same letters as *Avraham*. The Maharal explains that when Avraham came into existence he was not a continuation of his previous existence but rather the beginning of a new existence. We see that the Jewish people descend from a person who was the beginning of a completely new dimension of creation.

With this the Maharal explains that when the Torah tells us that Terach (Avram's father) died, he in fact lived for many more years. If this is the case then why did the Torah tell us that Terach died? Rashi cites the Chazal and explains that Avraham, leaving his father, would be seen as disrespectful since he would be violating his obligation to honor his father. Hashem said to Avraham that he was absolved from honoring Terach. On this the Maharal asks if in fact Terach was Avraham's father, how could he be absolved from his obligation? The answer is that Terach was no longer Avraham's father. Avraham was a new dimension of person who had no relevance to Terach. This is why the Torah states "Avraham fathered Yitzchak". Avraham was only able to father the future patriarch, Yitzchak, only after becoming a dimension of person who is equivalent to all existence.

This is the pedigree of every Jew. If we could only appreciate our own level and dimension, then we would be able to experience great spiritual growth.

### ***3. We Forge Our Own Path***

The Torah tells us that Esav returned from the field after killing Nimrod (as well as committing four other cardinal sins on that day) and found Yakov cooking lentils with his face covered with ash. Esav asked Yakov, "What happened?" and Yakov responded, "Our grandfather passed away". After hearing this, Esav proclaimed that there is no judgment and no judge! By this, Esav denied the existence of G-d. Esav knew that his grandfather would inevitably pass away, as all people do. In addition Avraham had already lived 175 years. What caused Esav to have such an extreme reaction?

Chazal teach us that each of the Patriarchs was destined to live 180 years. Yitzchak lived 180 years. Yakov was supposed to live 180 years; however, he passed away after 147 years because Hashem deducted a year of his life for every word of complaint he gave to Pharaoh. Chazal teach us that Avraham was destined to live 180 years; however, Hashem deducted five years because He promised Avraham that he would pass away in a "good old age". If Avraham were to witness the day that Esav committed five cardinal sins, it would have undermined Hashem's promise of passing away in a "good old age" because Avraham would have been devastated to see his grandson following a path of evil.

Esav understood that his grandfather was supposed to live 180 years. After Avraham passed away at the age of 175, Esav questioned the justice of Hashem. If there were justice and a judge in existence how could Avraham be denied five years of his life? It is important for us to understand the situation.

On the day that Avraham passed away, Esav had killed Nimrod. The Midrash tells us that Nimrod possessed the special garments of Adam that were fabricated by Hashem. These garments had a special power of attracting animals and since Esav was a hunter, he desired to take these garments for himself. Esav killed Nimrod for the sake of these garments. As we learned earlier, there cannot be an Avraham in existence without a

Nimrod- every force requires a counter force. Hashem maintains a perfect balance of good and evil in order to protect free choice. Ironically, we see that Esav's killing of Nimrod directly caused the passing away of Avraham. Esav was a cause of his grandfather's death because he chose to become a heretic on that day and commit five cardinal sins, one of which was murder. Hashem had promised Avraham that he would pass away in a "good old age." Therefore Hashem needed to deduct five years from Avraham's life so as he should not see his grandson committing these sins.

The irony is intensified because Esav denounced G-d because he believed his grandfather died prematurely when in fact Esav was the cause of Avraham losing five years from his life. Esav literally digs his own pit, jumps in and blames G-d for being in the pit. We can learn a lesson about ourselves through this incident.

People often do not understand their lives and circumstances. Some may believe that life is not fair because they deserve or do not deserve a certain set of outcomes. We make many choices in our lives often without clarity and our circumstances are a direct result of our choices. The source of our problems really lies in us. If we are able to have clarity, then we would be able to understand our circumstances. Our free choice dictates the way Hashem will treat us just as Esav's free choice resulted in the passing of Avraham. Let us not lose sight of these facts and hope to have clarity so as not to question the unwavering truth of Hashem's justice.

#### ***4. The Hidden Character of Yitzchak***

Unlike Avraham whose life and character is well chronicled by the Torah, we find that the Torah does not provide us with this level of detail about Yitzchak's life. Yitzchak remains a unknown individual who is presented by the Torah as the object of the *Akeidah*. The Torah does not tell us if Yitzchak was in agreement with the *Akeidah* or if he was forced to participate. We are told however that Yitzchak is deceived by his son and misled by Yakov in order to receive the blessing of the birthright which was intended for Esav. The Torah conceals the true nature of Yitzchak. Chazal refer to Yitzchak as the *olah temima* "the unblemished offering". Yitzchak is also referred to as the *kodshi kadoshin* "the holy of holies". The Torah however does not explicitly reveal Yitzchak and his many qualities.

Yitzchak's eyesight was impaired in his old age. The Torah states clearly that Rivka understood Esav's character yet she did not reveal this knowledge to Yitzchak. It would seem that she should have told her husband about Esav. Why did Rivka choose to conceal this information not to do this? Another question arises - how did Rivka know Esav better than Yitzchak? How did she gain this special insight and not Yitzchak?

The Torah refers to Esav as a person with the greatest power of deception. He was able to have the appearance of Torah sage while at the same time being evil to the core. One may posit that Rivka understood Esav from her personal experience with her brother who was also a deceptive and deceitful person. The Torah however explains that Rivka gained this understanding of Esav's character in a specific manner. When Rivka was pregnant with Yakov and Esav she had great difficulty with her pregnancy. Rivka experienced painful jolting and movements within her womb that caused her to seek out Hashem. The Torah tells us that she went to Shem for clarification. He informed her that in her womb were two great nations – one that epitomizes holiness and the other evil. When Esav was born she understood that Esav epitomized evil and that he would readily deceive her as well as Yitzchak. She knew this because Shem explicitly told it to her. The question is why did she ask Shem? We know that Avraham and Yitzchak were

greater prophets than Shem; yet, she received the prophecy from Shem.

The fact is Rivka had gone first to Avraham and Yitzchak concerning her difficult pregnancy but neither had any understanding of her predicament. If Hashem revealed this prophecy to Shem and not to Avraham or Yitzchak evidently He did not want them to know Esav's true nature. From this, Rivka understood that Hashem wanted to conceal this truth from Avraham and Yitzchak. We learned earlier that Hashem promised that Avraham would pass away in "a good old age" without being exposed to the realization of Esav's evil nature. This is why Hashem did not reveal this to Avraham. Hashem needed to keep Esav's nature hidden from Yitzchak because he would have been cursed by Yitzchak and not considered for the blessings. Rivka understood that she was not permitted this to communicate this knowledge to Avraham or Yitzchak because Hashem wished to conceal this from them.

The Ohr Ha' Chaim explains to us that the Torah reveals Yitzchak's character through one Hebrew letter. This week's parsha begins with *V'Aiele toldos Yitzchak v'Avraham* "And these are the offspring of Yitzchak son of Avraham..." The Torah could have omitted the letter *vav* in the beginning of the pasuk. However, the Torah is telling us through this *vav*, which is a connecting letter, that Yitzchak was the equivalent of his father Avraham. Just as Avraham's life and character was explicitly outlined in the Torah, Yitzchak is a continuation of Avraham. The question to ask is, if the Torah reveals Avraham in detail why would it not depict Yitzchak?

The answer is that we can all understand the characteristic of *chesed* "kindness" which was personified through Avraham. Yitzchak however represented the attribute of *din* or "judgment". He was completely dedicated to self-perfection. He was the "unblemished offering". How could we even begin to understand or conceptualize someone at this level? It would be similar to attempting to understand an angel, which is impossible to comprehend, through textual description. The Torah therefore simply states *V'Aiele*- he was equivalent to Avraham. Even though Yitzchak's focus was the attribute of "judgment" while Avraham was "kindness", they were equivalent of one another. Since we could not be able to comprehend Yitzchak's characteristic, the Torah only alludes to his status through the letter *vav*.

## 5. *Guarding our mouths*

We read in this week's parsha that Yaakov's mother, as a result of a prophecy, instructed him to go to his father and take the blessings that were rightfully his. In order for Yaakov to successfully accomplish this task he needed to present himself as Esav who was the designated recipient of Yitzchak's blessings. Rivka assisted Yaakov by preparing delicacies that he would serve to his father. In addition, she took goats' hides and placed them on Yaakov's hands and neck in order to resemble Esav's hairy skin.

After this, Yaakov went to his father to serve him the delicacies. Yitzchak, being surprised, asked his son how he was able to catch the game and prepare it so quickly. Yaakov responded that Hashem arranged it to be this way. Yitzchak became suspicious since Esav did not communicate in a refined manner nor did he use the name of Hashem. Yitzchak asked him, "Are you indeed my son Esav or not?" Yaakov responded ("*ani*"), "I am". Rashi cites the Chazal and explains, "*ani*" means "I am who I am and Esav is Esav the first-born." Yitzchak understood "*ani*" to mean that Yaakov was Esav the first-born; however, what was intended by Yaakov was as Rashi explains. How are we to understand this miscommunication? Is it a lie? Is a lie what one says or how it is understood? Evidently it is both.

We find that when Avraham went to Gerar he told Sarah that he would present her as his sister to Avimelech. During the first night with Avimelech, Hashem came to him and told Avimelech to return Avraham's wife or die. Avimelech returned Sarah to Avraham and asked him how could he have claimed that Sarah was his sister when in fact she was his wife? Avraham responded that he saw that the people and the king of Gerar had no fear of Hashem and therefore he needed to protect himself and Sarah. Avraham explains to Avimelech that he did not lie to him. Sarah was in fact his sister. How was Avraham able to claim this? Avraham stated that Sarah was the daughter of his brother and therefore the granddaughter of his father. There is a principle that grandchildren are like the offspring of the grandparents; therefore, Sarah is his sister. Avraham was making it clear that he did not lie. The fact that Avimelech understood Avraham to mean that Sarah was his actual sister is irrelevant. In fact, Avraham said that Sarah was his niece and since he was in danger, Avraham was permitted to state that she was his sister in a sense. He did not say a lie within a certain context that we just explained.

We see the Gemara in Shabbos recounts a discussion between Rav Abaye and Rav Pappa, which states that the value of the Torah study of young children has greater value than then the Torah study of these two Amoraim. How is this possible? These were some of the greatest interpreters of the Mishna? They understood that since young children have never uttered sinful words, therefore their Torah study is untainted. Even though they were great Amoraim, their Torah was tainted slightly from any inappropriate expression that may have come from their mouths.

Yaakov and Avraham understood this on the most absolute level. They knew that they needed to minimize any amount of lying even under circumstances that were a matter of life and death. If the listener only misinterpreted the statements of Yaakov and Avraham in the situations cited above, then they effectively minimized the lie. The value of the expression of speech emanates from the ability for a listener to interpret the meaning. The effectiveness of one's expressions depends on how tainted one's mouth is from lies. The Torah which one communicates could be diminished from a mouth that lies. Avraham and Yaakov were very careful not to damage the effectiveness of their speech by carefully phrasing their comments to be true within the context of expressing truth.

We see that although Yaakov disguised himself before his father Yitzchak, he did not change his manner of speech. If he intended to mislead his father into believing that he was Esav then why would he speak in a refined manner or mention Hashem? The answer is that Yaakov understood the necessity of receiving the blessings but was not willing to sacrifice his adherence to the ways of Torah. He did not wish to take credit for catching the game independently of G-d's help because he knew that it would be a *chilul* Hashem. Even though he knew that Esav would have never expressed himself in this manner, Yaakov believed that if he was going to be successful in his mission he would not need to deviate from his refined behavior. This is Yaakov's *hishtadlus* "taking initiative". Yaakov's *hishtadlus* involved only those actions that are permitted by the Torah. If an action was not permitted, it was not part of Yaakov's *hishtadlus*.

In terms of ourselves, we need to take initiative also; however, it needs to be within the context of Torah. The Ramchal says that the reason a person must take initiative is because it is part of the curse of mankind "by the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread". Even though the Gemara states that a person's physical and monetary situation is pre-determined from Rosh Ha 'Shana to Rosh Ha' Shana, we still need to take the initiative. This initiative needs to be within a permitted context. Just as Yaakov and Avraham were careful about their speech so too do we need to be careful. Because the effectiveness of our expression and our Torah will be determined by us not saying slander, lies, or other

damaging comments which emanate from our mouths.

## 6. *Hashem's Plan*

We read in this week's parsha that Yaakov took the blessings that Yitzchak had intended for Esav. The Torah states that after Esav discovered that Yaakov had taken the blessings, "He harbored hatred toward Yaakov because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esav said in his heart, when the days of mourning for my father draw near, then I will kill my brother Yaakov". Rashi explains this to mean that when Yitzchak will pass away, Esav will then kill Yaakov. Esav pledged to wait until after Yitzchak passes away because he had great honor and respect for his father and did not wish to cause him pain and anguish.

Immediately after Esav said silently "in his heart" that he would kill Yaakov, the Torah states, "When Rivka was told the words of her older son Esav, she summoned Yaakov, her younger son, and said to him, 'Behold, your brother Esav is consoling himself regarding you to kill you. So now, my son, heed my voice and arise; flee to Lavan, to Charan'. The question is who told Rivka the words that Esav said only "in his heart"? Rashi explains that Rivka received this information through divine prophecy. We should note that at this time, Yaakov was 63 years old and fled from his home as a result of Rivka's warning. He was away from his parents for a period of 38 years (22 years with Lavan, 2 years traveling, and 14 years in Shem V' Aiyver). After 38 years Yaakov returned home and Yitzchak was still alive. What was the point of Yaakov's premature fleeing? Why did Rivka receive the prophecy from Hashem foretelling Esav's actions so early? Yaakov could have easily remained at home with his father and mother for many more years?

The Torah states that Rivka had told Yaakov to flee to Lavan for only "a short while" until Esav's anger would subside; yet, Yaakov fled for 38 years during which time he was unable to fulfill his obligation of honoring and serving his father Yitzchak. As a result of the 22 years which he overstayed his refuge with Lavan, Yosef was later separated from him for 22 years. Why did this chain of events need to unfold in this manner?

The Midrash states a principal – *Ma'ase avos siman L'banim* "The actions and experiences of the Patriarchs are an indication of what their descendants will experience." For example, the Midrash says that since Avraham went to Egypt, the Jewish people would need to go to Egypt. Avraham returned from Egypt with phenomenal wealth - so too did the Jewish people leave Egypt with great wealth. While in Egypt, Sarah (Avraham's wife) was not defiled. As a result, the Jewish women were not defiled while being slaves in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> These are examples of *Ma'ase avos siman L'banim* .

The Patriarch Yaakov represents *golus* "exile". This is why he enacted the praying of the evening Amidah that occurs during the evening hours (night denotes *golus*). There was no other Patriarch who suffered as much as Yaakov in exile. He was outside of the land of Israel more than any other Patriarch. After he returned from his 38-year fleeing of Esav, Yaakov left for Egypt where he passed the remaining 17 years of his life. Why did Yaakov need to suffer in this manner in exile? The answer is because Yaakov is the Patriarch who foretells the future of the Jewish people. Just as Yaakov survived and grew as a spiritual being despite the harshness of exile, so too will the Jewish people survive and flourish in exile. We have the innate capability of surviving and flourishing in exile because of Yaakov. Evidently every moment of Yaakov's life in exile was crucial to the future development and survival of the Jewish people.

Even though Yitzchak was not going to pass away for many years, Hashem needed to inform Rivka early so that she should warn Yaakov. Rivka applied the information told to her exactly as Hashem intended that she warn Yaakov to flee immediately. This is because Hashem wanted Yaakov to experience the exile and the tribulations that he experienced in order to prepare the future generations of Jews who were destined to live in exile. There was no mistake in Yaakov's leaving early. It was essential for our surviving exile.

A *Daas Torah* is a person who invests his life in Torah and is spiritually charged as a result of his achievements in Torah. The *Daas Torah's* has a Torah mind – he can see situations and the world through the insights of Torah. The chemical activity in his brain is not what determines his mind's processing. How are we to understand that if a Daas Torah explains a situation in one way and it unfolds in another way? For example, during World War II, there were many Torah sages of the generation who were asked if the Jews of Europe should flee. Many Torah sages advised against leaving Europe and great tragedy unfolded in Europe – communities perished and millions were slaughtered. Did these Torah sages make a mistake? Or did they in fact communicate the correct message that Hashem told them- just as Rivka communicated to Yaakov to flee although Yitzchak lived until after Yosef was sold into slavery.

This is the way it needed to happen. Hashem communicated to Rivka that Yaakov needed to flee at that time because he needed to go into exile for many years and experience the difficulties he experienced only because the Jewish people needed to be able to survive in exile. We do not know G-d's mind. We do not even begin to comprehend the purpose of the events that unfold before us. We certainly do not understand the devastation to the Jewish people in World War II. All of this is part of the mind of G-d and therefore part of the mind of Torah.

My Rosh Yeshiva z'l used to say that we find that Nodav and Avihu were outstanding individuals destined to become the leaders of the Jewish people. However because they brought the fire for an offering without asking Moshe they were killed by G-d. The Torah refers to their fire as *aish zarah* "strange fire". In reality the fire, which they brought, was correct on a *halachik* or legal basis; however, they did not follow the proper procedure by not asking Moshe. Because the proper protocol was not followed Hashem did not want the fire and killed them. This is part of G-d's will. The world and its events are part of G-d's design. The Torah sages who advised people to stay in Europe during World War II processed the information from Hashem exactly as they were supposed to process it. It is not that they made a mistake. We simply do not understand Hashem's plan just as we could not understand why Rivka told Yaakov to flee so prematurely. We see, however, that Hashem's plan, albeit hidden from our understanding, is in our best interest. Because if Yaakov did not leave at the time he did, we would not have been able to survive the many years of our exile.

### ***7. Internalization is the key to blessing.***

The Torah tells us that after Yaakov received Yitzchak's blessings, Esav approached Yitzchak and asked for his blessing only to discover that Yaakov had already taken them. The Torah says, "When Esav heard his father's words, he cried out an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father "Bless me too, Father!...Have you not reserved a blessing for me?...Have you but one blessing?"" Yitzchak responded by giving Esav a blessing focused on the material world as follows: "Behold, of the fatness of the earth shall be your dwelling and of the dew of the heavens from above. By your sword you shall live, but your brother you shall serve; yet it shall be that when you are "*tarried*"

aggrieved, you may cast off his yoke from your neck.”

Rashi explains that the Hebrew word ” *tarried*(*aggrieved*) is an expression of anguish and pain when the Jews will violate the Torah and you will have a reason to agonize over the blessings which Yaakov had taken and you will be able to throw off his yoke.” Perhaps Rashi could have simply said that the Jews are deserving of the blessings only if they follow the ways of the Torah and if they do not, then Esav may throw off the yoke of his brother. What does Rashi mean by stating “you will have a reason to agonize over the blessings which Yaakov had taken”? We can understand that Yaakov took the blessings because he understood that he and his descendents would follow the Torah and be worthy of Yitzchak’s blessings; however, if Yaakov and his descendents deviate from the Torah then Esav could have a legitimate claim to the blessings. Yet Rashi adds, “you will have a reason to agonize”. How do we understand this?

Esav was a person who did not even believe in G-d. As we learned earlier he said, “There is no judgment and no judge”. He was also a ruthless murderer, thief, and possessed all the characteristics that are the antithesis of spirituality. However we see that Esav reacts in an astonishing manner when he hears that Yaakov received the blessings. We should note that Esav was feared throughout the world as a fierce hunter and warrior; yet, we find that he wailed and cried uncontrollably when his father told him that his brother took the blessings. If the world trembled in his presence and he apparently did not believe in G-d then why did Esav react to extremely? He could have easily dismissed Yitzchak and his blessings without any reaction at all. The answer is that regardless of how Esav chose to live his life he understood who Yitzchak’s was. Esav knew that his father had the ability to determine who would live or who would die – who would succeed and who would fail. This was the value of his father that was rooted in Yitzchak’s level of holiness. Even though Esav conducted himself as if there was no judge or judgment, he knew deep within himself that his father represented Hashem’s will in this world. Why did Esav cry from the depth of his being?

The answer is that Esav’s response to hearing that the blessings were given to Yaakov and he would be denied was a validation of his father Yitzchak who represented holiness in the world. Esav’s anguish emanated from his acknowledgement of holiness in the world. We can now begin to understand what Rashi was adding “yet it shall be that when you are “*tarried*” aggrieved, you may cast off his yoke from your neck.” When Esav was aggrieved he was validating that his father’s blessing had value; thus making him worthy of the blessing.

There is a Gemara in Berachos that relates the story of Reb Yehuda, an *Amora*. During Reb Yehuda’s time the Torah sages were only proficient in two areas of the Talmud. Yet whenever there was a drought Reb Yehuda only needed to take off one shoe and begin praying for rain and it would rain immediately. The Gemara states in further that in our day that we are proficient in all areas of the Talmud we do not receive a drop of rain in answer to our greatest prayers. What is the difference between the earlier generation of Reb Yehuda and the later generations? The Gemara states that the earlier generations “gave their lives to sanctify Hashem and we did not.” The Gemara relates how Reb Yehuda exemplified Kiddush Hashem. There was an incident where the laws of modesty were breached. When Reb Yehuda witnessed this breach, he reacted to correct the wrong regardless of the consequence of his action. This revealed to what degree his spirituality was internalized and therefore merited miracles.

We can now understand that deservingness is determined by one’s internalization of spirituality. To what degree are we pained (if at all) when we witness a chilul Hashem?

Or how elated are we when we witness a Kiddush Hashem? Despite Esav's level of evil, he was pained and anguished when his father did not give him the blessings. This was his acknowledgement of the holiness of Yitzchak.