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Between Guilt and Conditional Love

We all know that Yaakov dressed up as Esav to steal the Bracha of the firstborn. I, however, find it difficult to understand why Yitzchak was so adamant to give Esav the Bracha in the first place. The Parasha tells us

”וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו כִּי צִיד בְּפִיו וּרְבִקָּה אוֹהֶבֶת אֶת יַעֲקֹב”

In this Passuk, the stark contrast of Yitzchak’s conditional love and Rivka’s unconditional love becomes apparent. Rashi says that Yitzchak loved Esav because he would literally feed him through his hunting skills. The Midrash on the other hand, explains that Esav would metaphorically “hunt” Yitzchak’s love through his elaborate stories. Whether you interpret the Passuk like Rashi or like the Midrash it is obvious that Yitzchak’s love needs to be justified.

Yitzchak’s father, Avraham, also had two sons. The firstborn, Yishmael, had lost the spiritual inheritance of his father in favor of Yitzchak. This goes against what ancient law dictates. The firstborn is meant to be the physical and spiritual heir. Could it be that Yitzchak felt guilty for having swooped in and torn the Bechora,

though unintentionally, right out of his brother’s hands? If so, it fits that with his own children he would work extra hard to ensure that the right thing would be done. Esav is the Bechor. He deserves everything. Even if Yaakov might be a better fit, Yitzchak won’t let that disrupt the social norms once again. This is expressed in the Torah’s need to justify Yitzchak’s love for Esav.

Although Yitzchak believed he was doing the right thing, Hashem had other plans.

When does our guilt drive us to correct past mistakes and when is it counterproductive to Hashem’s will? We learn from Yitzchak that it is important to do the right thing and put our conscience at peace. Although our Hishtadlut doesn’t always follow suit with Retzon Hashem, it definitely plays a role in how history plays out. We have an obligation to act as best as we know how while we pray that G-d makes His Retzonot ours as well.



Klilah Mischel
10th grade, Efrat

Soup or Sandwich

In Parsha Toldot it says:

”וַיֵּזֶד יַעֲקֹב וַיִּזְדַּיַּד וַיִּבְרָא עֵשָׂו מִן הַשֶּׂדֶה וְהָיָה עֵיפָו׃”

“Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the open, famished.”

The point of that pasuk was to show

that Eisav wanted food, and demanded that Yaakov feed him. So why does the parsha point out specifically that he was making a stew? Why would it matter if he was making soup or some sandwiches? Rashi points out that in the next pasuk it says:

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל-יַעֲקֹב הֲלֵעִיטֵנִי נָא מִדֶּגֶר הָאֲדָמָה הַזֶּה
כִּי עֵינִי אֲנֹכִי עֹלֵיבֹן קָרָא שְׂמוֹ אֲדָוָם:

“And Esau said to Jacob, “Give me some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am famished”—which is why he was named Edom.”

Red stuff? What red stuff? The red stuff was actually red lentils, which is actually a mourner’s food. It is customary to make round food while mourning because it is round like a wheel, and mourning is a wheel that revolves around the world. Yaakov was cooking a stew of red lentils because he was mourning Avraham’s, his grandfather, death. Avraham had died on that day, so that he would not have to see Eisav falling into his bad ways. Rashi also points out that the pasuk used ‘famished/faint’ to describe how Eisav was feeling. In (Jeremiah 4:31) the Torah uses faint as a connection to murder, leading us to believe that the text was pointing to the fact that Eisav was famished from murdering people; the start of Eisav’s downfall. And Hashem had decided Avraham should die, rather than witness his evil ways.

Shabbat Shalom! ■

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